

University of Alberta

**A Narrative Inquiry into the Experiences of Two Beginning P.E. Teachers'
Shifting Stories to Live By**

by

Lee Mason Schaefer

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

Department of Secondary Education

©Lee Mason Schaefer
Fall 2010
Edmonton, Alberta

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Libraries to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only. Where the thesis is converted to, or otherwise made available in digital form, the University of Alberta will advise potential users of the thesis of these terms.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis and, except as herein before provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial portion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatsoever without the author's prior written permission.

Examining Committee

Dr. David Chorney, Secondary Education

Dr Nancy Melnychuk, Secondary Education

Dr. D. Jean Clandinin, Elementary Education

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my parents,
my mom who was a dreamer and taught me to follow in her footsteps,
my dad who always pushed me to become better,
and to
my wife Laura, who has been by my side supporting me throughout this amazing
journey.

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to inquire into the phenomenon of beginning teacher attrition, and more specifically, beginning physical education teacher attrition and retention. Utilizing the methodology of narrative inquiry, I first studied my own autobiographical stories that brought me to teaching. I then wove these stories into the current research around beginning teacher attrition and from this weaving, I began to look at beginning teacher attrition as a problem of identity shifting and shaping. This framing allowed me to narratively inquire into two beginning physical education teachers' experiences. Looking at their experiences through this lens enabled me to become attentive to the experiences that sustained them as beginning teachers. Their sustaining experiences resonated closely with the stories that had brought them to teaching and their imagined stories of who they would be as teachers.

Acknowledgments

This journey would not have been possible without the inspiration and support of many individuals to whom I wish to express my deepest gratitude:

To Dr. Chorney for providing me with feedback throughout the thesis process and for pushing me to think hard about the implications of my work to the physical education field.

To Jean who has been an inukshuk for me throughout this journey. Your selflessness and desire to help others along their way is truly inspiring.

To Dr. Melnychuk for providing me with support and timely comments. Also for your work in the area of physical education and for your passion towards physical education teacher education.

To Shane and Kate, thank you for courageously opening up your lives to me and sharing your experiences as beginning teachers. You inspired me and I know your words will inspire others.

To my family. Mom and Dad, you always made me feel like I could accomplish anything and you instilled in me a passion for learning. To my Grandma who, when I was 5 years old, told me that I would make a great teacher. To Laura for her unconditional love and constant support throughout the entire process. This work would not have been possible without you. Thanks for listening.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	1
Negotiating the Boundaries: First Encounters and Shifting Identities.....	1
Stories to Live By.....	3
The Three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space.....	5
Sacred Stories.....	7
Research Puzzle.....	10
Physical Education Literature.....	11
Broadened Scope of Research.....	14
Methodology.....	15
Situating Narrative Inquiry.....	16
Common Critiques.....	19
Narrative Inquiry and My Research Puzzle.....	21
Coming to the Participants.....	22
Methods of Data Collection.....	23
Autobiographical Field Texts.....	25
Conversations.....	25
Field Text to Interim and Final Research Texts (analysis of data).....	26
Ethical Concerns.....	29
Living Within Tension.....	30
Field Text to Research Text.....	31
Possibilities of Research.....	32
Chapter 2 Summary.....	33

Current Conceptualizations: The Possibility of Something New	33
Chapter 3 Summary.....	33
Inquiring into the Sanding of Stories	33
Chapter 1 References.....	35
Chapter 2.....	40
Beginning Teacher Attrition: A Question of Identity Making and Identity Shifting	
.....	40
Coming to Beginning Teacher Attrition.....	40
Moving into a New Landscape	42
Conceptualizing Teacher Attrition.....	49
Individual Conceptualizations	50
Burnout.....	50
Teacher Demographics	52
Quality Teachers	53
Contextual Conceptualizations	54
Discourses of Support.....	54
Living With Students.....	55
Other Contextual Conceptualizations	56
Bumping Stories: From Shifting Roles to Shifting Identities.....	58
Attending to Shifting Stories to Live By.....	60
Chapter 2 References.....	65
Chapter 3.....	69
Stories of Sustaining: Two Beginning Physical Education Teachers	69

Methodology.....	76
Participants.....	76
Data collection.....	77
The Sanding of Stories.....	79
Sanding Kate’s Stories.....	79
Sanding Shane's Stories.....	81
Disrupting the Sanding of Stories.....	84
Kate’s Journey of Becoming a Teacher.....	88
Thread 1: Not a Subject Area.....	88
Thread 2: Bumping of stories: Professional Landscape.....	90
Thread 3: Bumping of Stories: Personal Landscape.....	91
Thread 4: Shifting Stories to Live By.....	92
Shane’s Journey of Becoming a Teacher.....	95
Thread 1: Teacher of the House.....	95
Thread 2: Outside the Stereotype: Coming to Physical Education.....	97
Thread 3: Bumping of Stories.....	98
Thread 4: Shifting Stories to Live By.....	100
Messiness in the Lost Sand.....	107
Thoughts for the Future.....	108
Limitations.....	111
Further Research.....	112
Chapter 3 References.....	113
Chapter 4.....	117

Sliding Backwards and Forwards: Sustaining Moments Within Shifting Stories to Live By	117
Backwards	117
Present Stories.....	119
Future Stories.....	120
Hopes For The Research	121
Chapter 4 References.....	123
Appendix A: Kate’s Narrative Account	125
Starbucks	125
Appendix B: Shane’s Narrative Account	144
Nope, Not Those Shoes	144

List of Figures

Figure 1.1	86
Figure 1.2	104

Chapter 1¹*Negotiating the Boundaries: First Encounters and Shifting Identities*

It was an 8:30 am class, but that didn't bother me. I had finally worked my way into an education class. The Education program at this particular university is a 4-year program and as a transfer student, I knew it was difficult to be accepted into the program. I registered for university late and defaulted in to the Arts program. Although I was not in the Education program yet, I knew that if I could impress Dr. Jones I would be able to get in as a full-time student. As I walked across the snowy field towards the university, I rehearsed what I would say if I was asked why I wanted to be a physical education (PE) teacher. I began to envision what this introductory PE class would be like. I predicted games in the gymnasium, and lots of them; maybe a fitness program of some sort. I suspected there would be a little writing, but figured that the course work, in regards to academics, would be light. My story of who I wanted to be as a PE teacher was composed from all my experiences as a strong athlete, team player, and many successful and enjoyable PE classes.

Although it was only a 10-minute walk to class, I left my apartment that morning at 7:30 am to be sure I was on time. I had even checked out the classroom the day before to make sure there would be no surprises. As I walked up the stairs to the third floor, I noticed I was a little nervous and that I was

¹ This thesis follows a manuscript format. Chapters 2 and 3 are papers that will be submitted for publication.

really early. I figured that when I got to the classroom it would be locked. To my surprise when I got there the door was open and the lights were on.

“Good morning,” said Dr. Jones.

“Good morning Dr. Jones,” I replied. “My name is Lee and I can see that I am a little early.” At this time I noted all three chalk boards were full of writing and that there were, what looked to be, little kids’ toys sitting on the front desk alongside a number of handouts.

“You’re not early, you’re on time. Grab the handouts,” replied Dr. Jones. I grabbed the handouts and read through them. While I was doing this I looked at the syllabus. As I read through the syllabus, I realized there was a lot of reading, writing, and reflecting to be completed. To say I was surprised would be an understatement. It was not too long before other students started to filter in. They also seemed surprised by the syllabus.

At exactly 8:30 am Dr. Jones shut the door and class began. To be honest, I do not remember much of that class. At the beginning, Dr. Jones asked the athletes and coaches to put their hands up. I put mine up with pride, along with 90% of the other students. Dr. Jones noted that our athletic backgrounds could be a detriment to becoming PE teachers. He said, “You will not be able to relate to those students who do not like PE.” Then he started talking about theory stuff and I began to wonder what I was doing there. When I left class that day, I remember wondering how long Dr. Jones had been at the university and if he had ever really taught a high school PE class. I also remember reminding myself that I had to impress this teacher, and that I would definitely have to

jump through some hoops to do this. For the first few weeks there seemed to be a lot of hoop jumping.

Dr. Jones was passionate about PE. He talked about it as if it was as important as any other subject. I agreed with him on that. He talked about PE as marginalized subject matter and how PE teachers were marginalized teachers. I agreed with him on that. Dr. Jones's passion was contagious and I found myself reprimanding people for calling PE gym. I began to internalize the comments that individuals made about PE being a non-academic subject, and comments that alluded to jocks only being able to teach PE and I began to read un-assigned readings to increase my knowledge in the area of PE. I began to believe in what Dr. Jones was teaching. By the end of the semester my perspective on PE had totally changed.

Stories to Live By

This story is an experience that I return to often and is one that, no doubt, shaped both my personal and professional identity. When Clandinin and Connelly refer to teachers' identities they use the phrase *stories to live by*, a phrase "given meaning by the narrative understandings of knowledge and context. Stories to live by are shaped by such matters as secret teachers' stories, sacred stories of schooling, and teachers' cover stories" (1999, p. 4). Our narrative understandings of our stories to live by are created by the experiences we live through and, in thinking about these experiences, we almost certainly understand more about how our experiences shape the people we become. My experience in Dr. Jones's course was

one experience that shaped my stories to live by; that is, who I was at the time and who I was becoming as a teacher.

Stories to live by are connected to the personal practical knowledge teachers develop from their experiences, both in and out of school. Personal practical knowledge is a term that Clandinin and Connelly use to

capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons. Personal practical knowledge is in the teacher's past experience, in the teacher's present mind, and body and in the future plans and actions. (1988, p. 25)

Too often experience is construed as something that happened in the past. The strength of the preceding quote is the portrayal of how these past experiences shape our present experiences and our possible future experiences. As teachers, we embody our pasts and it shapes how we live in and see the world. Again, as I reflect back on my stories of my experience in Dr. Jones's course, I note how that experience shaped my experiential knowledge, my personal practical knowledge.

Connelly and Clandinin developed a metaphor of a professional knowledge landscape to talk about school contexts. This allowed them to talk about the space, the place, and the time of a story or experience (1995). Within this professional knowledge landscape experiences are continuously being shaped through the relationships between the individual, the space, the place, and the temporal aspects of the professional knowledge landscape. Thinking in this way allowed me to become attentive to the complex landscape I entered as an undergraduate and

attentive to how the negotiation of this landscape became a part of shaping my stories to live by.

Working with the concepts of knowledge, context and identity as narrative concepts emerges from the view of experience as a narrative phenomenon. As Clandinin and Connelly write,

Experience is what we study, and we study it narratively because narrative thinking is a key form of experience and a key way of writing and thinking about it. In effect, narrative thinking is part of the phenomenon of narrative. It might be said that narrative method is a part or aspect of narrative phenomenon. Thus, we say, narrative is both the phenomenon and the method of the social sciences. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 18)

The Three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry Space

Temporality, as defined by the past, present, and future, is one of three key dimensions to which Clandinin and Connelly refer to as the “three dimensional narrative inquiry space²” (2000, p. 50). The personal and social, or sociality, point toward the second dimension of the inquiry space. If we were to look at personal interaction during an experience we would be inquiring into the feelings and attitudes of the individuals involved. If we inquire into the social, we look at the individual’s experience with other individuals, or what is happening in the social environment in which they dwell. The last dimension of the three-dimensional

² The three-dimensional space will be discussed in greater detail throughout the methodology section of this paper.

inquiry space is place. This refers to the physical place or places in which an experience happens.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use the terms *backwards* and *forwards* to refer to the past and future. They use the terms *inwards* and *outwards* to refer to inquiry into the personal and social or sociality. "To experience an experience—is to experience it simultaneously in these four ways and to ask questions pointing each way" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000 p. 50). I have used the three-dimensional inquiry space to autobiographically narratively inquire into my stories.

Inquiring inwardly into the story of my undergraduate experience above, I note the feeling of excitement that I had on that crisp January morning. Along with this excitement, there was a sense of confidence. I had played sports my entire life and had coached a number of sports. My favorite school subject was always PE. Along with this excitement and confidence was a sense of anxiety. I had applied to the PE program before and I did not get accepted. A number of the university classes I was enrolled in were focused on my acceptance in to the PE program. These courses would be useless credits if I did not get in to the Education Program. Dr. Jones had been labeled as a very demanding teacher and his course was the gate in to the PE program. It was a course that weeded out the students that may not make good teachers. I wondered, on my walk over to the university that morning, what I would do if I were not able to succeed in this class.

In looking at this experience outwardly, the environment, teacher, and content of the class did not fit with my prior stories of enjoying PE as a student or my forward looking story of who I would become as a PE teacher. Once the class

began, my sense of excitement and confidence was lost. The landscape I entered early that morning was not one I had been prepared for by my stories of PE. I did not recognize Dr. Jones's class stories as those I lived on school landscapes. The dominant story that lived in the PE classes that I had participated in were stories that emphasized competition, athleticism, sport, and sweat. I wondered, "was this dominant story a sacred story created in the early days of PE?"

Sacred Stories

Crites (1971) refers to a sacred story as "stories that orient the life of people through time, their life-time, their individual and corporate experience and their sense of style to the great powers that establish the reality of their world" (p. 295). The aspect of competition, discipline, and fitness were the plotlines of the dominant story that I had lived as a PE student. Dr. Jones's story of PE bumped against this sacred story. His story included threads of pedagogy, inclusion, and social justice.

What I recognized as a divergence of story created an uncomfortable feeling in my stomach. I was almost angry when I left the classroom that morning. This uncomfortable feeling came from the dilemma that the conflicting stories created inside me (Lyons, 1990). As the divergence of the two stories of what it meant to be a physical education teacher became apparent, I had to make a choice. I began to jump through the metaphoric hoops that I imagined would allow me admission to the PE program. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) might say that I began to live out a cover story. I knew that I had to pass the course, and I knew I needed to show Dr. Jones I could be a capable PE teacher. My cover story was one where I began to live

the story of a person who did not believe in competition in PE. I began to live the story of a person who felt that marginalized students should be our first priority. I began to write papers that focused on movement patterns, such as sending, receiving and evading. I wrote papers that examined how appropriate teaching of performance cues could help marginalized students be successful in PE. This was a different story of teaching PE than the one to which I was accustomed.

Outside of the classroom I was living a different story. I told stories about how ridiculous it was to think that high school kids would listen to rhetoric about performance cues and movement patterns. My colleagues and I shared stories about getting into the schools and teaching how we had been taught. We laughed about how Dr. Jones would be received in a *real classroom*.

We entered the gymnasium for the first time. We were well in to our semester, and Dr. Jones finally had what I thought was a real gym class. As I walked into the gym I noted that there was an abundance of equipment set out. On the white board it said, grab a piece of equipment, an object, and begin to send and receive with a partner. My partner and I grabbed some equipment and started passing it back and forth. Then we switched our equipment, and began to send a basketball with a pickle ball racquet. Others were just using traditional equipment like a badminton racquet and a birdie. Everyone was active. We then had to switch to our non-dominant hand and use the same performance cues. This was challenging, but as I worked through the follow-through, transfer of weight, limbs in opposition and eye contact, I began to see success. It

was fun; the smiles on my colleagues' faces showed that they were having success as well.

Inquiring into this story fragment enables me to understand that my stories to live by were shifting. The gymnasium landscape allowed Dr. Jones to live out his personal practical knowledge. As I observed other students in class enjoying themselves with a differentiated type of activity, a light went on in my head. In looking at this experience temporally, this transformation of my stories to live by would change the way that I imagined PE and the way that I would teach PE when I entered the profession. If I look at the experience inwardly I note an *aha moment*. It was a moment when I began to feel passionate about a different kind of PE story. Outwardly, it was a moment when the cover story that I was living began to fade away and became a part of my stories to live by. I had a newfound respect for Dr. Jones and the in-class discussions and content became much more real; my stories to live by had shifted. Although I only share one experience of this shifting here, it did not happen in an immediate way. There were many experiences like this one that shifted my future story of PE.

The gym is a place in which I always felt comfortable. Throughout my school experiences I rarely succeeded outside of the gym. The positive feedback I remember receiving in school seems to be in some way associated with PE. Entering the gym on the morning this experience took place, I was comfortable. The classroom sessions had begun to change my knowing of PE and when I saw Dr. Jones living out his personal practical knowledge in the gymnasium, my place of comfort, I noted that it became a comfortable place for all of my colleagues. I noticed that

everyone was enjoying himself or herself. This experience helped me to see a new story of teaching PE—one that Dr. Jones lived by—and one that I began to believe could help students experience the joy of movement.

Research Puzzle

The story fragments above denote the shift in my stories to live by. As I moved through the university landscape I was awakened to the many shifts and changes that happened to my stories to live by as a teacher. As I told stories about who I was as a teacher, I now realize, I began to create an imagined story of who I was becoming. The education program of which I was a part, enabled the negotiation of this becoming by creating spaces for it to happen.

Upon graduation I felt assured in my future story and moved into my first teaching position with a great deal of confidence. As I entered this new and complex landscape, I realized that my imagined story of who I was going to be as a teacher did not fit into the school story. The inability to live out my imagined story created a dilemma, a dilemma that I felt in my body, almost a sick feeling in my stomach. My research puzzle stems from this feeling, my awakening to my own shifting stories to live by and my wonderings about other beginning teachers entering the profession. For me the frustration did not come from being too busy, student discipline problems, or a lack of support, but stemmed from not being able to live out my imagined story on the professional landscape. I wonder how beginning teachers negotiate their stories of who they are becoming as teachers as they enter the

professional landscape and how this negotiation may shape their decisions to stay in the profession.

Physical Education Literature

In the beginning of this study, I was specifically interested in beginning physical education teachers' identities. I felt that in understanding physical education teachers' identities, I must first understand how they have come to be physical education teachers. Lawson's influential work in the area of physical education teacher socialization is referred to often. His article "Toward a model of teacher socialization in physical education: The subjective warrant, recruitment, and teacher education,"³ helped me to begin thinking about the biographical histories of physical education teachers. He notes, "the socialization of PE teachers may be seen as a life-long process. This assumption departs from traditional notions that teacher socialization begins with higher education, and continues when people start teaching" (1983, p. 3). Lawson⁴ pondered how physical education teachers' histories might impact their longevity in the profession. This article shifted my thought process from focusing solely on beginning physical education teachers' identities to wondering more about how beginning physical education teachers' identities may shape their decisions to stay in or leave the profession.

Lawson and Stroot (1993) discuss the notion that pre-determined socialization, for example university education courses, do not always socialize

³ This article was part one of two articles that Lawson published in 1983.

teachers in the same ways. Student teachers' backgrounds shape how the socialization process affects each individual. The authors note that present research methods, which include survey and interview design, do not seem to be adding insight to our understandings of identity and that more in-depth research needs to take place for it to become more meaningful.

Solomon (1991) looked at participant teachers' role identities (TRI), and the teaching experiences they encountered throughout the research period. Findings showed that teachers with a higher TRI were more likely to succeed. In conclusion, Solomon noted that further and more in-depth research was needed to understand how beginning teachers' biographies might shape their TRI and their practice.

The aforementioned research fostered more curiosity about how beginning teachers' pasts may shape the process of negotiating their first teaching position. Butler (2005) discussed the complex process that beginning physical education teachers go through as they move from pre-service to in-service teaching. Tinning (2004) presented complexities that beginning physical educators need to negotiate as they enter the field. Tinning noted that societal expectations of PE are changing and that beginning physical educators' expectations of who they might have been do not align with the expectations of society. Researchers in this area have called for more work to be done in the area of beginning physical education teacher identity (O'Connor & Macdonald, 2002; Tinning, 2004).

Macdonald's (1999) literature review on teacher attrition indicated that, along with other marginalized subject areas including drama and music, physical education teachers have a higher attrition rate. Blankenship and Coleman (2009)

inquired into the impact that PETE (Physical Education Teacher Education) programs have on beginning physical education teachers once they have entered the professional workplace, but looked more specifically at the ways in which beginning physical education teachers implemented the knowledge gained in their individual PETE programs.

“There is little agreement on what constitutes a good physical education program” (Hellison & Templin, 1991, p. 5). However, researchers working in the area of PETE have called for changes to be made in PETE programs to better prepare physical education teachers for their increasingly diverse teaching positions (Belcher, 2008; Chorney, 2006; Melnychuk, Robinson, Lu, Chorney, & Randall, 2010; MacDonald, 1992; Sidentop & Locke, 1997; Tinning, 2002;)⁵.

Research in the area of physical education teacher burnout, which could be linked to beginning teacher attrition, has focused on contextual, environmental, and workplace factors that may contribute to beginning physical education teacher burnout (Fejgi, Ephraty, & Ben-Sira, 1995). Included in the burnout literature, but more focused on individual conceptualizations, is work in the area of teacher and coach role conflicts. Earls (1981) found that balancing coaching and teaching duties led experienced physical education teachers to become burned out. Research has shown that the extra curricular commitment of coaching is something that is expected by physical educators and that this added role encompasses many extra hours of work (Konukman, Agbuga, Erdogan, Zorba, & Giyasettin, 2010). Millslagle

⁵ The research in the area of PETE is discussed in more depth in chapter three.

and Morley (2004) worked from past conceptualizations based on role retreatism and in their study found that physical educators that coach and teach were conflicted between their roles, and often considered their coaching role to be more important. Although this research (Fejgi, Ephraty, & Ben-Sira, 1995; Earls, 1981; Konukman, 2010) has focused on identity, PETE programs, role conflict, and burnout, few studies have been directly linked to beginning physical education teacher attrition. MacDonald (1995) spoke to the role that the proletarianization of physical education teachers plays in the deprofessionalization of the subject area. She found that this contributed to high rates of attrition for beginning physical educators. To better understand my work in the area of beginning physical education teacher attrition, I felt it was necessary to undertake a broader literature review in the area of beginning teacher attrition⁶.

Broadened Scope of Research

In broadening my scope, I began to note the number of quantitative studies as well as the recent and large meta-analytic and empirical reviews that had been completed in the area of beginning teacher attrition (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Macdonald, 1999). These studies showed the trends and tendencies of teacher attrition and, more specifically, offered conceptualizations of why beginning teachers were leaving the profession. However, I thought a piece of the puzzle was missing. Even across the qualitative

⁶ The specific physical education literature is included in chapter three.

research (Kutcy & Shulz, 2006⁷; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005⁸; Swanson & McCoy 2007⁹), it seemed as though teachers leaving the profession were being de-contextualized, thematized, and categorized.

Keeping in mind the socialization literature from physical education (Lawson, 1983; Lawson & Stroot, 1993; Solomon, 1991; Lortie, 1975), I wondered about the histories and intentions of beginning teachers. If a beginning teacher had no intentions of teaching for an extended period of time and left the profession, this is contextually different than an individual who thought teaching was his/her life-long calling and left the profession. As I continued to read through the literature, I began to see common conceptualizations of beginning teacher attrition. It was through this reading that I began to wonder about how beginning teacher attrition research may be framed from a different vantage point.¹⁰

Methodology

The reasons for selecting narrative inquiry as a methodology are justified by setting it amongst three dominant methodologies along with a brief explanation of

⁷ Through inductive analysis the established themes, concepts and propositions related to second year classroom teachers.

⁸ Case studies of five first year special educators: with little contextual background about participants it takes the meaning away from their comments that seem to be plugged in to past research conceptualizations.

⁹ The study used a mixed method design that included surveys and interviews. While the study uses participant comments, the context of participants is unknown.

¹⁰ The in-depth literature review, autobiographical narrative inquiry and re-conceptualization are covered in greater depth in chapter 2.

what narrative inquiry is and how it was used to inquire into the research puzzle. Looking at the use of narrative inquiry in this particular study allows for the explanation of the negotiation with participants as well as the justification of different methods that were used to compose field texts (data). Analysis of the field texts and creation of the research texts are examined along with ethical concerns that became apparent during this study.

Situating Narrative Inquiry

In situating narrative inquiry within social science research, it is important to first map out where narrative inquiry is located among three dominant research methodologies. In an attempt to gain a better understanding of the foundational purposes of narrative inquiry, it is situated among the ontological and epistemological commitments of reductionism, formalism, and Neo-Marxism. It should be mentioned that the literature surrounding this area is vast and the goal is simply to situate narrative inquiry and explain its selection for this study.

Post-positivist thinking, or reductionist thinking, is the first dominant paradigm for discussion in this research. Researchers who work within reductionism or post positivism begin with epistemological commitments, or a theory of knowledge, and it is from their epistemological stance that they understand their ontological stance, that is, the nature of reality. In a reductionist understanding of reality “there are social facts with an objective reality apart from the beliefs of individuals” (Firestone, 1987, p. 16). In essence this reality is the same for everyone. In reducing the phenomenon under study, the post-positivist is able to

create outcomes that are measurable and reportable. In the search for truth, the reductionist controls the contextual factors to create an environment that can be replicated. “The virtue of this epistemologically conservative stance is that it proves a very stable consensus about a knowledge base for social science inquiry,” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 44). The downside to this search for certainty is that “large regions of human experience that influence human affairs . . . are often placed outside the bounds of that inquiry” (Clandinin & Rosiek, p. 44).

The second dominant research methodology is neo-Marxism; critical theorists have been influenced by neo-Marxism. Unlike post-positivists, a researcher working within a neo-Marxist understanding begins with ontological commitments. In doing so, they are trying to understand how the macro-social structures, ideologies, create prescribed notions of reality for those individuals living within the structure. Therefore, people’s knowledge is dictated by the ideologies of the social structures that people live within. From a neo-Marxist perspective “False consciousness is a condition in which a person acquires a habit of thinking and feeling that prevents him or her from noticing and analyzing the real causes of his or her oppression” (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 47). Within this view, the individual’s experiences reflect the social structures. Consequently, the critical theorist believes that study should be focused on how these social structures shape individual’s experiences. Researchers working from this perspective assume that they may be able to change these social structures for the betterment of the individual. Anderson notes that, in striving to change social structure in this way, a neo-Marxist, or critical

theorist may “become trapped in the theoretical cul-de-sac of overdeterminism” (Anderson, 1989, p. 251).

The third dominant research methodology that I briefly address is post-structuralism. “Just as reductionism makes the whole into something lesser, sociological and political analysis can also make the whole lesser through the use of abstraction and formalism” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 38). This area of thought argues that the structures of the world match the categories or structures of the mind. Like the reductionist, the post-structuralist begins with epistemological commitments, but also begins with a framework that allows the researcher to situate the research question within boundaries. In doing so they approach the phenomenon with a predetermined framework. Peshkin speaks of the constraints involved with this predetermined framework in his article “The Nature of Interpretation in Qualitative Research” as he states, “I was so hell-bent on pursuing cultural identity that I made it into a template in which everything else had to fit” (2000, p. 7).

By situating narrative inquiry within the three aforementioned methodologies, I see that there are differences and commonalities. Narrative inquiry begins, like Neo-Marxism, with a commitment to ontology. However, in contrast, narrative inquiry begins with an ontological commitment towards an individual’s lived experiences. This commitment stems from a Deweyan theory of experience.

In narrative inquiry people are looked as embodiments of lived stories. Even when narrative inquirers study institutional narratives, such as stories of

school, people are seen as composing lives that shape and are shaped by social and cultural narratives. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 43)

In contrast, a post-structuralist may study an individual's experience, but focuses on understanding how social discourses shape the individual's story, as distinct from a narrative inquirer who would inquire into how individuals may shape the social discourses, as well as how social discourse may shape their experiences. A Neo-Marxist may discount individual lived experience and story due to the belief that the stories would simply be shaped by the macro-social ideologies. The narrative inquirer does not attempt to reduce the phenomenon as a post-positivist might, or to enter into the study with a pre-determined framework as a post-structuralist might. The narrative inquirer enters the phenomenon with an ontological commitment to lived experience.

Common Critiques

Like all methodologies, narrative inquiry is critiqued at times. Common critiques of narrative inquiry claim that it is not theoretical enough and that the outcomes are not of a certain nature. Narrative inquiry does not begin with theory, but turns first to lived experience as the starting point of inquiry. Inquiry begins with an individual's lived and told stories of experience and literature and theory is then woven into the inquiry. As I outlined through my personal inquiry into my experience above, the weaving began as I studied the relational connections between my individual lived, told stories of experience, and other research and

theories. Given this inverted view of the relation of theory and practice, sometimes it is difficult to see the place of theory in narrative inquiries.

A second critique sometimes occurs in relation to the analysis process within a narrative inquiry. A narrative inquirer uses Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) metaphorical three-dimensional inquiry space to analyze their field texts (data). It is through this complex weaving of various theories within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space that the narrative inquirer begins to make meaning of the phenomenon under study. This meaning is what the narrative inquirer is attempting to understand, however, it is tentative and uncertain.

"What narrative inquirers gain in the proximity to ordinary lived experience and the scope of considerations, they at times sacrifice in certainty" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 46). Maxwell (2004) helps me to think about this when he notes, "meanings, beliefs, and volitional actions constitute process that can not be converted to variables" (p. 7); certainty is not what a narrative inquirer is after. By looking at how lived experiences shape a person's reality, an epistemic commitment is made to foster meaningful experiences for both the participants, and the audience of the research. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Fostering these meaningful spaces for both researcher and participant allows the narrative inquirer to demonstrate that "good research requires our careful, ongoing attention to questions of human-well being" (Hostetler, 2005, p. 16). Therefore,

The contribution of a narrative inquiry is more often intended to be the creation of a new sense of meaning and significance with respect to the research topic, than it is to yield a set of knowledge claims that might

incrementally add to the knowledge in the field. The narrative inquirer does not prescribe general applications and uses but rather creates texts that, when well done, offer readers a place to imagine their own uses and applications (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p. 42).

Narrative Inquiry and My Research Puzzle

In the first chapter of Coles' book, "The Call Of Stories," he discusses how important it is for us to listen. "Their story, yours, mine—it's what we all carry with us on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other to respect our stories and learn from them" (1989, p. 30). Certain types of research methods appear to consider the participant as a means to an end. Participants are simply a source of data, and are not seen as an active part of the research. In recognizing "teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, p. 25), participants are seen as having "feelings, values, needs and purposes which condition his/her participation in the research, and which can enrich and validate the study which elicits them as much as it can sabotage the study which ignores or suppresses them" (Clandinin and Connelly, 1988, p. 272). As narrative inquirers it is imperative we recognize teachers as holders of knowledge, and that we treat our participants as active co-researchers. Narrative inquiry allowed me to do this in my study by focusing on the importance of individual's lived experiences.

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) use a metaphor of borderlands to conceptualize the spaces where different methodologies border each other. Narrative inquiry bumps at the borders of other research methodologies. It is a different way of

looking at the fundamental purpose of research. Narrative inquiry is ambiguous, and researchers enter their puzzle without a specific question, or theory of what the outcome may be. Making an ontological commitment to experience allows the researcher to go where life takes them. Bateson (2004), using a metaphor for life, ponders that “the improvised meal will be different from the planned meal, and certainly riskier, but rich with the possibility of delicious surprise” (p. 4).

In allowing the conversations and stories to take us to places we do not expect, we, in turn, are able to go places that research has not been. If we enter a research project with a specific outcome, question or goal in mind we run the risk of missing everything else that is going on around us. “By emphasizing a single thread, we devalue the learning running through it” (Bateson, 1994, p. 108). Our research puzzles cannot be disconnected into isolated pieces, just like our identities are not grounded within one experience. We must, like Bateson says (1994), view our lives, and our research puzzles with peripheral vision; narrative inquiry enabled me to do this.

Coming to the Participants

As I looked at beginning teachers’ stories of being sustained in teaching, and more specifically, beginning physical education teachers’ stories of being sustained, I felt it was important to work alongside individuals in their first year of teaching. As the second part of the study focuses on beginning physical education teachers, the research participants possessed either a minor or major in physical education. It was also a requirement that each participant was teaching physical education at the

secondary level at the time of the study. The gender and race of the participants did not matter, however the participants had to be able to read, write and speak English as they needed to be able to understand the consent forms and I needed to be able to understand their language in order to have conversations with them. Each participant had to agree to be involved in 8-10 hours of conversation, and to meet outside of school time. Whereas some research methods may require large sample sizes to validate, correlate and generalize the data, narrative inquiry engages small sample sizes to ensure a maximum amount of time with each participant to delve deeper in to their stories of experience. Two participants are deemed as an appropriate size for a narrative inquiry.

To find participants, I used an intermediary that worked within the public education system in a large metropolitan city; this individual was heavily involved with beginning teachers. Once I received ethics approval, the intermediary sent out my initial contact letter that included study information, as well as contact information. Prospective participants contacted me directly, and each participant's principal granted permission before their involvement began.

Methods of Data Collection

"When narrative inquirers are in the field, they are never there as disembodied recorders of someone else's experience. They too are having an experience, the experience of the inquiry that entails the experience they set out to explore" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 81). As I inquired into the lives of two beginning physical education teachers, I became part of the beginning teachers' lives

and experiences; they also became part of my life and experiences. This is important in that the researcher in narrative inquiry can never be separated from the research phenomenon. The choice of field texts used and stories shared were decided with both my participants' interests and my interests in mind.

I suggested to participants that we meet at neutral locations away from their schools, outside of the formal school day. Conversations took place in coffee shops and bookstores to create a less formal and more public environment. The main source of field texts were collected through conversations. It was important that the participants felt comfortable and at ease. Therefore, I felt a public, social environment would suit these purposes. As I appreciated the time commitment that would be made by participants, I asked them to set the conversation times during time frames that met their needs. I met with each participant four times. The conversations were between 1½ to 2 hours. The fourth meeting included both participants and myself. I digitally recorded each conversation, and each conversation was then transcribed by me.

There are two forms of field texts that were utilized throughout my study. Each form of field text chosen is located or understood within the three-dimensional inquiry space, temporality, place, personal/social used in analyzing field texts. The first, which I used briefly at the beginning of this piece and delve deeper into throughout chapter two, is autobiographical writing. The second field text I collected was participant conversations.

Autobiographical Field Texts

Autobiographical writing, as used in the beginning of this piece, locates the inquiry for both the author and the reader. It allows the author to begin to understand their relationship with the phenomenon under study. “The writer can turn back upon her own texts and see there her own processes and biases at work” (Grumet, 1980, p. 25). It is through the writings of my early beginnings that I have begun to understand what brought me to my research puzzle. It is also through engaging in my own autobiographical narrative inquiry alongside the research with the participants that I began to think differently about beginning teacher’s lived experiences.¹¹

Conversations

As mentioned earlier, each conversation with participants was recorded and transcribed. A common question that arises with narrative inquiry is, what is the difference between a conversation and an interview? “Research interviews normally have an inequality about them. The direction of the interview, along with its specific questions, are governed by the interviewer” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 110). During a narrative inquiry research conversation, there is not a specific direction governed by the researcher. Having said that, the narrative inquirer is always

¹¹ This will be covered in greater depth throughout my literature review in chapter 2.

attentive to the three-dimensional inquiry space when asking questions or probing¹².

Although I did not have specific research questions created for each particular conversation, each conversation was loosely based on a topic. The first conversation was based on stories of experiences that brought both participants seek out teaching as their chosen profession. The second conversation looked at experiences they had up to this point as beginning teachers. These experiences included what they saw as both positive experiences, as well as experiences they interpreted as negative. The third conversation looked at stories and experience that may sustain the participants in the future. The fourth and final conversation included both participants and myself. The topic of our last discussion was stories of sustaining, as well as their experiences throughout the entire research process and their imagined stories.

Field Text to Interim and Final Research Texts (analysis of data)

“As we move from field texts to research texts, our field texts are the texts of which we ask questions of meaning and social significance” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 130). It was important to weave the autobiographical texts and conversational texts together to try to make meaning of the beginning teachers’ experiences. I asked myself questions of social significance, and moved beyond *what I found interesting* to a text that created meaning for the participants and those that

¹² This is part of the analysis and is discussed in greater depth throughout the data analysis section.

read the work. As has been discussed, this work is not only my composition of the study, but it is a relational co-composition between the participants and myself. Interim research texts are one way that allow this co-composition to take place.

Interim research texts were written and presented to the participants after our conversations. In my study I created a narrative accounts in which I tried to capture the participants individual lived experiences. A narrative inquirer may write a narrative account, or a story about an experience that the participant has shared. They may also create a poem that represents a particular experience. On the surface, it may seem to be a type of member check that allows the participant to confirm the information. However, interim texts allow negotiation of the research text, and a co-composition of the final product. The creation of these interim research texts is part of the field text analysis.

Throughout the entire process from conversations to field text, to interim text, to research text, I was attentive to the three-dimensional space. The narrative inquirer's gaze shifts from (inward) personal feelings, hopes and dispositions, to (outward) existential conditions, to temporality (backward and forward), and finally, to a consideration of place "which attends to the specific concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 51). These three dimensions constitute the metaphorical/conceptual space in which narrative inquiry into lived experience operates.

This space allows a theoretical framework in which to both collect and analyze field texts, as one moves from field texts, to interim texts, to final research texts. The analysis and interpretation within the three-dimensional space allows the

narrative inquirer to make meaning of the experience throughout the process. For example, during a conversation if a teacher told a story of an experience where she/he had a positive interaction with a student, I may have moved within the three dimensional space to ask him/her what his/her past experiences with this student had been. By moving forward and backward, temporally, I may have asked him/her if she/he remembered any interactions with teachers like that when he/she was a student and what she/he imagined future interactions with this particular student might be like. Looking at place, I may have asked where the experience happened. If at school, was it in the gymnasium during physical education class? Or, was it in the hall during supervision? I may wonder if the place in which this experience happened was a comfortable one for the student, and may ask the participant if the experience happened in a place in which he/she was comfortable.

Looking inward, I may have asked how the experience made him/her feel, and why it made her/him feel this way. Moving outward to the social, I might ask questions that pertained to the social environment, the ongoing events, during the experience: were other teachers around? What might other teachers say if they saw this interaction? What happened next? In this way I would be attentive in the conversation to the simultaneous exploration of all three dimensions.

This process of inquiry allows the researcher to delve deeply into the individual's experiences during conversations, as well as to move from field texts to final research texts. In doing so, a deeper understanding of the individual's experience over time, in place and within the sociality dimension may be acquired.

I envisioned my final research text as a weaving of each field text I collected, including my own stories, into the current literature and current conceptualizations of beginning teacher attrition and retention literature. It is through this weaving and co-composition that a research text was created that was meaningful to my participants and those that read the work.

Ethical Concerns

Although there is limited personal risk involved with this study, it is important to outline steps that were taken to decrease the likelihood of risk. The sample size for this study is small and both teachers (participants) are teaching in the same school system. I impressed upon them the need to keep our conversations with one another confidential. As researcher, I also adhered to this confidentiality agreement and held a responsibility to make sure this agreement was upheld. Each participant signed a confidentiality agreement that outlined this responsibility. The field texts were kept between the participants and myself. All data collected was stored in a computer that is password protected and hard copies were stored in a locked filing cabinet located in my office. Pseudonyms were used for the participants, schools, district, and city.

The participants signed an informed consent form that outlined they understood the purpose of the study. The consent form also included detailed information about participant requirements and expectations for the study. Prior to the beginning of the study participants were made aware that their participation was entirely voluntary, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

The participants have been involved in co-creating the narrative accounts. After completing the ethics at the beginning of the study, I assumed that ethical considerations were taken care of, however, ethical issues seemed to arise throughout the study.

Living Within Tension

Although these ethical considerations were considered and taken into account at the beginning of the study, as Clandinin and Connelly note (2000), the ethical responsibilities in relational research, such as narrative inquiry, are ongoing. There were many times that I wanted to ask for advice about how to negotiate the conversations. Was I allowed to clarify stories they told, or would that change the meaning of the story? How much of my own story should I tell? If I relate my struggles and triumphs as a beginning teacher would this change the stories that the participants told? Would it matter if it did? These were all questions I struggled with as I worked alongside the participants.

Tensions also arose as they told stories of struggle. I wanted to help them and give them advice. At times I wished I were a colleague who could observe a class and provide them with feedback and support. Providing verbal support was something that I felt was ethical, and something that I felt might open up conversational spaces. However, I knew that providing support in their particular professional landscapes would compromise the confidentiality agreement and could potentially create adverse relationships with other colleagues. Having an outsider come in and provide support for a beginning teacher may be perceived as offensive

to other staff members; they may feel like someone has been brought in to provide something they could not provide. This outside help could also have been perceived as *extra support*. The beginning teachers' colleagues might see this *extra support* as a sign of weakness. The desire to help, but not being able to, created a dilemma for me as a researcher.

Field Text to Research Text

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) speak of beginning narrative inquirers struggling with the question of ownership when it comes to participants' stories. I would not say that I struggled specifically with this phenomenon, but I did struggle with trying to choose stories that I felt the participants wanted me to tell. As I wrote the narrative accounts from the field texts, I felt as though I was leaving out pieces that were important to the participants' lived experiences. As I created the research texts from the field texts, I again had to make decisions about which stories would be told and which stories would stay only in the field texts. The struggle to decide which data to use and which data not to use is a common phenomenon; however, in this relational work I felt as though I had an obligation to the participants. This tension still lies within me. Geertz's (1988) analogy of the research landscape being a parade helps with this tension. Parades, ever changing and shifting, can never truly be captured as a whole. Like a parade, my work in this study is simply a work in progress; a glimpse of my time spent in this particular parade.

Possibilities of Research

It is my hope that through this inquiry into two beginning physical education teachers' lived experiences, a better understanding of experiences that sustain them will be gained. The narrative inquirer is not in search of certainty, causality, correlation or generalizability. The sample size is far too small to suggest that all or even some beginning teachers' experiences may be similar to the two participants with whom I worked. It is, however, my hope that if beginning teachers, principals, or teacher educators read my study, that it will carry verisimilitude. "My credibility rests on others seeing and accepting the relationship between my facts and my reasoning" (Peshkin, 2000, p. 6). The experiences of the participants and myself may resonate with others and allow them to constructively reflect on their practice. For teacher educators a constructive reflection on teacher education programs and questions about their effectiveness may arise. For beginning teachers a resonance may allow them to make new meaning of their diverse situations. Beginning teachers and teacher educators may resonate with the stories of experience presented, be intrigued by the inquiry and become motivated to do something differently.

When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look where I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about the nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries. (Peshkin, 1985, p. 280)

Chapter 2 Summary

Current Conceptualizations: The Possibility of Something New

Throughout chapter two I weave my autobiographical narrative inquiry into current and past literature on beginning teacher attrition. Throughout this process I came to find that the current conceptualizations of teacher attrition point to individual conceptualizations (age, gender, education) and contextual conceptualizations (lack of support, student discipline issues) (Ingersoll, 2001). It became apparent that my autobiographical stories would fit into the current individual and contextual conceptualizations, but that in sanding¹³ them to fit in, something was lost. It was in reflecting on these lost fragments that I started to think about beginning physical education teacher attrition in a different way. This new vantage point is one that frames beginning teacher attrition as a problem of identity shifting and identity shaping. From this vantage point, an attentiveness to seeing teacher attrition and teacher retention as a process as opposed to a single event is explored.

Chapter 3 Summary

Inquiring into the Sanding of Stories

In broadening my scope for my literature review, I noted the current conceptualizations of beginning teacher attrition, and began to frame beginning

¹³ When I use the metaphor of “sanding the stories to fit in to the boxes”, I am referring to narrow framings of teacher attrition and retention that do not take lived experience in to account.

teacher attrition in a different way. In this chapter I began by utilizing a fictionalized survey into which I fit Shane's and Kate's stories. I do this to show that their stories, when sanded, fit into the current conceptualizations. In the latter half of the paper I problematize this sanding and show that beginning teachers' stories to live by, and the negotiation of their imagined stories, are too complex and messy to be fit into boxes. I show the interconnectedness between the beginning teachers' personal and professional landscapes, and question how this intermingling helps to shape beginning physical education teachers' stories to live by, and imagined stories of who they are becoming.

Chapter 1 References

- Anderson, G. (1989). Critical ethnography in education: Origins, current status, and new directions. *Review of Educational Research, 59*, 249-270.
- Bateson M. (2001). *Composing a Life*. New York: Grove Press.
- Bateson M. (1994). *Peripheral Visions*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Belcher, D. (2008). Identity crisis and the many faces of PETE. *Journal of Physical Education Recreation and Dance, 79*(8), 20-22.
- Blankenship, B. T., & Coleman, M. (2009). An examination of “Wash-out” and workplace conditions of beginning physical education teachers. *Physical Educator, 66*(2), 97-112.
- Borman, D. G., & Dowling, M. N. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(3), 367-410.
- Butler, J. (2005). TGfU pet-agogy: Old dogs, new tricks and puppy school. *Physical Education & Sport Pedagogy, 10*(3), 225-240.
- Chorney, D. W. (2006). Teacher development and the role of reflection. *Physical & Health Education Journal, 72*(3), 22-25.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F.M. (1998). Stories to live by: Narrative understandings of school reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 28*(2), 149-164.
- Clandinin D. J., & Connelly, F.M. (1988). Studying teachers’ knowledge of classrooms: Collaborative Research, ethics, and the negotiation of narrative. *22*(2a), 269-282.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F.M. (2000.) *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and story in*

Qualitative Research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Clandinin, D. J., Pushor, D., & Orr, A. (2007). Navigating sites for narrative inquiry.

Journal of Teacher Education, 58(1), 21-35.

Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F.M. (1995). *Teachers Professional Knowledge*

Landscapes. New York: Teachers College Press.

Coles, R. (1989). *The Call Of Stories*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry.

Educational Researcher, 19(5), 2-14.

Crites, S., (1971). The narrative quality of experience. *Journal of the American*

Academy of Religion, 39(3), 291-311.

Earls, N. F. (1981). How teachers avoid burnout. *Journal of Physical Education,*

Recreation and Dance, 52(9), 41-43.

Fejgin, N., Ephraty, N., & Ben-Sira, D. (1995). Work environment and burnout of

physical education teachers. *Journal of Teaching In Physical Education*, 15, 64-

78.

Firestone, W. A. (1987). Meaning in method: The rhetoric of quantitative and

qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 19(7), 16-21.

Geertz, C. (1988). *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*. Stanford: Stanford

University Press.

Guarino, M. G., Santibanez, L., & Daley, A. G. (2006). Teacher recruitment and

retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational*

Research, 76(2), 173-208.

Hellison, D. R., & Templin, T. J. (1991). *A reflective approach to teaching physical*

education. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

- Hostetler, K. (2005). What is "good" educational researcher? *Educational Researcher*, 34(6), 17-21.
- Ingersoll, R. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-535.
- Konukman, F., Agbuga, B., Erdogan, S., Zorba, E., & Giyasettin, D. (2010). Teacher-coach role conflict in school-based physical education in USA: a literature review and suggestions for the future. *Biomedical Human Kinetics*, 2, 19-24.
- Kutcy, B. C., & Shulz, R. (2006). Why are beginning teachers frustrated with the teaching profession? *McGill Journal of Education*, 41(1), 77-89.
- Lawson, H. A. (1983). Toward a model of teacher socialization in physical education: The subjective warrant, recruitment, and teacher education. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 2(3), 3-16.
- Lawson, H. A. (1983). Toward a model of teacher socialization in physical education: Entry into schools, teachers' role orientations, and longevity in teaching (part 2). *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 3(1), 3-15.
- Lawson, H. A., & Stroot, S. A. (1993). Footprints and signposts: Perspectives on socialization research. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 12(4), 437-446.
- Lyons, N. (1990). Dilemmas of knowing: Ethical and epistemological dimensions of teachers work and development. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60(2), 159-180.

- Maxwell, J. S. (2004). Causal explanation, qualitative research, and scientific inquiry in education. *Educational Researcher*, 33(2), 3-11.
- MacDonald, D. (1999). Teacher attrition: A review of literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15(8), 835-848.
- MacDonald, D. (1995). The role of proletarianization in physical education teacher attrition. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 66(2), 129-141.
- MacDonald, D. (1992). One step forwards, two backwards: Deprofessionalization within physical education. *Paper presented at AARE/NZARE conference*, 1-26.
- Melnychuk, N., Robinson, D., Lu, C., Chorney, D & Randall, L. (Under Review). Physical education teacher education (PETE) in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Education*.
- Millsagle, D., & Morley, L. (2004). Investigation of role retreatism in the teacher/coach. *Physical Education*, 61(3), 120-131.
- O'Connor, A., & MacDonald, D. (2002). Up close and personal on physical education teachers' identity: Is conflict an issue? *Sport, Education & Society*, 7(1), 37-54.
- Peshkin, A. (2000). The nature of interpretation in qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 29(9), 5-9.
- Peshkin, A. (1985). Virtuous subjectivity: in the participant-observer's eyes. In D Berg & K Smith (Eds.), *Exploring clinical methods for social research* (pp. 267-281), Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Schempp, P. G., & Graber, K. C. (1992). Teacher socialization from a dialectical perspective: Pre-training through induction. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 11(4), 329-348.

- Schlichte, J., Yssel, N., & Merbler, J. (2005). Pathways to burnout: Case studies in teacher isolation and alienation. *Preventing School Failure, 50(1)*, 35-41.
- Siedentop, D., & Locke, L. (1997). Making a difference for physical education: What professors and practitioners must build together. *Journal of Physical Education Recreation and Dance, 68(4)*, 25-33.
- Solmon, M. A. (1991). Teacher role identity of student teachers in physical education: An interactive analysis. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education, 10*, 188-209.
- Swanson, G., & McCoy, K. (2007). Considering the context: Differences between the environments of beginning special educators who stay and those who leave. *Rural Education Quarterly, 26(3)*, 32-40.
- Tinning, R. (2002). Toward a "modest Pedagogy": Reflections on the problematics of critical pedagogy. *Quest, 54*, 224-240.
- Tinning, R. (2004). Rethinking the preparation of HPE teachers: Ruminations on knowledge, identity, and ways of thinking. *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 32(3)*, 241-253.

Chapter 2

*Beginning Teacher Attrition: A Question of Identity Making and Identity Shifting*¹⁴

Coming to Beginning Teacher Attrition

My curiosity about beginning teachers' experiences is grounded in my experiences surrounding physical education teacher education (PETE), as well as my four years in the teaching profession. My interest was sparked by watching some beginning teachers live out what appeared to be stories of success in their new *real world* positions, while others lived out stories that enabled them to leave the profession they thought to be their life long calling. I wondered what experiences shaped beginning teachers' careers. Why do so many beginning teachers leave the profession? How might we keep them in the profession? I am not the first to wonder about this phenomenon, but these questions seem particularly urgent as the numbers of beginning teachers who leave continues to increase.

In order to inquire into this phenomenon, I began by reflecting on my own past experiences as a beginning teacher and then used the insights from that process as a starting point to inquire into the experiences of other beginning teachers as they were represented in the research literature. In so doing, I first showed how teacher attrition is conceptualized in the research literature and then offered a different conceptualization of the phenomenon of early career teacher

¹⁴ This chapter was submitted to *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice* in February of 2010.

attrition that draws on my autobiographical narrative inquiry and the literature review.

In the review of the literature there are different conceptualizations at work in accounting for why beginning teachers leave teaching; some draw on notions of individual burnout, described as “a perceived state of physical and emotional exhaustion, which develops into negative attitudes towards students” (Shramer & Jackson, 1996, p. 29) while other conceptualizations draw on contextual problems, including lack of administrative support, student discipline, absence of collegiality, the status of teachers, and salary (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Macdonald, 1999; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Much research into beginning teacher attrition works from a view that beginning teachers develop “a growing awareness of the[se] less exciting realities of teaching [that] can be followed by feelings of ineffectiveness, loneliness, and alienation from the profession” (Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler 2005, p. 38). Looking inward to conceptualize the problem as something within the individual or looking outward to conceptualize the problem as situated in the context are both important frames. However, building on recent literature on narrative understandings of teacher identity, I propose to frame the problem as one of teacher identity making and identity shifting in order to understand the experiences of beginning teacher attrition.

I used two methods for this study; first, I engaged in writing a series of stories about my experiences as a beginning teacher. Using autobiographical narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), I then inquired into those stories in

order to retell them while looking for resonances across the stories. The retold stories that I use highlight narrative threads from my experiences. Secondly, I conducted a review of the literature, and organized it into two dominant problem frames of early career attrition. Framing the problem of teacher attrition as something situated within the individual or something situated in the context.

Moving into a New Landscape

The phone rang. I looked at the call display. It was the school board¹⁵ that had hired me in April of 2006. Now in August 2006 I had still not found out where, or what, I was teaching. I answered the phone and spoke with the man who would be my new principal. I learned I would start the next day at a junior high school. "Swing by the school as soon as possible," he said. A graduate of a program in secondary teacher education, I was a little disappointed my first job was teaching in a junior high, but looking at the map I had a feeling of relief; the school was only a ten minute drive from my new house. Driving to school, I was conscious about what I was wearing. In a hurry to leave the house, I could not find dress shoes. The only thing remotely close were golf shoes. Perhaps the principal would not notice and, if he did notice, maybe it would be a good icebreaker.

¹⁵ In order to provide anonymity, I addressed the school board as only that. The school board, located in a large urban district, has programs to meet the needs of the diverse student population.

Walking in¹⁶ I noted that the school was not what I expected. It was dingy, and the ceiling lights gave off a yellowish glow. I tried to walk softly so my golf shoes would not click. However, there was an excitement in my step that could not be silenced. The principal was waiting in his office. Welcoming me, he handed me my teaching assignment, an assignment it took me a while to comprehend. The longer I looked, the more overwhelmed I became. The schedule read: grade 7 Physical Education, grade 8 Physical Education, grade 7 Health, grade 8 Health, grade 7 Social Studies, grade 8 Social Studies, Grade 7 Language Arts, Grade 8 Language Arts, Grade 7 Computers. I noticed immediately I was teaching Language Arts and Computers; two courses I knew little about. I kept these worries to myself. I knew beginning teachers' positions often did not coincide with what they wanted to teach or were prepared to teach.

As we toured the school I heard little of what the principal said. All I could think about was the clicking of my golf shoes, and how I was going to teach nine different courses. At the end of the tour, we visited my first classroom. As the door opened I saw desks, a white board, a computer, four bare walls and no windows. I thought it looked desolate. The principal said "Don't worry. You have a few days to make it your own." I wondered, "How do I make it my own?"

¹⁶ The Grade 7 to 9 junior high school of approximately 500 diverse students is located in a middle class neighborhood. The school offered second language classes, an honors program and a behavioral program.

Inquiring into my experience¹⁷ as a beginning teacher, I noted the feelings and concerns I had. Inwardly, I felt I had no idea what I was getting into. I had expected time for appropriate planning, as I had been hired almost six months prior to starting. I began to realize that I had to prepare for nine different classes. I wondered how I would succeed. Later I learned the staff referred to my assignment as a *dog's breakfast*. As a newcomer to the province and city, this place did not feel familiar; the unknown made the transition more complex. Although I entered this landscape confidently, the unknown space began to shift my *stories to live by*¹⁸; I started to feel like an outsider.

Looking backward to the stories I was telling as I entered that first teaching position, I am reminded of what I expected. My forward looking story composed prior to that first day (Nelson, 2001), that is, my imagined story of who I would be as a teacher was an individual in a large school, one resembling my high school. My imagined place had large pyramid steps in the middle of the common area, with lots of windows and sunshine. I would teach physical education, creating a program to enable students to be committed to healthy active lifestyles. I recited my

¹⁷ Through narrative inquiry, experience is studied through explorations of the personal/social, temporality, and place. The narrative inquirer's gaze shifts from (inward) personal feelings hopes and dispositions, to (outward) existential conditions, to temporality (backward and forward), and finally, to a consideration of place "which attends to the specific concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 51). These three dimensions constitute the metaphorical/conceptual space in which narrative research into lived experience operates.

¹⁸ "Stories to live by" is a phrase "given meaning by the narrative understanding of knowledge and context. Stories to live by are shaped by such matters as secret teachers' stories, sacred stories of schooling and teachers' cover stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999, p.4).

introduction speech to my imagined students in the mirror numerous times, and planned activities to get to know them. I had wondered how they would respond. I imagined myself in front of the class confidently telling stories about why I became a teacher, and how much I was looking forward to working with them. Looking back now I see that my excitement stemmed from the opportunity to work alongside students.

When I saw the classroom that I was assigned, I was astounded by how bare it was. This shock awakened me to the realization that teachers are responsible for organizing their classrooms. In this moment, my forward looking story of who I imagined myself becoming was interrupted. I was in a junior high school, and had just learned I would teach only two physical education classes; physical education was my major, and my passion. The school was small, somewhat dimly lit and the only windows resided in the outside doors; they let in little sunlight. My concerns went quickly from building relationships with students, to wondering about how I was going to organize, plan and teach nine different classes.

Shifting forward through those first days, I began to realize that many of my imagined stories, those stories that I had been telling myself of who I was and who I was going to be, did not match the stories that beginning teachers were expected to live. For beginning teachers, the dominant institutional narrative in which they find themselves as a character, is one of trying to keep their heads above water. Often experienced teachers, when telling of their first years of teaching, share horror stories with plot lines of long hours, paper work, and having to make it on their own. According to Renard (2003), if beginning teachers make it through their first year

they see it as a major accomplishment. Beginning teachers often start their careers in positions that no experienced teacher would desire. Patterson (2005) refers to this as hazing, a situation where the least experienced teachers are not privy to the same resources as the experienced. Renard (2003) describes the pecking order in schools, noting that experienced teachers see beginning teachers at the bottom of the food chain. One of my colleagues told me he didn't even try to remember a teacher's name until they had a full time contract.

I wonder how beginning teachers' forward looking stories, the ones beginning teachers imagine, shape their identities, their stories to live by, as they enter new landscapes? What happens when those forward looking stories and the school stories bump at the border lands?¹⁹

That night I did not sleep a wink, and the next morning I was up early and ready to go. I carefully put on dress shoes, but my heels still clicked on the floor with excitement. The first day was a professional development day. I showed up early to set up my room. As I walked out of my room I met a colleague who welcomed me and then kind of laughed. "Where are you from?", he asked. When I responded "Saskatchewan," he broke into extremely loud laughter. When another teacher walked in, I assumed the conversation would end. To my surprise, the laughing and the conversation continued. "What are you teaching?" I responded, "A little bit of everything, but I am most interested in

¹⁹ Borderlands are described as "those spaces that exist around borders where one lives with the possibility of multiple plot lines" (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 59). Borderlands, used metaphorically, may be both internal and external. Borderlands are places of tension or struggle.

teaching physical education, as that is my passion.” He laughed again, then became serious. While his words have faded, the message remains. The school had just let two good young teachers go, and he could not believe they hired me out of Saskatchewan. “There are,” he said angrily, “many good young teachers in Alberta who are taking part time jobs because nothing is available.” He walked away shaking his head.

I remember little else from this day except the sense of pressure to perform in order to prove I deserved this position. The excited sound of my shoes clicking on the floor was dampened. I began to wonder if the forward looking story I had envisioned was idealistic in the *real world* of beginning teachers. My stories of who I would be as a teacher in my first school were interrupted.

Had this experience happened in a place in which I was comfortable, perhaps it might have shaped my stories to live by differently. Had I known the individual’s stories I may have responded differently. However, as a newcomer to this landscape, I was not aware of the plot lines that threaded their way through the school story.

“Teachers on landscapes learn how to act and think in appropriate ways, ways that are sanctioned by others positioned in the conduit,” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 158). New teachers are not only new to teaching, but they are new to the school they are entering and lack an understanding of the school context (Heller, 2004). Beginning teachers know little about the stories that live in those contexts or landscapes. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) borrow Geertz’s metaphor of a parade to describe the constant movement and changes on school landscapes.

Their image of a parade was not of a tightly orchestrated, carefully staged or

showy parade but was more of a local small community parade—a parade in which everybody participates, entering or leaving at different places and times as the parade meanders in a spontaneous way across an expanse or field. (Clandinin, Downy, & Huber, 2009, p. 146)

Beginning teachers, like other newcomers, enter this parade as it is in progress. As they observe others in the parade, as they tentatively walk along, they begin to understand where they fit in.

I arrived at the school early, and left late. I did this partly because I had a lot to get done, and partly to ensure others knew I was working hard. It was a way to let staff know I was committed to the school. I asked few questions during the first few weeks. I entered the school hired from outside of district. If I had too many questions, I might be seen as inefficient or unknowing. In the classroom, I was so concerned about keeping up with curriculum, lesson plans, and assessment, I lost sight of what I felt was most important, relationships. Perhaps I was living a cover story²⁰. Inside the school walls and around colleagues I was upbeat and positive. Had I been wearing my golf shoes, they would have been clicking. However, the cover story blanketed the many questions I wanted to ask. I was overwhelmed with trying to live a story of teaching that was coherent with the forward looking story of the teacher I had imagined I would be.

²⁰ Cover stories enable teachers whose teacher stories are marginalized by whatever the current story of school is to continue to practice and to sustain their teacher stories. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p.25)

My early experiences seem congruent with the experiences of beginning teachers as they are portrayed in the literature. The fear of asking questions and allowing administrators and other teachers to see they don't know something is a major issue for new teachers (Weasmer & Woods, 2000). Kutcy and Schulz (2006) found beginning teachers were frustrated that they were unable to work with students in the ways they expected they would be able to. Barnes (1993) found pressures to conform to what other teachers were already doing caused frustration for beginning teachers (as cited in Kutcy & Shulz, 2006, p. 78). As I read the literature and thought about my own stories, I wondered what happens to beginning teachers' stories to live by, when their stories are covered over or silenced by the stories of the school? How does this silencing of one's stories shape their future stories to live by on professional landscapes?

As I wrote about my own experiences as a beginning teacher and laid them alongside the representations in related research literature, I noted similarities. In the next section of this paper, I use the stories of my experiences as a beginning teacher, as a way to narratively read the ways beginning teacher attrition has been conceptualized.

Conceptualizing Teacher Attrition

While there is discrepancy about the percentage of beginning teachers who leave teaching in their first five years (from 5% to 50%), "one very stable finding is that attrition is high for young teachers" (Guarino, Santabanez, & Daley, 2006, p. 10). High rates of early career teacher attrition create a significant economic strain on

the system (Hahs-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Macdonald, 1999; Smith, & Ingersoll, 2004). In the U.S.A. “over 2 billion dollars are spent each year replacing teachers that leave the profession” (Alliance, 2003, p. 2). While this amount is not all spent on early career teacher leavers, early leavers make up a significant number of teachers leaving the profession. (Guarino, Santabanez, & Daley, 2006).

There are two main ways that teacher attrition is conceptualized. One way to frame the problem situates the focus on the individual teacher, that is, the focus is on the person. The second framing is to look at the organizational context of beginning teachers, that is, with a focus on the context.

Individual Conceptualizations

Existing research on teacher attrition has generally focused on the individual characteristics of those who leave the profession (Ingersoll, 2001; Strunk & Robinson, 2006). One prominent individual conceptualization is based on individual burnout.

Burnout

The concept of burnout, used since the early '70s, has many different definitions (Gold, 1984). Maslach (1978, 1982), a leader in burnout research, defined professional burnout as a syndrome of bodily and mental exhaustion, in which the worker becomes negative towards those with whom they work, and develops a negative sense of self worth. A long list of factors that cause burnout for beginning teachers ranges from excessive paperwork, to lack of administrative

support, to role conflict, to unclear expectations (Anhorn, 2008; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005). Although research alludes to organizational factors that cause burnout, the label of burnt out frames beginning teachers in a particular, and frequently, negative way.

Perceiving beginning teachers as being burned out infers that they were unable to survive and suggests that the problem of teacher attrition is situated with the individual teacher; they could not hack it in the real world of teaching, and became exhausted; they should have swum, instead of sunk (Anhorn, 2008). Because burnout is framed as an individual internal response, it suggests that there is something wrong with the individual. Framing the problem of early career attrition in this way, suggests that we need to address the problem with better teacher education programs, through which we create individuals who are resilient, and will not succumb to the rigors involved with teaching. Given this framing, the high numbers of beginning teachers who are leaving suggests we are graduating teachers who cannot handle the pressures of the profession.

As I left the school on the first Friday, I felt exhausted. My eyes were sore, my head hurt, my body was sore from participating with the students in physical education, and I was grouchy from lack of sleep. As I drove home, curriculum guides in hand, I wondered how I would handle the demands of being a full-time teacher. I wondered how my imagined story could have been so far off. Assessment plans, literacy plans, management issues sidetracked me, and I was struggling to make connections with students. My shoes, once clicking, were

now dragging as I walked out of the school and began what seemed to be a long drive home.

Inquiring into this personal story, I realize I could have been perceived as a teacher who was becoming burnt-out. There were many days like the experience above. Juggling teaching and coaching took up all of my time. I was being stretched in different directions. I wanted inquiry-based assignments that engaged students, but it was less time consuming to give students already produced handouts. I began to feel like I was the teacher I had sworn I would never become. I felt like I was selling my students and myself short. My excitement for teaching was waning.

Teacher Demographics

Other conceptualizations of teacher attrition are also framed around individual teacher characteristics. Research suggests that age, gender and ethnic background are related to teacher attrition. As mentioned earlier, findings show that attrition rates are higher for younger less experienced teachers. (Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006). One explanation for this finding is that beginning teachers of today's generation do not look at teaching as a life long career (Peske, 2001); they view teaching as something to do *for now*. This suggests today's teachers' values have changed, just as today's students' values have changed. In their recent meta-analytic and narrative review, Borman and Dowling (2008) cite Kirby and Grissmer's (1991) theory related to human capital and suggest a link between the amount of capital invested in the profession and beginning teacher attrition. Beginning teachers have less capital invested in teaching and are more

likely to leave as they feel less personally invested in the profession. Similarly teachers in their first few years may be able to find other employment opportunities that pay as much, or more, than teaching. This may not be true for older, more experienced teachers.

Borman and Dowling (2008) found females have a higher attrition rate than males. Guarino et al (2006), found minority teachers are more likely to stay in the profession. The majority of beginning teachers leaving the profession are younger Caucasian females. This focus on the individual teacher's age, gender and ethnicity frames the problem as situated in the individual.

Quality Teachers

Framing the problem of attrition by looking at educational experiences and ability, is another framing in terms of individual teachers' characteristics. Guarino et al, (2006) literature review noted four studies that showed higher ability students chose not to go into education. Murnane and Olson (1990) found teachers with higher academic ability were also more likely to leave teaching careers early. Other researchers (Henke, Chen, & Geis, 2000) noted that it is the best and brightest new teachers who appear most likely to leave. There is particular concern about the impact on the teaching profession and on student performance given that "there is a growing consensus among researchers and educators that the single most important factor in determining student performance is the quality of his or her teachers" (Alliance, 2005 p. 1). Conceptualizing teacher attrition in this way again

puts the onus on individual's characteristics and does not take in to account the contextual circumstances that may be apparent.

Contextual Conceptualizations

Discourses of Support

Lack of support is often listed as a cause of beginning teacher attrition (Flores & Day, 2006; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 1999; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Whether it is a lack of administrative or staff support, an environment that promotes individuality seems to be a major concern when studying beginning teachers who leave the profession (Anhorn, 2008).

I began to second-guess taking this job. The pressure to perform continued and I continued to not ask questions. I did not want my new colleagues to see that I did not know what to put on my walls, or how to organize my desktop. I felt that if I wanted to survive, I was going to have to do it on my own.

While the above is an account of my context, similar school contexts promote individualism and competitiveness that lead to feelings of isolation (Anhorn, 2008; Flores & Day, 2006; Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005). Isolation is one of the main reasons teachers leave the profession (Heller, 2004). The dominant story of the teacher is that they are knowledgeable and knowing, however, "the condition of not knowing is common for beginning teachers" (Corcoran, 1981, p. 21). In my story, I tell of being hesitant to ask questions of my colleagues or of my administration in the early days. I wanted to portray myself as an expert, someone who was

competent, confident, and more than capable of handling *real teacher situations*. I wanted the staff and principal to notice my golf shoes clicking.

Even as I lived and told cover stories, I knew the principal was formally evaluating me and knew that informally the rest of the staff were making their own judgments. The isolation caused by the school context forms barriers between beginning teachers and colleagues.

Living With Students

Issues with student discipline are also seen as a cause of beginning teacher attrition (Gurino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 1999; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Kutcy and Shulz (2006) found students' attitudes towards learning were a major frustration for beginning teachers. Many beginning teachers aspire to make a difference in students' lives; however, the research suggests beginning teachers learn quickly that student discipline problems and student work ethics prevent them from doing so (Schlichte, Yssel, & Merbler, 2005). As a beginning teacher I expected to make connections with students. However, the mandated curriculum and the temporal and spatial structures of schooling allowed me little time to build relationships. The challenge of building relationships with students, while trying to *cover* curriculum and set acceptable expectations for student behavior, was not something I anticipated. My forward looking story was one in which I came to teach, to shape, to impact, and live alongside students. This story was written over by a story of teaching where I spent my time trying to manage students and cover curriculum. The interruption of my imagined story and the lived story created a

moral dilemma. This dilemma and other challenges lead me, like beginning teachers portrayed in the research literature, to experience job dissatisfaction.

Other Contextual Conceptualizations

Along with lack of support from administrators and student discipline problems, beginning teachers also leave teaching because they are not involved in school decisions and are paid low salaries (Gurino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2001).

During my first few days I attended many meetings that pertained to the year start up. I had little to contribute. However, I was excited when I got an email about an upcoming physical education meeting. I readied my unit plans for activities I thought we might implement, and activities I thought other PE teachers might be interested in. I had created a Tawkra unit, an Eastern sport that includes a bit of volleyball, and a bit of hacky sack, as well as an ultimate Frisbee unit. I took these two units to the meeting with a confidence I did not have in the other meetings. I waited for the perfect time to introduce my units. Near the end of the meeting the PE department head asked if there were other questions or concerns. I said I had two units I had taught in the past and that I did not see them on the yearly plan. I suggested the ultimate Frisbee unit might fit nicely in to the fitness unit planned for September. Before I finished my final sentence, another colleague stopped me. "It's your first year here. Don't worry about re-inventing the wheel. You need to keep your head above the water and try to survive."

Narratively inquiring into this story, I look temporally and inwardly to attend to the excitement and confidence I carried with me into the meeting. It was a meeting that I finally felt I could contribute. The other meetings consisted of people talking about things and issues I knew little about. When the comment was made that “I needed to worry about surviving” something clicked internally. It was at this point that I realized my opinion was not valued. I was storied as a “not knower”²¹ on this landscape. The knowledge I embodied was not seen as important to these more experienced teachers. I wanted to be a part of the school, and a part of the decision making process, especially in the areas that I was passionate about. Beginning teachers who feel as if they do not have control over their own classroom or school decisions tend to be more frustrated with their teaching positions (Ingersoll, 2001). Once again I entered a situation with my golf shoes clicking, and left with them dragging along the floor.

Salary is also often talked about when discussing beginning teacher attrition. Gurino, Santibanez, & Daley (2006), noted that from their review of recent empirical literature, they found that higher salaries were indeed a deterrent to teachers leaving the profession. Having said that, there are also studies that indicate the salary increases needed to actually decrease beginning teacher attrition, is not a viable solution (Imazeki, 2005).

In laying my stories alongside beginning teacher attrition literature, it becomes apparent that my experiences may be categorized into the current

²¹ Being storied as a not knower was first coined in: Belenky, M., Tarule, J., and Goldberger, N. (1986). *Women's Ways of Knowing*. New York: Basic Books.

conceptualizations. However, in this categorization my individual story becomes de-contextualized, and my lived experiences are not deeply explored. The lack of my story fitting has led to me to wonder about other ways to frame beginning teacher attrition.

Bumping Stories: From Shifting Roles to Shifting Identities

In this portion of the paper I begin to ponder framing beginning teacher attrition as a problem in identity making and identity shifting. In shifting my focus of beginning teacher attrition to a question of narrative conceptions of identity, I begin to see beginning teacher attrition from a different vantage point. Flores and Day (2006) begin to explore how this shift in role may shape beginning teachers identities, and bring us closer to framing teacher attrition as a query that involves identity making and shifting.

My beginning story denotes the surprise and shock of my first few days of school. As a beginning teacher I entered the school landscape living stories that were filled with expectations of how things would be. Many studies emphasize the shock that comes from going from the role of student to the role of teacher (Flores & Day, 2006). Lortie's theory of *apprenticeship of observation* notes the number of hours students spend being socialized as students (1975), and how this falsely shapes their perceptions of what it is to be a teacher. A common task of teacher educators is preparing beginning teachers to negotiate the role shift from student to teacher. The work we do in teacher education sets beginning teachers up to expect they will be positioned differently, that is as teacher rather than student. However,

this role shift is only part of what is at work when beginning teachers begin to negotiate their new landscape.

Beginning teachers begin teaching with preconceived ideas of who they might be as a teacher. These preconceived notions include how they might live out staff relationships, relationships with students, relationships with subject matter and relationships with parents. As noted earlier, Schlichte, Yssel, and Merbler (2005) believe that when the realities of teaching become apparent to beginning teachers the conflict of their ideal stories with their lived stories may result in them becoming isolated and frustrated.

Flores and Day's study on beginning teachers' experiences and identity showed that their participants began to live a story of 'strategic compliance' (2006, p. 229). What Flores and Day describe as a story of strategic compliance is a kind of cover story that allows beginning teachers to conform to what is being done on their school landscapes; this compliance or cover story enables them to fit in, and to live alongside others on the school landscape, without creating social tension. Although this cover story or strategic compliance may help avoid social tension, the dilemma or internal tension that is created by living out this conflicted story is more than a shifting or shaping of role but is a shaping of the individual's identity, his/her stories to live by.

Flores and Day also found that this compliance was not only to instruction, but also to the attitudes and values of being a teacher. They found that when beginning teachers entered the new landscape they were excited and enthusiastic, their metaphoric golf shoes were clicking. However, they soon began to live their

cover stories of strategic compliance; they became socialized by the dominant school story. As this happened a *sense of giving up* became apparent in the beginning teachers' stories (p. 229) and their shoes began to drag. I wonder how this conflict of stories shapes beginning teachers stories to live by. I wonder how they negotiate these experiences and how this shapes their forward looking stories of teaching.

Attending to Shifting Stories to Live By

Identity means different things to different people. In this paper, I adopted a narrative understanding of identity and follow Clandinin and Connelly's work on teacher identity as stories to live by. For Clandinin and Connelly, stories to live by is a phrase that brings together teacher knowledge and teacher context. For them teacher knowledge is "personal practical knowledge, knowledge, which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person's being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of a person's experiential history, both professional and personal" (Clandinin, 1985, p. 362). They conceptualize school context in terms of a professional knowledge landscape. The professional knowledge landscape is composed of relationships among people, places and things, and is both a moral and intellectual landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). Therefore, the phrase "stories to live by" is "given meaning by the narrative understanding of knowledge and context. Stories to live by are shaped by such matters as secret teacher stories, sacred stories of schooling and teachers' cover stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999, p. 4). When we inquire into our past, present and future experiences with a

narrative lens we are able to begin to understand how our stories to live by have come to be.

A narrative way of thinking about teacher identity speaks to the connection between a teacher's personal practical knowledge, and the landscapes, past and present, where teachers live and work (Clandinin, Downy, & Huber, 2009). "From a teacher's vantage point, knowledge is entwined with identity, stories to live by" (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009, p. 2). From this we may understand that teachers' stories to live by are continually shaped by their knowledge, as well as the stories of the professional landscapes that they live and work on. Thus, each individual's story to live by is different, and shaped differently by the landscapes they are privy to. "Important to this way of thinking is an understanding of the multiplicity of each of our lives-lives composed around multiple plot lines" (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009, p. 2).

Earlier I wondered about my own forward looking stories. As I think about the complexities of teaching I begin to wonder if other beginning teachers are able to step back and re-imagine a shifted forward looking story of who they might become as teachers, that is, new stories to live by. I wonder how they negotiate the disconnected stories and interruptions within the midst of their shifting identities. Reading the literature through a narrative lens allows me to become awake to the importance of lived experience, and justifies inquiring into beginning teacher attrition from a different vantage point.

When I noted the bumping of stories during my first year, I began to shape my cover story to one that fit in with the school story, a story of strategic

compliance. It is often said that it is easier to do what has been done before. For me, as a beginning teacher, this was only partly true. Outwardly, it was easier to teach the textbook, use handouts and diligently work through the curriculum. However, inwardly, it was much more challenging for me to teach in this way. In abandoning my stories to live by, I had to also abandon the thing that brought me to the profession; the students.

Through my experiences as a teacher, and my autobiographical narrative inquiry work for this paper, I have begun to frame beginning teacher attrition as a problem that compels inquiry into teacher identity making and identity shifting as a way to narratively understand the experiences of beginning teachers. In thinking in this way, I wonder how the bumping of stories, the school stories and the beginning teachers' stories to live by, may shape their identities. How do beginning teachers negotiate their identities in the foreign professional landscapes that they enter in to? Have those that left the profession early had their stories to live by shaped in ways that enabled them to leave the profession? Have those that stayed in the profession been able to sustain their stories to live by in a way that has allowed them to continue to teach?

Framing beginning teacher attrition in this way, represents how important the lived experiences of each individual are and how important the stories are that bring beginning teachers to the profession. Recognizing "teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1988, p. 25), allows their stories of their own experiences to become important in understanding the bumping of plot lines. It is within the weaving, paralleling, and bumping of these school and personal

plot lines that messiness becomes apparent. As individual beginning teachers we carry with us stories of how things should be, may be, and could be. Our personal practical knowledge situates us within a story to live by that is continually shifting, shaping and being negotiated.

As I read the literature through a narrative inquiry lens, and autobiographically inquired into my own lived experiences as a beginning teacher, I noticed that my stories could be squeezed into the common conceptualization. Unfortunately, our stories are rough around the edges, and do not fit neatly in to specific categories. By sanding the edges off of my stories to squeeze them in, they became de-contextualized and the stories that brought me to teaching were sanded away, as were the stories of my teacher education program. By squeezing my stories into “lack of support” the stories of the amazing teachers that were always by my side were sanded away. In squeezing my stories into “overwhelmed, burned out” the stories of leaving the school feeling lucky to be a teacher were lost.

Framing future research into teacher attrition as a problem of identity shifting and shaping, may allow me to begin to see teachers’ stories in a different way. In a way that honors their personal lived experiences and allows their stories to stay rough around the edges.

It had been a long day. I had already observed seven student teachers in three different schools and provided written feedback to each of them. I was observing my last student teacher in the last period of the day, when the mentor teacher rolled his chair over to mine and with a large smile noted, “You know it’s invigorating to have a student teacher, I love watching them work

through their anxiety, succeed, interact with students, and learn new things. The best part is how excited they are about becoming a teacher. I think when they leave, I am revived, and so much more appreciative of how important my job is as a teacher.”

In hearing the mentor’s comment, I began to smile. I thought of the student teachers I was working with, and the thorough three page lesson plans they prepared. I thought of their patience when dealing with students who are deliberately trying to push their buttons. I thought of the student teacher who entered the cohort meeting pumping her fists in celebration, because her lesson ended right as the bell rung. I thought of the small victories each of them had already experienced on their journeys.

Throughout these thoughts I heard the echo of my clicking golf shoes and remembered the excitement I carried with me on my first day of teaching. As I made my way out of the school that day, I thought back to the mentor being revived by his student teacher, and wondered how, as a profession, we may embrace this excitement and newness and return the favor by somehow allowing beginning teachers to succeed in the profession.

Chapter 2 References

- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2005, August). Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the nation and to the states. (Issue Brief). Washington, DC: Author.
- Anhorn, R. (2008). The profession that eats its young. *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 74(3), 15-26.
- Borman, D. G., & Dowling, M. N. (2008). Teacher Attrition and Retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(3), 367-410.
- Belenky, M., Tarule, J., & Goldberger, N. (1986). *Women's Ways of Knowing*. New York: Basic Books.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F.M. (2000). Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly M. (1996). Teachers' professional knowledge landscapes: Teacher stories. Stories of teachers. School stories. Stories of School, 25(3), 24-30.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly M. (1995). Narrative Inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27(1), 44-54.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly M. (1988). Studying teachers' knowledge of classrooms: collaborative research, ethics, and the negotiation of narrative. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Clandinin D. J. (1985). Personal practical knowledge: A study of teachers' classroom images. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 15(4), 361-85.

- Clandinin, D. J., Downey, D.A., & Huber, J. (2009). Attending to changing landscapes: Shaping the interwoven identities of teachers and teacher educators. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(2), 141-154.
- Clandinin, D.J., Pushor, D., & Orr, A., (2007). Navigating sites for narrative inquiry. *Journal of Teacher Education, 58*(1), 21-35.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1999). *Shaping A Professional Identity: Stories of Educational Experience*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Corcoran, E. (1981). Transition shock: The beginning teacher's paradox. *Journal of Teacher Education, 32*, 19-23.
- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22*(2), 219-232.
- Gold, Y. (1984). Burnout: A major problem for the teaching profession. *Education, 104*(3), 271-275.
- Guarino, M. G., Santibanez, L., & Daley, A. G. (2006). Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(2), 173-208.
- Hahs-Vaughn, D. L., & Scherff, L. (2008). Beginning English teacher attrition, mobility, retention. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 77*(1), 21-53.
- Heller, D. A. (2004). *Teachers wanted: Attracting and retaining good teachers*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Henke, R. R., Chen, X., & Geis, S. (2000). Progress through the teacher pipeline: 1992-93 College graduates and elementary/secondary school teaching as of 1997. Washington DC: National Centre for Educational Statistics.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (1999). The problem of under qualified teachers in American secondary schools. *Educational Researcher*, 28, 26-37.
- Imazeki, J. (2005). Teacher salaries and teacher attrition. *Economics of Education Review*, 24, 431-449.
- Kutcy, B. C., & Shulz, R. (2006). Why are beginning teachers frustrated with the teaching profession? *McGill Journal of Education*, 41(1), 77-89.
- Maslach, C. (1978). Job burnout: How people cope. *Public Welfare*, 36, 56-58.
- Maslach, C. (1982). *Burnout. The cost of caring*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- McDonald, D. (1999). Teacher attrition: A review of literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 15(8), 835-848.
- Murnane, R. J., & Olsen, R. J. (1990). The effects of salaries and opportunity costs on duration in teaching: evidence from Michigan: *Review of economics and statistics*, 71, 347-352.
- Murnane, R., Singer, J., Willett, J., Kemple, J., & Olsen, R. (Eds.) (1991). *Who Will Teach? Policies and Matter*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Nelson, H. L. (2001). *Damaged Identities: Narrative Repair*. New York: Cornell University.
- Patterson, M. (2005). Hazed! *Educational Leadership*, 62(8), 20-23.

- Peske, G. H., Liu, E., Johnson, S. M., Kauffman, D., & Kardos, S. M. (2001). The next generation of teachers: Changing conceptions of a career in teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, *83*(4), 305-307.
- Renard, L. (2003). Setting new teachers up for failure...or success. *Educational Leadership*, *60*(8), 62-64.
- Schlichte, J., Yssel, N., & Merbler, J. (2005). Pathways to burnout: Case Studies in teacher isolation and alienation. *Preventing School Failure*, *50*(1), 35-41.
- Shamer, A. L., & Jackson, J. M. (1996). Coping with stress: common sense about teacher burnout. *Education Canada*, *36*(2), 28-31.
- Smith, M. T., & Ingersoll M. R. (2004). What are the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turnover? *American Educational Research Journal*, *41*(3), 681-714.
- Strunk, O, K., & Robinson, J, P. (2006). Oh, wont you stay? A multilevel analysis of the difficulties in retaining qualified teachers. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *81*(4), 65-94.
- Weasmer, J., & Woods, A. M. (2000). Preventing baptism by fire: Fostering growth in new teachers. *The Clearing House*, *73*(3), 171-173.

Chapter 3

Stories of Sustaining: Two Beginning Physical Education Teachers

When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look where I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about the nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries. (Peshkin, 1985, p. 280)

As I completed my autobiographical narrative inquiry²² I began to awaken to the importance of attentiveness to beginning teachers' stories to live by (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999), their identities, who they are and are becoming as teachers. I wondered if beginning teachers' imagined stories of who they were and who they were becoming as teachers would shape whether or not they stayed in the profession. Would they become leavers, stayers, movers or shifters in teaching? (Freedman & Appleman, 2009). Although teacher education programs may help to shape beginning teachers' stories to live by, it seems that, as Lawson (1983) and Lortie (1975) have alluded to, we begin to think about becoming teachers long before we begin to teach. We live on school landscapes for much of our young lives and are shaped by the individuals teaching in them, as well as the school landscapes we have lived upon.

In order to explore this attentiveness to beginning teachers' stories, I adopted Clandinin and Connelly's conceptual framework (1995, 1999) using a

²² Schaefer, L. (Under Review). Beginning Teacher Attrition: A Question of Identity Making and Identity Shifting. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*.

narrative understanding of identity²³ as ‘stories to live by’. Stories to live by is a phrase that brings together teacher knowledge and teacher context. Teacher knowledge is understood as “personal practical knowledge, knowledge, which is imbued with all the experiences that make up a person’s being. Its meaning is derived from, and understood in terms of a person’s experiential history, both professional and personal” (Clandinin, 1985, p. 362). Clandinin and Connelly (1995) conceptualize school context in terms of a professional knowledge landscape. The professional knowledge landscape is composed of relationships among people, places and things, and is both a moral and intellectual landscape . Therefore, the phrase, stories to live by, is “given meaning by the narrative understanding of knowledge and context” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999, p. 4).

Following from this conceptualization, I understand that individual’s enter physical education teacher education programs (PETE) embodying stories to live by and, as part of their stories to live by, embodying forward looking stories of his/her imagined identity as a teacher. This makes studying beginning physical education teachers’ experiences, both those experiences that brought them to teaching physical education and those that may help beginning physical education teachers to stay in the profession, a very complex phenomenon.

As each beginning physical education teacher comes to their respective PETE program with diverse stories to live by, they also enter a diverse PETE program that may socialize different individuals in different ways. PETE programs across Canada,

²³ It should be noted that this is only one way to conceptualize identity. There are other conceptualizations (Gee, 2000)

the United States and Australia are varied in both curriculum and practicum. Belcher (2008) believes that PETE programs are themselves in the midst of an identity crisis. Hellison and Templin (1991) speak to the dissonance that is apparent amongst United States PETE programs. Melnychuk et al.'s (2010) recent study speaks to the multiplicity of different programs offered across Canada that vary in curricula, structure, field experience length, philosophy and organization. The individuals that teach these programs also have diverse professional backgrounds and different experiences with physical education (Melnychuk, et al., 2010). Inquiring into the literature shows that "there is little agreement on what constitutes a good physical education program" (Hellison & Templin, 1991, p. 5).

Melnychuk, et al., (2010) also speak to the movement of PETE programs in Canada from a central role to a marginalized role. This movement away from central positions in universities seems to resonate with MacDonald's (1995) argument of the proletarianization of PETE programs across Australia. This marginalization speaks to the fragmentation of PETE programs and may also speak to the ineffectiveness of school level programs being offered to children (Sidentop & Locke, 1997).

While there is dissonance internationally as to the identity of PETE programs, there also seems to be a consensus that PETE programs need to shift to accommodate a new generation of teachers and students (Belcher, 2008; Melnychuk et al., 2010; Sidentop & Locke 1997, Tinning 2004). The PETE literature base is broad and I briefly delve into it at this point as more of a disclaimer to denote the different experiences that beginning physical education teachers may encounter as

they enter their respective PETE programs. Other broad areas of physical education literature became apparent as I inquired into attrition and retention.

Physical education teacher burnout literature, although not linked directly to teacher attrition, may be helpful when thinking about why teachers leave. Burnout literature has focused on contextual, environmental and workplace factors that may contribute to beginning physical education teacher burnout (Fejgi, Ephraty, & Ben-Sira, 1995). Included in the burnout literature, but more focused on a combination of individual and contextual conceptualizations, is work in the area of teacher and coach role conflicts. Earls (1981) found that balancing coaching and teaching duties led experienced physical education teachers to become burned out. Research has shown that the extra curriculum commitment of coaching is seen as something that is expected by physical educators, and that this added role encompasses many extra hours of work (Konukman et al., 2010). Millslagle and Morley (2004) worked from past conceptualizations based on role retreatism, and found in their study that physical educators that coach and teach were conflicted between the roles, and often considered their coaching role to be more important. Although this literature in the area of burnout and teacher/coach role conflict does not pertain explicitly to teacher attrition, it is important to keep in mind when looking at beginning physical education teacher attrition and retention.

In studying beginning physical education teachers, and beginning teachers in general, it is important to be aware of the different experiences that each teacher may have had. Each beginning teachers' stories to live by, including their forward looking stories, are much more than a result of their experiences in teacher

education. Stories of what has brought them to this place, that is, to their experiences as beginning physical education teachers are unique. Through attending to their stories to live by, I hope I can add insight into what may help to keep them in the profession.

Little research has been undertaken specifically on beginning teacher attrition and retention in the area of physical education teachers. MacDonald (1999) completed a literature review on teacher attrition. In her review she noted that, along with other marginalized subject areas including drama and music, physical education teachers have a higher attrition rate. There was very little other research in the specific area of beginning physical education teacher attrition and retention (Hardy, 1999; MacDonald, 1995, 1999).

Due to the lack of literature covering the specific area of beginning physical education teacher attrition and retention, I broadened the scope of the literature review. In part, I broadened the scope because of the lack of literature, but I also questioned whether the experiences of beginning teachers were strongly differentiated by their subject matter areas. In this study I was working with two beginning physical education teachers, their stories might resonate with a variety of beginning teachers, not just physical educators.

Research into the phenomena of sustaining beginning teachers is interwoven with research into the phenomena of attrition and retention. Kitching, Morgan, and O'Leary (2009) discuss this interconnectedness and note that "knowing why teachers quit may signpost us to the reasons why others remain" (p. 44). To explore

teacher attrition we must look at retention and when exploring what sustains teachers we need to explore both attrition and retention.

There are two main ways that teacher attrition has been conceptualized (Ingersoll, 1999): one way to frame the problem of attrition situates the focus on the individual teacher, that is, the focus is on the person. A few examples of this individual conceptualization are seeing attrition in terms of age, gender, ethnicity quality and educational background. The second framing is to look at the organizational context in which beginning teachers work, that is, with a focus on the context. A few examples of this contextual framing are support, resources, collegiality, and classroom management.²⁴

While there is discrepancy about the percentage of beginning teachers who leave teaching in their first five years (from 5% to 50%), “one very stable finding is that attrition is high for young teachers” (Guarino, Santabanez, & Daley, 2006, p. 10). High rates of early career teacher attrition create a significant economic strain on the system (Haha-Vaughn & Scherff, 2008; Macdonald, 1999; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). In the U.S.A. over 2 billion dollars are spent each year replacing teachers that leave the profession (Aliance, 2003, p. 2).

²⁴ For further information see: Schaefer, L. (Under Review). Beginning Teacher Attrition: A Question of Identity Making and Identity Shifting. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*.

The work in teacher attrition thus far has clearly pointed out the trends and tendencies of beginning teacher attrition. However, by sanding²⁵ beginning teachers' stories to fit in to the current trends and tendencies something is lost. By attending to beginning teachers' stories to live by, I can see beginning teachers as more than trends and tendencies. I can see them as more than graduates from a particular program and more than just beginning teachers. Greene (1995) helps me to think about being attentive in this way. She writes of seeing things big and seeing things small and notes,

To see things or people small, one chooses to see from a detached point of view, to watch behaviors from the perspective of a system, to be concerned with trends and tendencies rather than the intentionality and concreteness of everyday life. To see things or people big, one must resist viewing other human beings as mere objects or chess pieces and view them in their integrity and particularity instead. One must see from the point of view of the participant in the midst of what is happening (p. 35)

Throughout this manuscript, I show the results of a narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) into the experiences of two beginning physical education teachers; an inquiry that enabled insight into these two young individuals' lives as teachers and as people. It is a study that allows me to see big in regards to Greene's terms.

²⁵ When I use the metaphor of "sanding the stories to fit into the boxes, I am referring to narrow framings of teacher attrition and retention that do not take lived experience into account.

Methodology

The conceptual framework of narrative inquiry builds upon John Dewey's view of experience. "Dewey held that one criterion of experience is continuity, namely, the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences and experiences lead to further experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 3). Dewey's second criterion of experience, which builds upon continuity, is interaction, that is, past experiences interacting with present experiences to create future experiences (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Through narrative inquiry, experience is studied through explorations of the personal/social, temporality, and place. These dimensions connect, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) show, to Dewey's criteria of continuity (temporality), interaction (sociality) and situation (place). The narrative inquirer's gaze shifts from the personal (inward), that is, feelings, hopes and dispositions, to the social (outward) existential conditions as it is simultaneously attends to temporality (backward and forward), and to place, that is, "to the specific concrete physical and topological boundaries of inquiry landscapes" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 51). These three dimensions constitute the metaphorical/conceptual space of narrative inquiry.

Participants

I selected two participants for the study based on the criteria that they were beginning physical education teachers. Both participants, Kate and Shane, graduated from the same physical education teacher education program and received

combined degrees in physical education and education. Both teachers were in their first year of full time teaching when they participated in the study. Shane taught in a Grade 1-12 school although he only taught grades 7 to 12. Kate taught in a high school, teaching grades from 10-12. As well as teaching physical education, they both taught other subject areas.

As both Kate and Shane are first year teachers they were, at the time of this study, participating in their district induction program. The program is a district wide initiative that allows beginning teachers to be mentored outside of their schools along with other beginning teachers. An intermediary that works with the teacher induction program initially contacted beginning physical education teachers to see if they would be interested in the study. Shane and Kate were the first two participants to email me back and after reading through my letter of intent, they agreed to be involved in the study.

Data collection

I met with Shane and Kate four times each. The first three meetings were one on one conversations, and the final meeting was a conversation between both participants and myself. Each of the conversations ranged between one and two hours, and were digitally recorded and transcribed. Although I did not use pre-specified interview questions, the following topics were covered throughout the conversations: 1) Experiences that brought them to teaching 2) Experiences in their first year of teaching 3) Experiences they thought might sustain them as beginning teachers 4) Experiences with the research process. Although these were the pre-

determined topics for different conversations, the same topics seemed to thread throughout each conversation.

The three-dimensional narrative inquiry space also guided my analysis of the field texts (data). I inquired into the temporal, personal-social, and place of each individual's stories of experience. Working within the three dimensional space, I composed narrative accounts for each participant. Each narrative account attended to their experiences across time, place and events. Draft narrative accounts (interim research texts) were then shared with each individual and negotiated with them in order to be attentive to participants as co-composers of their stories as represented in the texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

My interest in the stories of experience that brought Kate and Shane to the profession increased as the inquiry unfolded. The stories that Kate and Shane considered to be sustaining experiences, linked closely to their imagined stories of who they thought they would be as teachers. Although each student graduated from the same physical education teacher program, and were engaged in their first year of teaching, their stories of sustaining seem to be as different as the stories that brought them to teaching.

As I listened to Kate's and Shane's stories of experience, it was clear that I could fit their stories into the individual and contextual framings (Ingersoll, 1999) that are most common throughout the literature. In what follows, I fit transcript fragments into a fictionalized survey tool, which was created from current conceptualizations of beginning teacher attrition in the literature. I do present this analysis to show how neatly Kate's and Shane's stories, when sanded, fit into the

current conceptualizations of beginning teacher attrition. In the latter half of the paper I problematize this process and show that in sanding beginning teachers' stories to fit into the conceptualizations, the stories to live by of each individual teacher are lost.

The Sanding of Stories

Sanding Kate's Stories

Beginning Physical Education Teacher Survey
<p>Participant Information:</p> <p>Gender: Female Age: 22</p> <p>Type of school (i.e. elementary, high school): high school</p> <p>Current year of teaching: 1</p> <p>Current classes you are teaching (please include grade level): Physical education 10, 20, Sports Performance 10</p> <p>Education: Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of physical Education</p> <p>Approximate number of students at your school: 2400</p>

Please answer questions according to Likert scale: Bold the number that you feel is most appropriate.

1-very low 2- low 3- average 4- high 5- very high

Below each question there is an area for you to add comments if you choose.

1) How would you rate the support you have been given throughout your first year of teaching?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

"I was assigned a mentor teacher from the school, and we have had one meeting, and that was it." (Kate, Con 1, p13)

" I am like I don't know if I am doing the right thing, and no one is telling me I am doing a good job, and sometimes that is all I want to hear" (Kate, Con 1, p 23)

2) Please rate your average level of frustration you have had over your first year of teaching.

1 2 3 **4** 5

Comments:

"In September and October I was like I cannot do this, cause that was when I did not know anything...September and October I was awful, I was so mean to everyone I was stressed out and not finding a balance, I could not do it, I was like screw this I don't know what I am going to do with my life, but it is not this. I am not having any fun at all" (Kate, Con 1, p 32).

3) On the Likert scale rate the level of frustration physical education has caused you throughout your first year

1 2 3 **4** 5

Comments:

"I did not realize it is such a take home job, but with PE it is not marking it is almost emotional, especially with girls there are so many things going on, and your stressed cause you don't know how to fix it" (Kate, Con 1, p 22).

<p>4) Rate the level of frustration that came from feeling like you were teaching in a marginalized subject area</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>“oh you teach PE...you just play” (Kate, Con 3, p 5).</p> <p>“It sounds better than oh I am a student but it does not have the credibility of oh I teach LA, cause people are like you don’t have any marking. That must be so easy no prep work” (Kate, Con 3, p 6).</p>
<p>5) Rate the level of classroom management and discipline issues that you have had throughout your first year.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>“It is baffling and sometimes it literally upsets me the amount of excuses I have in a day as to why they can not participate, or just the refusal. They will take a 0 and be fine, and I am like how do you just take a 0” (Kate, Con 3, p7).</p> <p>“you ask what is up, are you not feeling good, are you having a bad day. I hate PE, well why, I just hate it” (Kate, Con 3, p 8).</p>

Sanding Shane’s Stories

Beginning Physical Education Teacher Survey
<p>Participant Information:</p> <p>Gender: Male Age: 27 Type of school (i.e. elementary, high school): Junior high school</p> <p>Current year of teaching: 1</p>

<p>Current classes you are teaching (please include grade level): Physical education 7,8,9, Science 7,8,9.</p> <p>Education: Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of physical Education</p> <p>Approximate number of students at your school: 500</p>
<p>Please answer questions according to below Likert scale: Bold the number that you feel is most appropriate.</p> <p>1-very low 2- low 3- average 4- high 5- very high</p> <p>Below each question there is an area for you to add comments if you choose.</p>
<p>1) How would you rate the support you have been given throughout your first year of teaching?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>“She did (come in to observe) it was in the context of my evaluation, formal evaluation, so it was you’ve already done bad, and I am just letting you know right now, it is not like let’s sit down and make this better” (Shane, Con 2, p24)</p>
<p>2) Please rate your average level of frustration you have had over your first year of teaching</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Comments:</p> <p>That first six weeks, you know you’re in the classroom sweating and tired and stressed out, and, you know, you’re thinking, ‘ what am I doing here?’ (Shane, Con1, p12).</p>
<p>3) On the likert scale rate the level of frustration physical education has caused you throughout your first year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5</p> <p>Comments:</p>

"I don't know if it's just that it seems to be the PE thing right, if there is coaching to be done it falls on the PE guy. (Shane, Con 1, p 15).

4) Rate the level of frustration that came from feeling like you were teaching in a marginalized subject area

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

"Everyone just thinks we don't do any planning or marking, all of these things that our status as a teacher is lower. We are there to be coaches and we also teach PE on the side" (Shane, Con 2, p 19).

"I guess even at our school before this principal was there, I was talking to social teachers when they had to teach PE... they were just thrown in there cause they needed someone to do it; and they figure anybody can do it" (Shane, Con 2, p 20).

5) Rate the level of classroom management and discipline issues that you have had throughout your first year.

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

"I feel bad, it sucks the kids are bored, and again it comes back to the classroom management, maybe if I was able to plan more engaging lessons they would be less inclined to mess around" (Shane, Con 2, p 12).

"I've got behavior problems and you try to solve them resorting back to just disciplinarian style, you are losing relationships, at the end of the day it is like what was I doing here all day. (Shane, Con 2, p 12)

Disrupting the Sanding of Stories

By analyzing the field texts in this way it is apparent that Kate's and Shane's stories fit neatly into the current conceptualizations around beginning physical education teacher attrition and retention. This method of analysis is effective in that it shows commonalities among the participants. It illustrates the trends, tendencies and patterns that become available through seeing small (Greene, 1995). However, in reducing the stories to fit into the boxes and seeing small, Shane's and Kate's individual lived experiences are lost; their stories become reduced to common trends, when they are surely not. They were working on contextually different professional landscapes shaped by different plot lines, and different characters. They had grown up differently, in different places, with different parents, different families and different values. They came to teaching living out different stories and had personally unique imagined stories of what teaching might be like. These differences became important as I inquired into Kate's and Shane's stories.

Imagined Stories to Live By: Bridging the Gap

All my writing is about the recognition that there is no single reality. But the beauty of it is that you nevertheless go on, walking towards utopia, which may not exist, on a bridge which might end before you reach the other side (Young, n.d.).

As I read Young's words I could not help but think of this bridge as the space that beginning teachers are in/on as they try to live out their imagined stories of being teachers on their school landscapes. I wonder how this search for utopia, that

may be their imagined stories, shapes beginning teachers' stories to live by on their professional and personal landscapes. I also wonder if, when they leave, they realize, as Young states, that the bridge may not reach the other side.

Flores (2006) helps me to think about the complicated process that beginning teachers go through as they try to negotiate their stories to live by, as they enter their new professional landscapes. She notes that identity shifting is “a process that involves complex interplay between different, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives, beliefs, and practices that are accompanied by the development of a new identity” (p. 2021).

Estola (2003) also helps me to think about the complexities of beginning teachers' shifting stories to live by. She emphasizes that “teachers cannot separate their personal identities from their professional ones” (p. 181). Konukomon et al (2010) elude to this shifting of identity as they looked at the conflicts that become apparent as physical educators try to negotiate their role between teacher and coach. Day and Flores (2006) speak of this process as beginning teachers struggle with negotiating their personal vision of who they want to be within the structures of the school culture. Shane's and Kate's stories show the struggles they experienced as they tried to negotiate their personal and professional landscapes while hanging onto the imagined stories of who they wanted to be as teachers. Their stories of who they were going to be bumped at the borders with who they were expected to be as beginning physical education teachers (Clandinin, Huber, Huber, Murphy, Orr, Pearce, & Steeves, 2006).

This bumping encouraged both Kate and Shane to shift their stories to live by, to try different bridges, and to try crossing them in different ways to reach their imagined stories. The shifts they made in living on both their professional and personal landscapes seemed to enable them to have moments of feeling sustained. The shifting of who they were on their professional and personal landscapes was so intertwined that it was difficult to discern which experiences initiated this shift. However, it was within these shifts that Shane and Kate seemed to catch glimpses of the imagined teacher image, with which they entered the profession. It was within these glimpses that Kate and Shane seemed to find moments that allowed them to continue to cross that metaphoric bridge.

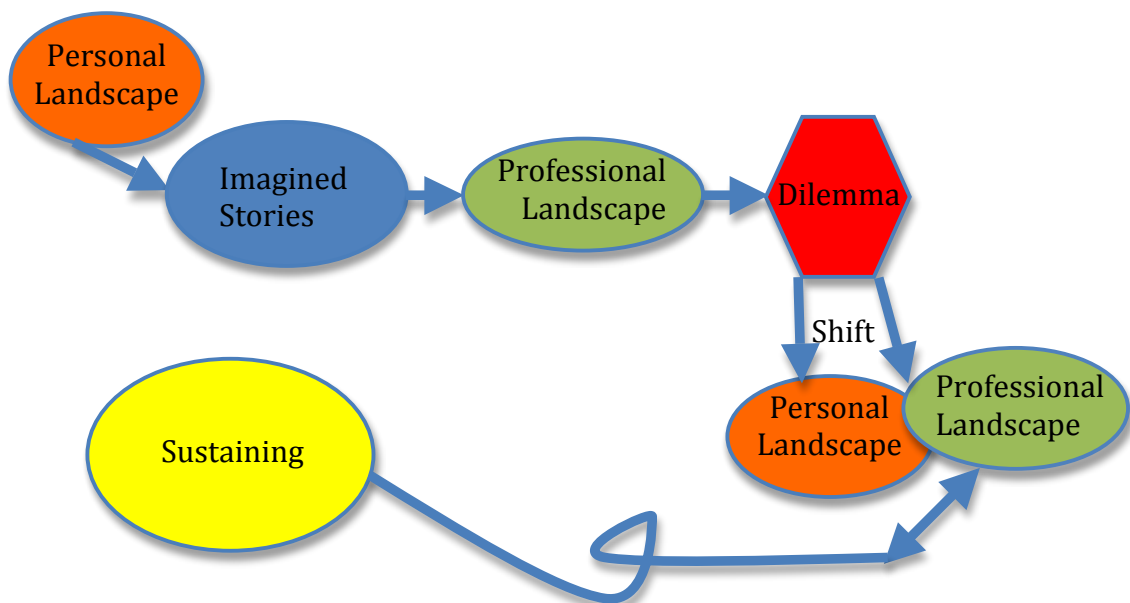


Fig 1.1

Figure 1.1. visually illustrates the ongoing process of identity shifting that was apparent in Kate's and Shane's experiences as beginning teachers. The visual is

in no way a conceptual framework, and I am not saying that Kate's and Shane's stories fit neatly into these circles. The circles are blurred to show that the borders of this process are temporally fluid, complex, and ever changing. The line between the personal and professional landscapes and sustaining moments is not straight to show the complexity of this process. Both Kate and Shane entered the profession with stories to live by, and imagined stories of who they were going to be as teachers. As they began their careers on their new professional landscapes there was a bumping between their imagined stories and the stories they felt they had to live out. This bumping caused both Kate and Shane to make shifts on their professional and personal landscapes. It was within these shifts that they seemed to catch glimpses of their imagined stories, which in turn, seemed to create sustaining moments for them.

Researchers (Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005; Estola, 2003; Flores, 2006; Flores & Day, 2006) have discussed the complexities that become apparent as beginning teachers try to negotiate their identities on their personal and professional landscapes. These authors have facilitated my thinking about the ongoing negotiation of each beginning teacher's stories to live by. However, these authors have not linked the complexities of this negotiation directly to beginning teacher attrition and retention. Sherff (2007) studied beginning teacher identity negotiation as it pertained to teacher attrition and sustainability, however, she did not inquire into the stories that brought the beginning teachers to the professional landscape.

In the remainder of the paper, I narratively inquire into the stories of experience that both Kate and Shane shared, and show that becoming attentive to

beginning teachers' stories to live by and how they shift and change on the professional and personal landscapes, may help us to better understand their stories of being sustained as teachers.²⁶

Kate's Journey of Becoming a Teacher

Thread 1: Not a Subject Area

I remember the exact moment that I wanted to be a teacher. I was 16 and I was volunteering with Sports Central...We started with 30 kids and by the end of the week we had 70...I was, like, this is so fun. I am playing with these kids all day and I was like I want to be a gym teacher...I started working in Sports Central because my brother passed away and instead of flowers we asked people to donate to Sports Central. We created a fund with the donations. That happened when I was in grade 10... gym class was the only class I could handle going to...These younger guys who were super fun and laid back, and they just wanted to play and that was it...And it was that passion, I was fortunate to have great classes, and good friends, but it's mainly that I understood then that sport can pull people together, that's why I wanted to be there...I could just be me...And I was like I want to create that environment for someone else. That was what inspired me...I felt like they were more inclined to think of me as a

²⁶ The narrative accounts, composed as the first level of analysis within the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space, are included as appendices. In this paper I focus on the stories that brought Kate and Shane to teaching, their shifting stories to live by, and their sustaining stories; therefore, I have chosen story fragments that I feel depicted this shifting.

*person, and not just a student. You know you were not a subject area to teach you were a person that needed things outside of those subject areas.*²⁷ (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation)

Kate's story of experience above alludes to the importance physical education played in her life. Kate's experience of losing her brother was obviously a tough time for her and, in some way, Kate's physical education class was her place of respite. She speaks of sport and physical education in a powerful way, but also speaks to the environment that was created. You were "*not a subject area to teach, you were a person*" (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation). Kate's story of what physical education should be is strong; being able to be herself and have fun was important to Kate as a student and her imagined stories of teaching include these strong feelings. "*I wanted to create that environment for someone else*" (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate's brother is another important thread in the plotline of her becoming a teacher. Initially she spoke of coming back to school, after her brother passed away, and being more like him. In a later conversation, as she talked about her brother, she told me that he wanted to be a teacher and that she felt like she should "*emulate him*" (Kate, March 8, 2010, personal conversation). Along with the impact her physical education teachers and brother had on her, Kate had other motivators that brought her to teaching. She felt like her outgoing and interactive personality fit the job of being a teacher and noted that being a teacher "*was always a bit of a calling in*

²⁷ Kate and Shane's direct quotes are italicized throughout the paper.

a sense, like what I really need as a person to be satisfied (Kate, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Thread 2: Bumping of stories: Professional Landscape

September and October, I, like, I don't know trying so hard to seem like the expert in everything, especially to my kids, cause I felt like I had to prove something. I was faking confidence, like, I know how to do this... I just felt like I had to be way more strict and sort of almost like a bitch because I look so young and I am so small... you know you're told you have to be evil until Christmas, don't smile until Christmas so they (the students) don't take you for all you got...in university you are always told to never be their friends... I was always so stressed, nothing was good enough, I was never feeling satisfied (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

Although Kate's stories to live by, as she entered the profession, spoke of creating an environment that made her students feel like people as opposed to a subject area, it seems that Kate felt she had to live out a different story. Being *strict* and being a *bitch* did not fit in to the story she told of physical education as she entered. Her need to be *perfect* and knowledgeable did not seem to fit with Kate's imagined story either. Her stories to live by spoke of joy, and fun being more important than learning.

Kate's stories to live by valued her former physical education teachers getting involved with the students, yet Kate mentioned that in her beginning months she stood on the sideline and evaluated the students. Other teachers in her school

followed this procedure, so she felt like it was expected. Although Kate spoke of her past physical education teachers as being friends and making her feel like she mattered, on her professional landscape she distanced herself from students, and adhered to what she said she had been told in university; “don’t smile until Christmas or they will take you for all you got” (*Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation*).

Thread 3: Bumping of Stories: Personal Landscape

I still live at home and my Mom was like, you need to move out, you are awful to be around. I was barely seeing my friends, I was being an awful girlfriend and I was just mean to everyone. At school you put on this happy face, and when you get home you are so desperate to feel something not fake (*Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation*).

Kate’s stories to live by on her personal landscape seemed to create tensions that were not apparent before she began teaching. Although she spoke of putting a happy face on at school, it seemed that she was not who she wanted to be on either landscape. At one point Kate even told me that she thought about leaving teaching, but did not know where she would go. Kate’s desperation to “*feel something not fake*” (*Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation*) speaks to her not being able to live her imagined story on either landscape. The tensions that Kate spoke of on both her professional and personal landscape were causing a dilemma for Kate. Feeling like she had to change something to *survive* to “be more like herself” (*Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation*), Kate began to cross the bridge that she felt might

allow her to live out her imagined story. As she did so, her story began to shift to one that tried to incorporate more of her imagined stories.

Thread 4: Shifting Stories to Live By

I started to feel slowly more like myself and more content even though I was having crazy days at work, it was more bearable. That's when I was like ok I need to start doing more things just for me (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

It is hard to denote which landscape prompted Kate to begin shifting her stories to live by, however, it is clear that the shift happened on both landscapes in a simultaneous way. Kate speaking of feeling “*more like herself*” (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation) speaks to the glimpses she was catching of her imagined story.

I was like, screw this supposed teacher hat I am supposed to have on. It is not working...I started just being me and said I would have fun, put myself out there. I found that kids were more likely to relax at the very least, and laugh a lot. Like that was what I said, we need to laugh at least once in my class, like you and me. So I went and said to them, my goal is to talk to each of you each class about anything, and even now a student said I love the fact that I worked at a deli and you remembered it. That was what my teachers did (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

“*Screw this supposed teacher hat*” (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation). I wondered, as Kate spoke, if she realized that the shifts that she

pointed out seemed to enable her to live out a piece of her imagined story as a teacher. Kate's gravitation to feel "*more like herself*" (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation), illustrates a movement from doing what others thought was important to doing what she felt was important. In the last part of the story fragment, Kate overtly states that she had, in some way, obtained the environment that her physical education teachers had created for her. In becoming more like herself, Kate's personality, which she believed was a "*perfect fit for teaching*" (Kate, March 11, 2010, personal conversation. allowed her to connect with her students. As Kate talked about the environment created, and the connection created with her students a smile came across her face.

I was showing this girl how to do a stretch, and she was injured, and she looked so awkward, and we just started laughing for like five minutes...Like everyday if you could have a stellar thing and you, like, feel good, I am making a difference in this kid's life...She never learned the stretch, but at the same time when she is asked who her favorite teacher is, I may be one of them (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate told the story fragment above, and her laughter caused me to move backwards and reflect on the feelings that came from knowing that I had connected with a student; how I felt when "*a stellar thing*" (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation) occurred. It was in this moment that I missed teaching. Although she called these experiences minor successes, I saw these successes with students as major breakthroughs in the context of Kate's imagined story. Kate's stories to live by spoke of shaping students' lives in positive ways and allowing them to have fun

while engaged in physical education. It is clear from Kate's words and demeanor during this conversation that the connections being made with students were sustaining moments. I wondered if these *stellar things* that Kate spoke of were glimpses of her imagined story.

There is much more to Kate's stories to live by and to her imagined stories. Although the transcript fragments show that she shifted who she was and was becoming on both her professional and personal landscape, and seemed to feel more successful after the shift, Kate's future as a teacher is not certain. As a beginning teacher with only a probationary contract, her job has been posted for next year due to budget cuts in the district. The last time I spoke to Kate she was involved in a number of school trips and coaching at least two different sports teams. She quoted herself as "*the yes girl*" (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation) and, at times, felt as though she was being taken advantage of. Along with stories of connections with students and "*stellar things*" (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation), Kate told stories of frustration that seemed to stem from the bumping of her imagined story with the stories she felt she had to live out on the professional landscape.

As I question what might happen next for her as a teacher, many wonders come to mind. I wonder what happens to beginning teachers' stories to live by as they try to negotiate their imagined stories. I also wonder how beginning teachers may see their new landscapes differently if they entered with knowledge of how school landscapes may be negotiated. I too wonder how more experienced teachers perceive beginning teachers like Kate. What stories do experienced teachers tell of

beginning teachers and how do their lived and told stories of beginning teachers shape the stories that beginning teachers can live and tell? I mostly wonder if Kate's *stellar* moments will be enough to sustain her as a beginning teacher.

Shane's Journey of Becoming a Teacher

Thread 1: Teacher of the House

I grew up with a brother who is about the same age as me and he had some learning disabilities, so I really liked helping him out with his schooling. I also have a younger sister and I helped her along as well. Neither of my parents at the time when I was going through school had graduated from high school, so if there were any scholastic problems it was me that tried to solve them. So I guess I was always kind of the teacher in the house, and I have always enjoyed explaining things to people. That aha moment when you see them get it, and they are happy, and then you are happy because they are happy (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane's smile as he told me this story was one that portrayed his feelings of happiness when he is able to help others learn. In this story I saw that Shane was storied by himself, and by others, as a teacher long before he ever entered the profession. His desire to help others learn, become better, resonated throughout our conversations and it is apparent that Shane's imagined story of himself as a teacher, was one that involved himself enabling others to learn. Shane also denoted other experiences that seemed to foster his desire to become a teacher.

Shane spoke of teachers as well as coaches that he storied as “*being funny, good at their job*”, and, he said, “*they made learning easy*” (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation). He noted that although he really enjoyed these teachers, he would not force himself to become like they were. He was aware, and believed it was important, that he needed to create his own style. Shane wanting to create his own style is in contrast to Kate’s stories to live by. Shane’s need to create his “*own style*” (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) becomes more apparent in further stories. Later in our conversation, Shane spoke of another story of experience that brought him to teaching.

As I got older, um, and kind of started looking at education from a First Nations Perspective and seeing First Nations people falling through the cracks and stuff like that, that really kind of, like, helped to solidify the career choice for me...and now it is definitely a want, a desire to help kids and teaching seems to be a good avenue for that....kids just seem like the correct entry point...you can help save so many lives; it’s a dramatic thing...I guess you hope to set them on the right track, to get the ball rolling, to help them on the right track (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane is of First Nations heritage, and it was apparent through his words and passion, that helping First Nations students is an important part of his stories to live by. Shane works in a school with a high First Nations population, and requested to be put in this particular school. As Shane spoke about impacting children’s lives, my mind shifted backwards. I remembered the feelings of excitement I had as I entered my first teaching position. Building relationships, and connecting with students was

number one on my priority list. As my mind shifted back to our conversation, I wondered if Shane would be able to fulfill his desire to help children.

Thread 2: Outside the Stereotype: Coming to Physical Education

Um, I never really thought about teaching PE which is kind of weird. You know I enjoyed PE and I played sports in high school, but for some reason the thought of teaching PE never crossed my mind; it was always Bio. Bio is difficult and I thought I could help explain it to kids....when I started to do my degrees, I just got, I would not say I got bored with Bio, the other aspects, the non human aspects of the Bio got boring and I had a friend of mine that was in PE and looking at what he was learning; the anatomy, the physiology that was what really peaked my interest. So that was when I made the switch....So teaching PE is kind of an afterthought, once it was there I was like, oh ya, I guess I could teach PE (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane's desire to help students learn becomes apparent again in this story fragment above. Although he was involved in sports and liked physical education he never thought about teaching physical education. In thinking back to our conversation, I remember being surprised that the biological aspects of physical education brought him to want to teach physical education. I wondered if Shane's interest in hands on learning inspired him to become involved in a subject where he felt he could teach biology in a more embodied way. I also wondered if this story, teaching biology in physical education, was one he would be able to live out on his professional landscape.

Thread 3: Bumping of Stories

I guess it was probably the build up of like slogging through the mud so to speak. Just getting worn down to the point where I had a class where I just, you know, my office I can see in the gym so it is not like I left my class unattended, but I just left the class and went and sat in my office, and I was just like what is going on here. This is not going the way I want it to. You reflect on the day and the week and you just find that things do not add up. Just knowing myself, and knowing that, just thinking how long can I go at this rate with this type of stress, and this type of running in to a brick wall everyday? Eventually something was going to break, and I did not want it to be me physically or mentally, so I knew I had to change something (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation)

This story fragment could be construed as Shane becoming burned out, however, if I think about Shane's stories of wanting to keep students from "*falling through the cracks*" (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation), I wondered if the metaphoric "*brick wall*" (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation) may be his imagined story, bumping against the dominant stories shaping his professional landscape. Shane's metaphorical use of "slogging through the mud" (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation), creates an interesting image as I think of Shane trying to cross the bridge to reach his imagined story. Although he is striving to live out his imagined story it seems that the *mud* is making the process difficult.

I am only focusing on classroom management and planning and how am I going to get through the curriculum. And you know a lot of the relationships are not getting built because I don't have time. Unfortunately, the way things are going, you know I have created an adverse relationship with some of the harder students I need to be reaching...unfortunately I can't build relationships to get them to work, so I have to force them to work, which further polarizes it...I want a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere where we can joke around and have fun, but unfortunately you know with discipline problems that I am dealing with, all of that gets pushed to the side and I don't feel like I am being who I want to be in the classroom (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane's frustration as he spoke of the lack of relationships being built was clearly apparent in his voice. The juggling of his teaching duties were getting in the way of building relationships with students. The management issues he faced, due to what he attributed to "*few relationships being built*" (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation), seemed to bump with Shane's imagined story of shaping students' lives in a positive way. Shane's long hours and the bumping of his imagined story with the stories he was living, were taking a toll on him. As Shane struggled with life on his professional landscape, his imagined story of who he would be as a teacher was creating bumps on his personal landscape as well.

I pictured first year teaching, I guess just being out of school for the first time, as having more time than I did at school. School was booked up, especially me trying to pay for school. I was working 30 hours a week on top of my school

schedule. So I [as a teacher] saw myself joining sports leagues, or Friday night darts. That first summer me and some friends went to a big festival in Vancouver, and being able to do things spur of the moment, hit trips and that is kind of what I was hoping for. Like I said, that young urban professional (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane spoke often of the “*young urban professional*” (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation) he imagined himself becoming. He envisioned a life outside of school that allowed him the freedom that working a full time job, and attending university at the same time, did not allow. He was spending less time with his friends than he wanted to, and not living the lifestyle he had hoped teaching would provide. Like Kate, Shane made the decision to change the stories he was living out on both landscapes to try to create a bridge to his imagined stories.

Thread 4: Shifting Stories to Live By

You talk about a breaking point of work and things like that, and I found that's what I had to do. I had to cut down my planning and marking and all the other things I was doing in the evening because the stress and frustration was boiling over and it was completely killing everything else that I had going on. So in order to keep my identity, keep myself sane and happy and healthy, I had to scale back what I was doing (March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

Although Shane spoke of shifting on the professional landscape, like Kate's shift, it is difficult to separate this shift on the professional landscape from his shift on the personal landscape. As Shane spoke of hanging onto his identity, I wonder if

he means hanging onto what is important to him as a person and a teacher. Shane felt that spending more time with friends, and with students, rather than planning and marking, would allow him to sustain his identity, to sustain what was important to him.

I think that is the thing. Where I want to put my best is in the classroom, and so, you know, I am always going to be a little behind in my marking, my planning is probably never going to be quite as good because I want to be focused on what is going on in the classroom... by providing after school drop in floor hockey, by having a wrestling team, and volleyball team, doing the things that are extra curricular that cut in to my time to do all the other things I think it's just, it is going to get me farther (March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

When Shane spoke of “*getting himself farther*” (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation), I did not equate this to meaning that it would move him up the ranks in the school. I think Shane may have been talking about getting himself farther, that is, closer to living his imagined stories, those stories built around plotlines of keeping students from “*falling through the cracks*” (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) and being an adult that cares. Shane’s decision to do less marking and planning was a way for him to try to catch a glimpse of his imagined story.

Last semester I had a grade 12 class, and due to our school size we have some odd classes; this was a class where I had 8 students. But they were literally my rock last semester...I would come in, they were really quiet...You know I would set them up, and we could plays games, trying to play games with 8 students

can be difficult, so I would try lots of different things, and they did anything I could ever ask them to do. I found I made more connections with that group; they were a little bit older more mature (Shane, March 18, 2010).

Shane referred to this group of students as “*his rock*” a number of times throughout our conversations. Shane’s “rock” (Shane, March 18, 2010, personal conversation) like Kate’s “*stellar thing*” (Kate, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) seemed to be something that allowed him to live his imagined story; it seemed to create a sustaining moment. The connections with students is something that clearly stands out, as it closely links to Shane’s imagined stories of teaching. However, I wonder if this was an experience that Shane was able to experiment within, and create his “*own teaching style*” (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation). This creation of his own teaching style may have allowed him to move farther across that metaphoric bridge, closer to his imagined story.

Although Shane shared sustaining moments that involved students, he also talked about feeling more confident in front of his classes, and felt like he “*knew what was around the next corner*” (March 15, 2010, personal conversation), which made him feel somewhat more at ease. The changes that he made on the personal landscape also seemed to help. Shane talked about allowing himself time to be “*physically active and to meet up with friends*” (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation). Having said that, as I looked through Shane’s transcripts I wondered if these sustaining moments were enough.

Ya I get frustrated with this, do you want to just do 200 serving kills, and Tuesday 300 bump drills, and Friday we will play for half the day, how does

that sound? It is hard to explain to these guys...they have a preconceived notion of what they want (Shane, March 25, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane talked about trying to implement “*Teaching Games For Understanding (TGFU), and other fun activities*” (Shane March 25, 2010, personal conversation). I see this as Shane, again trying to “*create his own teaching style*” (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation); one that he believes will help to keep students from “*falling through the cracks*” (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation). In the story fragment above he struggles with the preconceived notions that the students have of what physical education should be. Shane’s story of physical education is not only bumping with the professional landscape story, but also with the students’ stories of what physical education ought to be.

I’ve got class averages of 50%, so the kids are not getting the information I am giving them. I’ve got behavior problems and you try to solve them by resorting back to just disciplinarian style you are losing those relationships. At the end of the day it is like what was I doing here all day. I did not build relationships and I did not pass on any knowledge (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Although Shane shifted on the personal and professional landscape, it seems that he is catching few glimpses of his imagined story. The fragment above shows Shane’s frustration with the environment being created in his classes. Shane’s imagined stories of “*aha moments*” (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) and “*keeping kids from falling through the cracks*” (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) are bumping hard against the professional landscape stories.

As Shane spoke of next year he noted, *"I have not had a summer break yet...once we get that to enjoy...a chance to unwind and reflect a little bit I think it will help to feel recharged and ready to try again"* (Shane, personal conversation, March 25, 2010). Then he kind of caught himself and noted, *"I think that is probably why after 5 years is when most people leave...they have tried it and then realize this is not for me. I think after one year it is a bit too soon after investing so much time"* (Shane, March 25, 2010, personal conversation).

At this point Shane is not sure if he will be back at the same school or not. His comments about teachers leaving after five years because they realize it is not for them, created many wonders for me as a researcher. I cannot help but wonder what will happen if Shane's next year looks similar to this one. How many years like this one will he endure? I wonder if having planned for a year already, he will be able to spend more time trying to connect with students. I also wonder if Shane will see the benefits of having worked alongside students or if he will be able to tell that he has saved a student from *"falling through the cracks"* (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) I wonder if Shane will stay in teaching long enough to see the benefits of his work. I mostly wonder if Shane will be able to *"slog through the mud"* (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation) long enough to cross the bridge to his imagined stories.

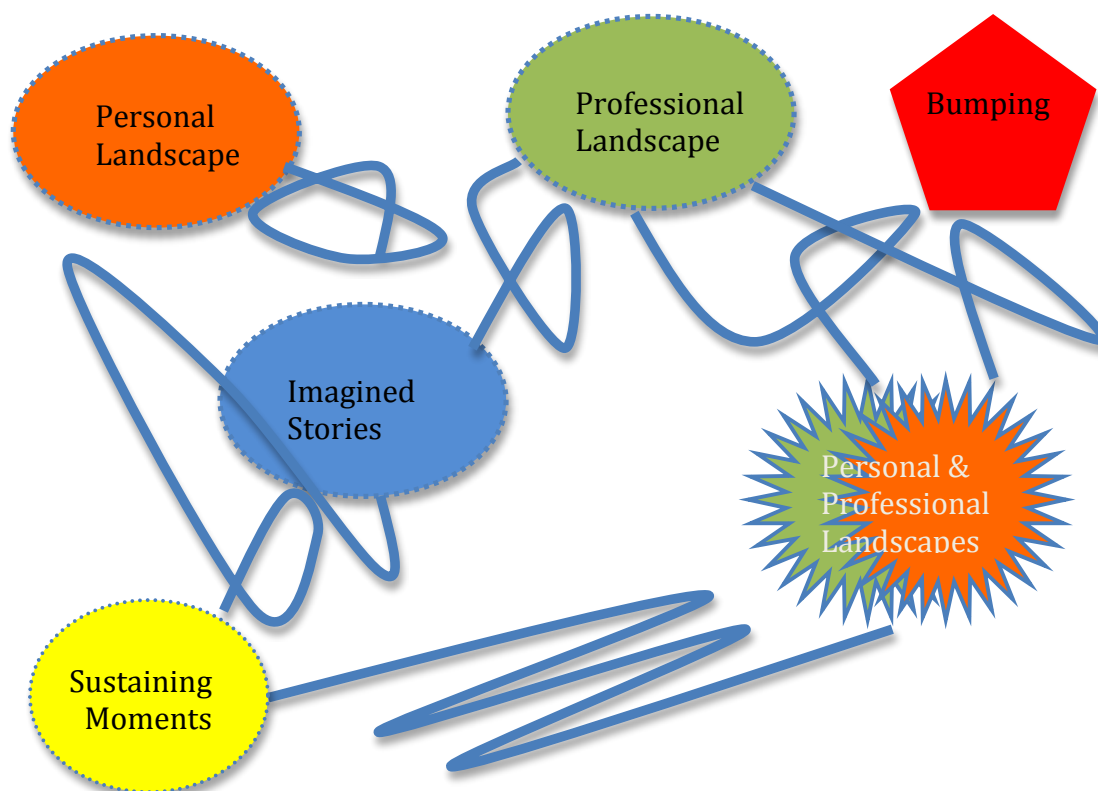


Figure 1.2

Figure 1.2 somewhat resembles Figure 1.1 that I created to illustrate Kate's and Shane's stories. It is challenging to take a phenomenon that is messy and to try to give it coherence without sanding the stories to fit into different boxes. In figure 1.2 I try to show that the process of beginning physical education teachers negotiating their stories to live by is complex, ever changing and shifting. By using the messy lines I try to show the temporal, backwards and forwards, negotiation that is always ongoing. In trying to make Shane's and Kate's stories coherent, I found myself at times, trying to fit them into boxes. The figure above is a visual tool to help show that their stories are shifting backwards and forwards, inwards and outwards.

They are not stable and, although their stories are similar in many ways, they are also different and constantly being negotiated.

In this paper I focused on certain aspects of Kate's and Shane's stories to try to begin to understand how their imagined stories, when lived out, may help to sustain them in the profession of teaching. It was clear from their stories that both Kate and Shane had stories to live by that were created on their personal landscapes prior to teaching. It also became apparent that these stories to live by bumped up against the stories that shaped their professional landscape. As the stories bumped, both Kate and Shane shifted their stories to live by to try to catch a glimpse of their imagined stories; they tried to cross the metaphoric bridge. Although they both had sustaining moments that came out of these shifts on both their personal and professional landscapes, it is difficult to tell if these sustaining moments will indeed turn into stories that will sustain them in the profession.

In Kate's case, it was clear in her stories that the changes she was making to her stories to live by allowed her to gain these sustaining moments that she spoke of. Through "*becoming more like herself*" (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation) on the professional landscape she was able to connect with students, have fun, and become "*that teacher*" (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation). She was able to recreate, at least in her mind, the environment that meant so much to her as a student in physical education.

In Shane's case things are murkier, and perhaps more messier. Although he made shifts on his personal and professional landscapes, it is difficult to tell if these shifts created the positive experiences of which he spoke. Kate's imagined stories

were of creating a certain environment that was important to her, that which had been created for her as a student. Shane's imagined stories were different; he wanted to create his own style, experiment, and create a different environment. Shane's stories seemed to continue to bump after the shift took place. It seemed that, at this time, the bridge to his imagined stories of "*aha moments*" (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) and "*keeping kids from falling through the cracks*" (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) could not be crossed.

Messiness in the Lost Sand

What does this reveal to me? It shows me that Kate's and Shane's stories on the surface are similar. As I illustrated at the beginning of the paper, if we analyze their comments, sand their stories and put them into boxes, they fit nicely into common beginning teacher trends and tendencies. However, it seems that Kate's and Shane's stories are far too complex and messy to fit neatly in to boxes. When I sanded their stories down to fit them in to the boxes, their stories became everyone else's and Kate and Shane were lost. By becoming attentive to the stories that brought Kate and Shane to teaching, the stories of their personal and professional landscapes, and their stories of moments of sustaining, I began to see that their stories are diverse, shifting and changing in different ways. This diversity makes me wonder about the multiplicity of stories that beginning teachers enter the profession with, and tell, as they negotiate their stories to live by and their imagined stories on their individual professional landscapes.

Through this inquiry, the interconnectedness between Kate's and Shane's personal and professional landscapes became apparent. The landscapes that they lived within were so interconnected that, at moments, I had a difficult time differentiating one from the other. I wonder if researchers stay away from inquiring into teachers' lives on their personal landscape because they are complex, messy, and immeasurable. However, "A narrative way of thinking about teacher identity speaks to the nexus of teachers' personal practical knowledge and the landscapes, past and present, on which teachers live and work". (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009). If beginning teachers' stories to live by are continuously being negotiated on their personal and professional landscape, it is important to be attentive to this complex, and messy phenomenon on both landscapes.

Thoughts for the Future

When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look where I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about the nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries. (Peshkin, 1985, p. 280)

Certainty is not a part of narrative inquiry, and I do not offer knowledge claims that will resolve the issues surrounding beginning physical education teacher attrition. I do, however, show that by sanding beginning teachers' stories to fit into the boxes, we make invisible many of the lived experiences that make these individuals who they are and are becoming. Without knowing what has brought

teachers to teaching, or what their imagined stories of teaching are, I wonder if we will ever know how we might keep them sustained in the profession. Although I mentioned earlier in the paper that beginning teachers are socialized as teachers long before they enter their formal education career, their stories to live by are being negotiated throughout their teacher education program and their teaching careers. I wonder how we might create spaces in education programs to foster and bring to light this ongoing negotiation.

At times PETE programs, and teacher education programs in general, may become prescriptive, and success becomes outlined by certain objectives that need to be met (Hellison & Templin, 1991). “Efficiency, accountability, opportunism, and knowledge derived from science and technology, are venerated while critical thought, process orientations and knowledge derived from the arts and social sciences have been shunned outside educational circles and by some within” (MacDonald, 1992, p. 2).

Tinning (2002) uses Bauman’s (2001) words to reiterate how this type of teacher education may cause problems for beginning teachers as they negotiate their new landscapes.

If they expect to find a cohesive and coherent structure in the mangle of contingent events, they are in for costly errors and painful frustrations. If the habits acquired in the course of training prompt them to seek such cohesive and coherent structures and make their actions dependent on finding them—they are in real trouble. (Bauman, 2001, p. 125 as cited in Tinning, 2002, p. 35)

Bauman's words help me to think about beginning physical educators and beginning teachers as they try to negotiate their stories to live by. In thinking about this I wonder about how, as teacher educators, we may create supportive spaces for the constant becoming, and negotiation of stories to live by.

We contend that the commitment essential to good teaching resides in a teacher's teaching from standing for, and living out his or her own values and beliefs. It follows that we need to help teachers sort out and analyze their values to determine to what extent they hold up to scrutiny, and then, making modifications as necessary to learn to teach from them. (Hellison & Templin, 1991, p. 5)

For beginning teachers to become reflective, spaces must be provided, in both teacher education and induction programs, for them to turn back upon the stories that have brought them to become physical education teachers. In becoming reflective to what has brought them to teaching, as well as to what they believe is important to them, and why it is important, beginning teachers may come to understand their imagined stories in a different way. The negotiation of their professional landscape and personal landscape may become more purposeful if they themselves understand how they have come to the bridge that they need to cross.

"Just as there is no single model of physical education for achieving success with students, there is no single model of teacher education for initial preparation" (Sidentop & Locke, 1997, p. 30). These words help me to think about how blanket induction programs may become more attentive to beginning teachers' stories to live by. Although induction programs provide a certain kind of support, *the one size*

fits all mentality does not create spaces for beginning teachers to negotiate their stories to live by and their imagined stories in an individualistic way. It almost seems that just as certain research conceptualizations sand teachers' stories and fit them in to boxes, so too do induction programs. A *one size fits all* induction program for Kate and Shane would certainly not take into account their diverse stories to live by with the richness of expression of their personal practical knowledge.

There is no correct answer, or certain way to help beginning teachers. However, by becoming attentive to each beginning teacher's stories to live by as they try to live out and negotiate their identities in messy and complex ways, we may be able to help beginning teachers cross the bridge to their imagined stories. As our classrooms become more diverse and complex, it is important that we help beginning teachers negotiate their stories to live by, in a way that will allow them to hang on to their imagined stores; in bridging the gap to these imagined stories beginning teachers may be able to create future stories that include them in the profession.

Limitations

Methodologically narrative inquirers work with small sample sizes. In working with only two individuals there can be no correlations made to beginning teachers in general. The time frame that I had to collect data was shorter than I would have preferred. Although four, 1.5 – 2 hour, conversations provided me with a large data set, I still had questions when the study was completed.

Further Research

Through this study many new questions have emerged for me. Listening to both Kate's and Shane's stories, brings about concerns and questions about the perceptions of the other stakeholders in the school. Further research into the perceptions of experienced teachers towards beginning teachers may be helpful. What do mentors see their role being in supporting beginning teachers? Do mentors, or experienced teachers in general, see value in supporting beginning teachers? It might also be interesting to inquire deeper into administrator's perceptions of beginning teachers. What do they see as being their role in helping and supporting, beginning teachers?

A future project that I am involved in will be working specifically with beginning teachers that have left the profession. I will also be working with third year teachers who are still in the profession to try to better understand the process of leaving.

Chapter 3 References

- Alliance for Excellent Education. (2005, August). *Teacher attrition: A costly loss to the nation and to the states*. (Issue Brief). Washington, DC: Author.
- Bauman, Z. (2001). *The Individualized Society*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Borman, D. G., & Dowling, M. N. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(3), 367-410.
- Clandinin, D. J. (1985). Personal practical knowledge: A study of teachers' classroom images. *Curriculum Inquiry, 15*(4), 361-85.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly M. (1995). Narrative inquiry: A methodology for studying lived experience. *Research Studies in Music Education, 27*(1), 44-54.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. J., Huber, J., Humber, M., Murphy, S., Orr, A. M., Pearce, M., & Steeves, (2006). *Composing Diverse Identities: Narrative Inquiries into the Interwoven Lives of Children and Teachers*. New York: Routledge.
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1999). *Shaping a Professional Identity: Stories of Educational Experience*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Day, C., Elliot, B., & Kington, A. (2005). Reform, standards and teacher identity: Challenges of sustaining commitment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*, 563-577.
- Earls, N. F. (1981). How teachers avoid burnout. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, 52*(9), 41-43.

- Estola, E. (2003). Hope as work: Student teachers constructing their narrative identities. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 47(2), 181-203.
- Fejgin, N., Ephraty, N., & Ben-Sira, D. (1995). Work environment and burnout of physical education teachers. *Journal of Teaching In Physical Education*, 15, 64-78.
- Flores, M. A. (2006). Being a novice teacher in two different settings: Struggles, continuities, and discontinuities. *Teachers College Record*, 10, 2021-2052.
- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(2), 219-232.
- Freedman, S. W., & Appleman, D. (2009). "In it for the long haul": How teacher education can contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, urban schools. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60, 323- 337.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts and Social Change*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Guarino, M. G., Santibanez, L., & Daley, A. G. (2006). Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(2), 173-208.
- Hahs-Vaughn, D. L., & Scherff, L. (2008). Beginning English teacher attrition, mobility, retention. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 77(1), 21-53.
- Hardy, D. A. (1999). Perceptions of physical education beginning teachers' first year of teaching: Are we doing enough to prevent early attrition. *Teacher Development*, 3(1), 109-127.

- Ingersoll, R. M. (1999). The problem of under qualified teachers in American secondary schools. *Educational Researcher*, 28, 26-37.
- Kitching, K., Morgan, M., & O'Leary, M. (2009). It's the little things: exploring the importance of commonplace events for early-career teachers' motivation. *Teachers and Teacher: theory and practice*, 15(1), 43-58.
- Konukman, F., Agbuga, B., Erdogan, S., Zorba, E., & Giyasettin, D. (2010). Teacher-coach role conflict in school-based physical education in USA: A literature review and suggestions for the future. *Biomedical Human Kinetics*, 2, 19-24.
- Lawson, H. A. (1983). Toward a model of teacher socialization in physical education: The subjective warrant, recruitment, and teacher education. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 2(3), 3-16.
- Lawson, H. A. (1983). Toward a model of teacher socialization in physical education: Entry into schools, teachers' role orientations, and longevity in teaching (part 2). *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 3(1), 3-15.
- Lawson, H. A., & Stroot, S. A. (1993). Footprints and signposts: Perspectives on socialization research. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 12(4), 437-446.
- Lortie, D.C. (1975). *Schoolteacher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Macdonald, D. (1995). The role of proletarianization in physical education teacher attrition. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 66(2), 129-141.
- Marguerite Young. (n.d.). BrainyQuote.com. Retrieved June 22, 2010, from BrainyQuote.com Web site:
<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/marguerite196731.htm>.

- Millslagle, D., & Morley, L. (2004). Investigation of role retreatism in the teacher/coach. *Physical Education, 61*(3), 120-131.
- Peshkin, A. (1985). From title to title: The evolution of perspective in naturalistic inquiry. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 16*(3), 214-22.
- Sherff, L. (2007). Disavowed: The stories of two novice teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*, 1317-1332.

Chapter 4

Sliding Backwards and Forwards:

Sustaining Moments Within Shifting Stories to Live By

Backwards

Thinking about the stories that brought me to this inquiry, reminds me the essence of temporality is that our stories to live by move from past, to present to future, that is, “that experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Our present and future stories curl back upon our past stories; the stories that have brought us to where we are today. I thought about this journey that we all take during my time as an undergraduate student. Looking at the colleagues around me it was apparent that we all had different stories, different reasons for being where we were. I now realize that we had taken different paths and, in some way, our pasts had lead us to a similar place; however, the different paths that we had journeyed changed the context of our present and future experiences. We responded to things in different ways. We spoke about things in different ways. We storied ourselves in different ways. We envisioned ourselves as different teachers in different landscapes.

Moving into my first teaching position, this awareness of past experiences resonated. I was seeing things through a lens that had been created by my past experiences. As I watched and worked with other beginning teachers, my colleagues, my interest in how our past experiences shaped the teachers that we become, continued to resonate.

I progressed through the graduate program at the University of Alberta, and I began to gain a language to speak about, explain, and understand the process that I was going through. I had the same passion for beginning teachers, and I now had a language to help me inquire into my own stories, and the stories of other beginning teachers. I began to think about why so many beginning teachers leave the profession. I thought about why some stay and I thought about why some are able to negotiate the landscape in a way that allows them to create sustaining moments; sustaining moments that turn in to sustaining stories to live by.

As I delved into the research done in the area beginning teacher attrition and retention (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Ingersoll, 2004; Smith & Macdonald, 1999), I noted the common conceptualizations that were apparent. The first read of the articles was affirming; my stories fit perfectly into the conceptualizations of burnout, salary, prestige, feeling un-important and many others. Continuing my search I became interested in the individuals that were leaving the profession. I was finding that the *trends and tendencies* (Green, 1995) provided a clear picture of *why* so many teachers were leaving. However, the *trends and tendencies* did not seem to provide a clear picture of *how* they were leaving, or *who* was leaving. It seemed that teachers who left were being treated as objects or chess pieces (Green, 1995). Their individual stories, when sanded down to fit into the boxes, had become generalized, faceless, and lost in the categorization.

I realized that my stories could be organized neatly into the current conceptualizations, but in fitting them in, everything that had brought me to the moment of leaving was lost. It was at this point that I began to think of a different

way to represent data that may come from working alongside beginning physical education teachers in a relational way.

Present Stories

As I set out to work alongside Kate and Shane I wanted to be attentive to their stories to live by. I wanted to be attentive to the process in which they negotiated their stories to live by on their personal and professional landscapes. Researchers (Day, Elliot, & Kingston, 2005; Estola, 2003; Flores, 2006; Flores & Day, 2006) have discussed the complexities that become apparent as beginning teachers try to negotiate their identities on their personal and professional landscapes. This past work emphasized attentiveness to beginning teachers' negotiation of their stories to live by and helped me to be attentive to the processes that unfolded as Kate's and Shane's stories bumped with the stories of their professional landscape. This attentiveness also enabled me to denote the struggles that occurred on both their personal and professional landscapes. In fact, it became difficult at times to decide which landscape they were talking about. This interconnectedness shows how important it is to be attentive to both the professional and personal landscapes, as it seems they cannot be separated (Flores & Day, 2006).

An attentiveness to Kate's and Shane's stories also enabled me to see the links between their stories to live by, and their imagined stories on both the professional and personal landscape. As both of their stories unfolded, it became apparent that their sustaining moments linked closely to the stories that had brought them to teaching. Kate's shift enabled her to create an environment in her

physical education class that emulated her experiences as a student. These shifts also allowed Kate to create a balance on her personal landscape that included her being a better friend, daughter and girlfriend.

Shane's moments of sustaining also linked closely to his stories to live by as he entered the teaching profession. His ability to create an individual teaching style and environment was a large part of his imagined story of teaching. It also became clear in Shane's stories that his imagined stories of "*keeping kids from falling through the cracks*" (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) and "*aha moments*" (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation) were not being lived out. This bumping showed in Shane's words as he narrated his stories of school.

Future Stories

The teaching pool keeps losing water because no one is paying attention to the leak. (Peske, Liu, Johnson, Kauffman, & Kardos, 2006, p. 306)

Although I cannot interpret Peske et al.'s quote as a need to be more attentive to beginning physical education teachers' stories to live by, the quote provokes me to wonder about how we might become more aware of the leak. By becoming more attentive to Kate's and Shane's stories, I became aware of the sustaining moments that they shared. I also began to understand why these sustaining moments were important to them as individuals. As they tried to negotiate their stories to live by and their imagined stories on both their professional landscapes and their personal landscapes, it became clear that there was a complex process underway. This complex process was something for which they had not received support. They had

help with lesson plans, report cards, and parent teacher interviews, but the process of negotiating their stories to live by with their imagined stories was done on their own. Even after our conversations, I wonder if Kate and Shane have become attentive to how important their stories to live by are.

Flores and Day (2006) call for a “stronger focus upon opportunities to experience and reflect upon personal biography and the cultural contexts of schools in order that the tensions between the two might be better understood” (p. 230). We cannot change the past experiences that bring teachers to teaching, but we can try to understand those past experiences and help beginning teachers try to understand their own past experiences. “Prospective teachers should be given meaningful opportunities to analyze and reflect upon their own beliefs and values, insofar as they have an impact on the way that they learn how to become teachers” (Flores, 2006, p. 2028). This attentiveness to the negotiation of beginning teachers’ stories to live by will allow administrators, teacher educators, and induction programmers to create spaces for individual stories to live by to be negotiated.

Hopes For The Research

The sample size of this study is far too small to suggest that all or even some beginning physical education teachers’ experiences may be similar to the two participants with whom I worked. It is, however, my hope that if beginning teachers, experienced teachers, principals or teacher educators read this study, that it will carry verisimilitude, a truth like feeling. The stories of experience and inquiry into these stories may resonate and create new meaning on each reader’s diverse

professional and personal landscapes. Thinking about the stories that brought both Kate and Shane to become physical education teachers, may create a reflective turn for a teacher educator that engages in this study. This reflective turn may create attentiveness to their students' stories to live by, as well as their own stories to live by. Asking questions about what is important to our students, as well as ourselves as teacher educators, may help to create spaces to discuss the complex identity negotiation that is always ongoing for teachers. In thinking about who they are becoming, beginning physical education teachers may be more prepared to negotiate this becoming on their new professional landscapes.

I used Peshkin's words throughout and in ending with them I hope that I have created meaning for others on their own individual landscapes.

When I disclose what I have seen, my results invite other researchers to look where I did and see what I saw. My ideas are candidates for others to entertain, not necessarily as truth, let alone Truth, but as positions about the nature and meaning of a phenomenon that may fit their sensibility and shape their thinking about their own inquiries. (Peshkin, 1985, p. 280)

Chapter 4 References

- Borman, D. G., & Dowling, M. N. (2008). Teacher attrition and retention: A meta-analytic and narrative review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(3), 367-410.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F.M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Day, C., Elliot, B., & Kington, A. (2005). Reform, standards and teacher identity: Challenges of sustaining commitment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*, 563-577.
- Estola, E. (2003). Hope as work: student teachers constructing their narrative identities. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 47*(2), 181-203.
- Flores, M. A. (2006). Being a novice teacher in two different settings: struggles, continuities, and discontinuities. *Teachers College Record, 10*, 2021-2052.
- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 22*(2), 219-232.
- Greene, M. (1995). *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts and Social Change*. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Guarino, M. G., Santibanez, L., & Daley, A. G. (2006). Teacher recruitment and retention: A review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(2), 173-208.
- Hellison, D. R., & Templin, T. J. (1991). *A reflective approach to teaching physical education*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

- McDonald, D. (1999). Teacher attrition: A review of literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 15(8), 835-848.
- Peshkin, A. (1985). From Title to title: The evolution of perspective in naturalistic inquiry. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly* 16(3), 214-22.
- Peske, G. H., Liu, E., Johnson, S. M., Kauffman, D., & Kardos, S. M. (2001). The next generation of teachers: Changing conceptions of a career in teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan* 83(4), 305-307.
- Smith, M. T., & Ingersoll M. R. (2004). What are the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turnover? *American Educational Research Journal*. 41(3), 681-714.

Appendix A: Kate's Narrative Account

Starbucks

I was excited to meet Kate and to talk to her in person. We had sent a few emails back and forth, and I had talked to her on the phone for a short period of time. She had responded to the study in a positive way, and seemed to be excited to participate. This was a good thing, as I did not want her to feel like she was wasting her time. I was hoping the study would not only be a research opportunity, but also an opportunity for me to support a beginning teacher in a meaningful way. Over the phone Jackie had mentioned that she was participating in a 30 day hot yoga challenge. I have to say I was impressed that she was able to take time for herself to be physically active. I was also impressed because I had tried hot yoga once, and was on the verge of fainting.

When I contacted Kate a few days earlier, to confirm our meeting at Starbucks, I forgot to tell her where I would sit, what I would be wearing, or anything else that would help her to identify me from the other 30 customers. As I sat down I tried to make the table look like a place where a conversation could take place. I glanced over to the counter and saw a young woman buying what looked to be a Grande tea. She had a Lulu Lemon bag, so I immediately thought that this may be Kate. As she walked in the opposite direction, I did not want to follow her, as this could make an already awkward situation even worse. However, she turned and walked back my direction, and our initial introduction was filled with laughter about not knowing how to find each other.

As I sat down with Kate and began to explain the study, I was relieved to see that she seemed to be engaged in what I was interested in. She also seemed to have an outgoing demeanor, which helped the conversation flow. I was excited to find out about her experiences as a beginning teacher, and was looking forward to the conversations.

The Journey to Teaching

The Exact Moment...Maybe

In understanding what might sustain Kate in the profession of teaching, I wanted to find out what had brought her to becoming a teacher, and more specifically, a physical education teacher.

I remember the exact moment that I wanted to be a teacher. I was 16 and I was volunteering with Sports Central. We were doing hockey camps for underprivileged youth, primarily Aboriginal kids. I am not that good at hockey, but I was doing the dry land training for them so it did not really matter. We started with 30 kids and by the end of the week we had 70. It was so fun, by the end you have 50 kids at any given time and you are just trying to think of anything they can do, and I was, like, this is so fun. I am playing with these kids all day and I was, like, I want to be a gym teacher (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate grew up as an active person, and was involved in a number of different activities, some of these activities being at an elite level. It is not surprising that she enjoyed physical education class, as she was probably very good at physical education; however, she seemed to enjoy physical education for a different reason.

I started working in Sports Central because my brother passed away and, instead of flowers, we asked people to donate to Sports Central. We created a fund with the donations. That happened when I was in grade 10 which is a bad time for this to happen, and gym class was the only class I could handle going to (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

When Kate spoke of her brother passing away, and about how close they were, my mind began to reminisce. Two good friends of mine lost brothers while they were in high school. I remember how hard it was for them. I remember how hard it was for me to talk to them about it. I did not know what to say, or whether I should say anything at all. Kate telling me this story early on in our conversations, she showed me that she felt comfortable in our discussions. As my mind drifted back to our conversation, I wondered what it was about Kate's physical education class that helped her to get through this experience. *"I could just be me, do what I wanted, I did not have to think or feel. And I was like I want to create that environment for someone else. That was what inspired me"* (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

I wondered about Kates' comments here, in regards to not thinking or feeling. Was it the environment, the moving, the noise that allowed Kate to feel like she was not thinking. Was it the distraction of physical activity or the increase of endorphins that took away the thoughts of the day? Kate continued talking about her physical education experience.

These younger guys who were super fun and laid back, and they just wanted to play and that was it. If you learn awesome, we're going to teach you the rules,

but we're going to play, and I want you to realize the joy. And it was that passion, I was fortunate to have great classes, and good friends, but it's mainly that I understood then that sport can pull people together, that's why I wanted to be there, no matter what. You can have an awful day, and you could just go play badminton, or ultimate Frisbee (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

This story of her experience in physical education came out often as she discussed her current philosophy of physical education. In re-reading this portion of the transcript I wondered about how Kates' physical education classes might have shaped her if she had not been athletic. What if she would not have been able to realize the joy of movement because she was not successful while moving? For students like Kate, who are athletically inclined, joy can be obtained by moving or having success in a competitive sport situation.

Teacher Hat: Professional Landscape

Kate spoke of the supposed "teacher hat" (*Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation*) that she felt she needed to wear when she first began her position. September and October had been tough months for Kate and from our conversations I gathered that there were times when she thought about leaving the profession. The teacher hat metaphor is an interesting one. As I looked through the transcripts I noted that this teacher hat that Jackie felt she had to wear did not reflect the teacher she wanted to be.

September and October, I was, like, I don't know trying so hard to seem like the

expert in everything, especially to my kids cause I felt like I had to prove something. I was faking confidence, like, I know how to do this, I would say I liked all sports and that I am good at all sports when I am not...I just felt like I had to be way more strict and sort of almost like a bitch because I look so young and I am so small (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

This cover story of expert is one that beginning teachers often mention. To the students they are just another teacher; however, the students expect from them what they expect from any other veteran teacher. Kate felt like she had to portray to her students that she knew everything, and was an expert in the content area of physical education.

I would come home and keep working and trying to perfect things but it would not make a difference cause I could make it perfect and it still would not work out the way it was supposed to...I was always so stressed, nothing was good enough. I was never feeling satisfied so I needed to find something...I was finding the most random small rules just in case so I would seem like the most brilliant woman ever. It was so stupid (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

When Kate spoke of her early experiences with physical education, she spoke of a supportive, safe and fun environment. This was an environment she wanted to create in her classes. However, the “teacher hat” Kate felt she had to wear did not allow her to create this environment. The pressure to be seen as expert changed Kate’s imagined story of who she would be as a physical education teacher. Kate spoke of this in the story fragment below.

I was trying to be super strict, you know you are told you have to be evil until Christmas, don't smile until Christmas so they (the students) don't take you for all you got...in university you are always told to never be their friends (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

It seems that there was a major bumping between the story the professional landscape seemed to require Kate to live out, and the story that brought Jackie to this professional landscape. This conflict was not only shaping Kate's identity on the professional landscape, but it also shaped the person she was becoming on her personal landscape.

I still live at home and my Mom was like, you need to move out you are awful to be around. I was barely seeing my friends, I was being an awful girlfriend and I was just mean to everyone. At school you put on this happy face, and when you get home you are so desperate to feel something not fake (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

When telling me about her experiences, Kate was very aware of the interconnectedness of the personal and professional landscapes. She did not seem to like the person that she had become on her personal landscape nor her professional landscape. At one point she mentioned that things at school were okay, but that everything outside of school was not. She felt no balance, and felt like the professional landscape had taken over her life. Kate realized that the teacher story she had imagined of herself was not being lived out. As Kate spoke of her first few months in school, she spoke of a breaking point, or a shift in her mindset.

I started to become more like myself, I was like screw this supposed teacher hat

I am supposed to have on. It is not working...I started just being me and said I would have fun, put myself out there. I found that kids were more likely to relax at the very least, and laugh a lot. Like that was what I said, we need to laugh at least once in my class, like you and me. So I went and said to them, my goal is to talk to each of you each class about anything, and even now a student said I love the fact that I worked at a deli and you remembered it. That was what my teachers did (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

When I Felt Like I Mattered

Kate spoke very highly of certain teachers who had taught her in the past. Part of this shift was her thinking about what they had done to create positive classroom environments. Reflecting on how they had made some sort of lasting connection with her, Kate noted that it was not just physical education teachers, but that the teachers that seemed to resonate with her were the ones that had some sort of physical activity connection.

I don't know if it was I needed that sport to relate to them, but it seems like I always respected those teachers more, because I felt like they were more inclined to think of me as a person, and not just a student. You know, you were not a subject area to teach, you were a person that needed things outside of those subject areas (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

As Kate talked about her past teachers she seemed to make a connection with how her students were responding to her now. It seemed that as she ended the following sentence in our conversation, she made the connection.

I don't know how I managed to remember weird things about people, but at the same time if you know them they are more likely to try, and that's what, that was my biggest light bulb moment. I started to get to know these kids and all of a sudden they are coming on time and prepared and willing to help out and try new things. That was when I realized I was having a successful class, and being a good teacher for them...I just tried to get to know them individually, rather than saying you're my PE class let's do PE. Like, I want to know the finer details in them because that is what my teachers did for me and that is when I felt like I mattered (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

Shifting on the Professional and Personal Landscape

Kate's shift in who she was going to be on the professional landscape seems to be connected to the imagined stories that had brought her to teaching. However, this shift was also spurred on by her imagined story of her personal landscape.

It just felt like everything was going wrong, like work was fine, but everything else was not fine. So, I was like this is not working. I would rather them both be okay than one being supposedly awesome and the other one going to hell, so it was sort of that (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

I wanted to know what kinds of changes Kate made to help her to create the balance between who she was on the personal and professional landscape.

I did not let myself do school work at home. Once I leave school that is it. I go early enough that I can tweak whatever I need to tweak, or fix whatever...I started just making plans cause I am not one to usually bail so now I have this so I am going to do it. I started to feel slowly more like myself and more content

even though I was having crazy days at work, it was more bearable. That's when I was like okay I need to start doing more things just for me...My boyfriend, he is a teacher and he was, like, there we . I was waiting for this moment, it took longer than I thought it would (Kate, March 11, 2010, personal conversation).

As Kate discussed these changes, she certainly became more passionate. She smiled more and I thought she felt like she could not believe she had started the way she had. As we discussed evaluating students from the sideline, she said she was almost embarrassed that she had done this instead of getting involved with them. When Kate spoke of this shift she did not speak of others on the professional landscape guiding her along. Her colleagues did not say, “you need to be more like yourself” or you need to balance home life and school life. She did mention her department head telling her that one day a week she should leave the school right after teaching to help her to keep from getting burned out.

Supporting Characters

Kate works in a large high school with more than 100 teachers. Her physical education department has nine teachers involved in it. Kate's position is one that is often not filled by someone right out of university. She teaches full time physical education as well as a few other courses that deal with physical activity in some way. Her school is very large, so large that I needed detailed directions to find the physical education office. Throughout the day there were a number of physical education classes going at the same time, as well as a number of extra curricular programs running at lunch and after school.

Kate spoke of being overwhelmed when entering such a large department where each individual had been teaching at this particular school for a number of years.

It was like a meeting and you are brand new, and they've taught there for 3 or 4 years at least, and you walk in there and I took a position of a leave of absence of someone who had taught there for 5 years. So they are all like you have big shoes to fill and I am like holy crap. I don't even know what I am doing. September and October I was like I don't know if I can do this (Kate, March 11, 2010, personal conversation).

Being amongst an experienced group of teachers seems to be very intimidating for Kate. However, in being with such a large group of experienced teachers it would seem that Kate is in a great position to gain experience from others. Kate has a department head that is experienced in the position. She was assigned a mentor by her principal, although not the person that Kate had requested. Kate tried to connect with her mentor on a number of occasions and even tried to set up meetings for her mentor to come in and observe her classes.

Last semester she taught two courses, block 0 and 4, and she never once came in to watch me. I would ask her, can you come watch? I am teaching this and do not know how. Can I watch you teach it? She would be like, ya for sure, then she would not show up, or she would cancel at the last minute (Kate, March 11, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate noted that as she became closer to her department head, she became more vocal about the support that she felt she needed.

I kind of was like, not snap show, but I was like I am not getting any support, I am brand new, studies show that I need to be mentored, and no one is. So she (mentor) came in the next day and gave me great feedback, but that was it. He (Department Head) was supposed to come in and watch me last week and didn't. And you get that they are busy, and you're not disagreeing with their job, but you're like I am not going to get any better if no one is going to watch, and help me get to the best of my abilities (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

Kates' imagined stories of support are much different than the stories being lived out at her school. When I asked her what she had imagined, she spoke of her practicum. Having someone there with you to kind of hold your hand, to support you, take you under their wing, and answer your questions. *"If I have questions they will answer them, but they are never offered, ever. It's really hard because you are reinventing the wheel everyday...I am flying solo a lot"* (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

The Elephant in the Room

Throughout our conversations the topic of support came up often. To me, as a past mentor teacher, and school coordinator (pre-service teacher support liason), it seemed odd to me that no one acknowledged that Kate was, is, a beginning teacher. One glaring example of this was when her physical education department had an in-house professional development day. It was a day planned so that all of the physical education teachers could get together and share good pedagogy. Each

department member presented an example of a game, with the exception of Kate and one of her colleagues who had also only been teaching for two years.

It's like you saved me for last just in case, but I probably have the most recent games...Ya I just felt like almost rejected, I have this really sweet game that I have played with my classes and they really like it, and you don't even want to get to know it because we had to play an extra round of pickle ball (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate's frustration while telling this story was clearly apparent. As she spoke, I wondered what part of the experience really upset her? Was it that the others did not learn her game? Was it that she did not learn anything new? Was it just a boring afternoon? When I asked, Kate responded,

Well it is almost like I just felt like if I show them this game and they are like, oh it is good, we have never played this before, she has got something here, and you feel validated. See I told you so, but I don't get that...Ya, I just don't feel all that valuable. I don't have enough experience to really contribute to the group...it is hurtful, it's like I know I am new but that does not mean I don't know anything (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

As I inquired in to Kates' experiences there seemed to be bumping plot lines. On the one hand, Kate is to be an expert, veteran teacher. Her students expect it from her, she expects it from herself. Her principal, when evaluating her, expects her to have the skills of an experienced teacher. On the other hand Kate's knowledge is almost discounted because she is seen as a novice teacher. It seems her knowledge has no benefit to the group in this experience. Faced with the dichotomy, I noted

how Kate could be confused. Which one am I? If I am an *expert* then my knowledge should be as worthy as the others, and my word and advice should be as important as others. If I am a *novice*, and I do not have important knowledge then I should be supported as if I am learning. I should be mentored, worked with and supported in a way that may help me to one day have knowledge that is meaningful to others. Kate seems to be lost in this borderland space between these two plot lines.

Just Tell Me What is Right

In thinking backwards to my first year of teaching, I have to honest, it was nerve wracking to have people in my classroom or gymnasium watching me teach. In moving back to our conversations, as Kate told her stories, it did not appear that she felt this way and I sensed that she wanted to learn from her more experienced colleagues. When I said to Kate “ it sounds like you are not concerned about someone coming and watching and saying oh, you should not be doing that, you should be doing this. You’re almost asking for someone to come in,” she finished my sentence, “*Yes, someone to come in and rip it apart so that I can learn*” (Kate, March 11, 2010, personal conversation).

The first part of our conversations revolved around technical aspects of teaching. Kate was concerned about what she should bring to parent teacher interviews, if she should fail students, the types of drills she should be doing, how she should handle certain students, how to assess certain skills. All of these concerns came out in our discussions.

There is just no answer, it depends on other things. I just need a clear cut answer right now, there is a huge grey area. Just give me something to work

with and, as I grow and get more comfortable, I can expand on it, but right now I need to know this is how it is and this is why (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation).

This fragment, although fairly straight forward in showing Kate is looking for a black and white answer, suggests Kate's need to know she is doing things correctly. She wants to do things right, that is, how they are supposed to be done in her school and at this time she is not concerned that there may be more than one right answer.

I am, like, I don't know, if I am doing the right thing, and no one is telling me I am doing a good job, and sometimes that is all I want to hear. Just you're doing a good job, or we are happy to have you or anything (Kate, March 11, 2010, personal conversation).

I wondered if Kate's focus on the technical aspects of teaching was a way for her to gain positive emotional feedback. Although Kate spoke about needing positive emotional feedback at times, her focus when speaking of support was usually focused on the technical aspects of teaching. What kind of drills should I be doing? How should I grade this student? How might I deal with this management issue? I wondered if Kate felt that having the correct answer would allow her colleagues to see she was doing her job well. Kate not being able to present her activity during the in-school professional development day, was a lost opportunity to gain positive feedback from her colleagues. Perhaps by making what she saw as, the correct decisions, Kate would receive more of the emotional feedback she needed to feel valuable, important and empowered.

Then and Now

Looking forward and wondering how Kate's story of teacher may play out, I am again intrigued by looking backwards at the stories that have brought her to the profession of teaching. Kate spoke occasionally about her brother passing away, and how hard those times were for her. But she also spoke about how the passing of her brother may have shaped her decision to become a teacher. Kate spoke of coming back to high school shortly after her brother passed away:

When I came back I was more outgoing and louder like my brother than I was like me, and as I started to grow up I started to be more like him and he always wanted to be a teacher. So I did not know if I became a teacher cause he wanted to be, and cause I feel like I should emulate him. But at the same time I feel like my personality fits what I am doing (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate also spoke of her personality fitting in to her story of teacher earlier in the conversation.

I really liked the idea of teaching. I did not know if I was going to be good at it, but I liked the idea of being a teacher. I love talking to people, I like being on my feet, I love constant interactions and everything else. So everything I feel like I need to be satisfied was in the job description of being a teacher (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate spoke of having an office job over a summer and hating it. She said this was something that even if she was at the top of the pay scale, she knew she would not want to do. She even spoke of not enjoying her time over exam break this past

semester because she could not stand being behind her computer entering marks and comments. In Kate's imagined story of teaching, she seemed to be the perfect fit. *"I think it was always a bit of a calling in a sense, like what I really need as a person to be satisfied"* (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation). The notion that a job should have purpose and shape people in a positive way was something that Kate deemed as important to her calling as a teacher.

Bumping of Stories

Although the study puzzle was one that began with a focus on sustaining beginning physical education teachers, it has, as expected, brought many different ideas and thoughts to the forefront. I wonder about beginning teachers' imagined stories of who they will be as teachers: Imagined stories of how their students will respond to them; Imagined stories of the relationships they will build and impact they will have on students, imagined stories of what their personal lives will be like as teachers. As noted earlier, I inquired into Kate's stories to understand the experiences that brought her to teaching. Kate spoke of past teachers, gym class environment, experiences with sport, her brother, her personality and other past experiences and relationships that had brought her to teaching. My wonders now turn to thinking about what happens to beginning teachers like Kate who are not able to live out the stories they imagined.

If as a beginning teacher I imagined I would build relationships with students but was not able to live that out in practice, how will that shift the trajectory of my future story? If, as a beginning teacher I was excited to share my knowledge and

become part of a successful team of physical education teachers, what happens if I cannot live out this imagined story?

Stellar Interactions

Kates' experiences have not allowed her to live out the story she had imagined living as a teacher. However, somehow without much meaningful support from her colleagues, she has in some ways been able to hang on to a piece of the story that has brought her here.

So, like, I did think about leaving but I did not know where I was going to go and now I cannot imagine leaving and that was only four months ago that I was like F this profession, who would do this...I don't know after you have minor successes and you're like that was all me, no one taught me how to do this, no one showed me how to do this. Maybe I am going to be okay (Kate, March 4, 2010, personal conversation).

These minor successes that Kate talked about came up later in a further conversation. Kate spoke of helping one of her friends out that was doing her advanced practicum at the time. As Kate talked about how she helped her, she realized that she had learned a lot in a short span of time.

So you have to come up with those options so that is when you sort of realize that you're getting better. And I feel more confident in front of the class now. I am not all nervous when I am starting a new unit. I did this before. I can do it again (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate spoke of there being no real external reward or feedback to say "I am doing this better". She was frustrated that there was not always instant gratification

to help her see she was doing a good job. Kate had difficulty accepting that she would have to just feel like she was getting better. Although Kate was not receiving external feedback from colleagues, she was, in a less overt way, receiving feedback from her students.

I think the interactions with kids, on a daily basis, have one stellar interaction that I have found, and maybe it is cause I really try to look for them, or cause I strive to try to make a connection with a kid every day, but there are sometimes when, like today, I was showing this girl how to do a stretch, and she was injured, and she looked so awkward, and we just started laughing for like five minutes...Like everyday if you could have a stellar thing and you, like, feel good, I am making a difference in this kid's life...She never learned the stretch, but at the same time when she is asked who her favorite teacher is, I may be one of them (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation).

Kate added to this story that she was not trying to be everyone's favorite teacher, but that she remembered the impact certain teachers had on her life. To Kate it is very important that she impact her students' lives in the same way her teachers impacted her life.

From my last semester class kids still come see me, and they get excited that they see me and that is cool. You like, ya, I did become that teacher for you. I had tons of my 20's say I hope you're my teacher in 30 cause you made this so much fun. Like, it is PE, it is supposed to be fun and you made it legitimately fun; everyday you made it fun (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation).

She also discussed more measurable factors that sustained her.

In November my attendance started to get way better. It's not like I was the one class that kids were not coming to any more. I was the one class that kids were all there. That was when I started to realize that I was doing something right (Kate, March 18, 2010, personal conversation).

In looking backwards, I remember how motivating it was to have students want to be in my class. As Kate discussed, what she called minor success, she had a smile on her face, and became passionate about what she was talking about. Although she called them these experiences minor success, I thought these breakthroughs with students were major successes in the context of Kate's imagined story. Her purpose as a physical education teacher is to be a teacher that shapes students' lives in positive ways and allows them to have fun while engaged in physical education. It is clear to see Kate's words and demeanor during this conversation portrayed that the connections being made with students were helping to sustain her.

It seems that Kate's good and bad days revolve around student interactions. Kate's story is so much more meaningful to me because I have a glimpse of what brought her here. I have an understanding of her past teachers, her brother and her supportive family and boyfriend. Kates' past stories and her imagined story of teaching helps me understand how she might be sustained in her professional and personal landscape.

Appendix B: Shane's Narrative Account

Nope, Not Those Shoes

I entered the somewhat busy coffee shop around 4:15 pm on a fairly chilly winter afternoon. Our meeting was not supposed to start until 5:00 pm, but I wanted to make sure I was able to get a table. I eyed the already occupied tables wondering if Shane might already be there. As I took out my brand new audio recorder, I heard the coffee grinder and wondered if it might be too loud in this place. I wanted to meet in a location that would feel informal, one that would be conducive to conversation. I bought myself a coffee, and wondered if I should buy Shane one as well.

I had only communicated with Shane over the phone and via email, so I was a little nervous. I was wondering how he viewed this study. I wondered if it was just another thing for him to do in his busy beginning teacher schedule of emergent things. I wondered if he was hesitant to begin a study with a stranger. I was debating how to begin the conversation. Should I make small talk about the weather, or discuss the success of the Canadian hockey teams at the Olympics? I wondered how the conversation would be different if I did not have a digital audio recorder, and consent forms that needed to be signed.

While waiting for Shane I began writing the words that follow. A sense of panic strikes me as I realize that I don't even know what he looks like. What if I cannot pick him out? As I watch cars pull up I am caught stereotyping the individuals as they enter. Nope, he's not a PE teacher, a PE teacher would not wear that type of shoe. Nope, a first year teacher would not be driving that truck. I scold

myself a bit for stereotyping in this way, and my thoughts turn back to how our conversation may begin.

It is 4:49 and still no Shane, I scan the crowd again wondering if he is already here.

My writing stopped as I saw a tall male with track pants walking into the coffee shop, somehow I immediately knew it was him. He saw me over in the corner with my laptop set up, and made his way over. We introduced ourselves and I was relieved that he actually seemed like he wanted to be there.

The Journey to Teaching

Past Experiences

What brought me to this place, and this study is a keen interest in beginning teachers. With only 3 full years of teaching experience under my belt, I am still considered a beginning teacher. I began to wonder about the phenomenon of beginning teachers during my undergraduate program. Thinking about my past classes, each was set up with a kind of predetermined socialization. They wanted us to learn specific content, to reflect, to discuss and to grow. It was clear at many points in the program that each of us was getting something different from our experiences. Some people felt as though they were jumping through the hoops, and that when they got to the *real world* they would begin to teach *for real*. Others seemed as though being engaged in the process was too much work, and they seemed unmotivated and impassionate towards moving in to the profession of teaching. Other colleagues seemed to buy into the process, were passionate about teaching, and were excited to move into the field to help evoke positive change. It

was clear that each of our forward-looking stories was different, and we envisioned ourselves as teachers in different ways.

Looking at current research in the area of beginning teacher attrition and retention I often wonder how beginning teachers' past experiences may shape their decisions to keep teaching or leave the profession. How does what shaped their decisions to become teachers shape their stories to live by on the professional landscape?

Teacher of the House

One of my interests is understanding what has brought Shane to this place, and to the profession of teaching. I loosely focused our first conversation on experiences from his past that he felt have paved his path to the teaching profession. Our conversation started out a little awkward, but when I inquired into Shane's journey to teaching he seemed to become comfortable. He noted:

I grew up with a brother who is about the same age as me and he had some learning disabilities so I really liked helping him out with his schooling. I also have a younger sister and I helped her along as well. Neither of my parents at the time when I was going through school had graduated from high school, so if there were any scholastic problems it was me that tried to solve them. So I guess I was always kind of the teacher in the house, and I have always enjoyed explaining things to people. That aha moment when you see them get it, and they are happy, and then you are happy because they are happy (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane's smile on his face, as he told me this story of experience, portrayed a sense of pride involved with helping others learn. It is clear from this story that Shane was storied by himself and by others as a teacher long before he ever entered the profession. His desire to help others learn, and improve, resonated throughout our conversations and it is clear that Shane's imagined story of himself as a teacher was one that involved himself enabling others to learn.

If I Knew Then What I Know Now

This semester I taught a curriculum and instruction course at the university for physical education minors. I have to admit I was a bit taken back by how little they were writing down. I guess I chalked it up to different styles of learning, and never really mentioned it. After their first week in the schools with their mentors, they came back with a different attitude. It was like it sunk in that they were going to actually have to teach. They were going to be expected to plan and explain and teach lessons to students. I had students asking for past handouts, lesson plan examples, activity summaries and every other thing we had done throughout the semester. I asked Shane about his practicum experiences and he noted:

Um, actually I have kind of been thinking about IPT and APT [practicum courses], just because we just had convention and you know I am still in my first year. I wish I could do them all over again, you know, because now I have a better idea of what I should have been looking for. You know, to help myself from where I am now. I remember the IPT [first practicum] going by so fast, you know, you barely seem like you do any, anything, any teaching or anything at all (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation).

He spoke about how enjoyable the experiences were and then continues on:

You're going in to the classroom and you're, you know, they say observe the teacher, but they don't really tell you what you should be looking for. You don't see them setting up a classroom and procedures. Never something you talk about in university, or management class. During my IPT and APT I never asked my mentors what their rules and procedures were, you know, how do you run things in your class (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation)

In a later conversation Shane spoke of one of his colleagues sending in a student teacher to observe his lesson. Shane seemed confident to allow the student teacher to observe him, but wondered what the observer was writing down. In discussing the situation he said, *"what are you even writing down, if you want to know what to write down, I will tell you what you should be writing down"* (Shane, March 22, 2010, personal conversation). Shane was eager to talk to other beginning teachers about teaching. As he mentioned, if he only had known what to look for, he could have learned so much more. It reminded me again of my IPT students who seemed to awaken in the field to realize that they were shifting from students to teachers. It was almost like this shift created a new meaning, a new context for their learning. Their learning thus far in university applied to tests, or assignments, but now their learning was the practice of teaching, for living out teaching.

Coming to Physical Education

The majority of individuals who become physical education teachers often have a rich sports background. Some research questions the intentions of future physical education teachers. The story of, coach then teacher, is one that comes up

often in physical education literature. Physical education teachers may have a passion for sport, and may hope to foster this passion through coaching. I often hear students tell stories about how coaching has inspired them to become physical education teachers. I had a student tell me the other day that “to be able to coach and get paid for it is a pretty sweet deal”. There is no doubt that coaching is a large part of being a physical educator. There is an unspoken expectation that physical education teachers will take care of coaching duties. They are stereotyped as having the most knowledge of sports. However, there are some major differences between coaching and being a physical education teacher that coaches.

Science Teacher?

The path that brought Shane to physical education is different from the common stereotypes. Shane’s biology experiences played a large part shaping his desire to become a physical education teacher.

Um, I never really thought about teaching PE which is kind of weird. You know I enjoyed PE and I played sports in high school, but for some reason the thought of teaching PE never crossed my mind; it was always Bio. Bio is difficult and I thought I could help explain it to kids. So what happened was when I started to do my degrees, I just got, I would not say I got bored with Bio, the other aspects, the non human aspects the Bio got boring and I had a friend of mine that was in PE and looking at what he was learning; the anatomy, the physiology that was what really peaked my interest. So that was when I made the switch....So teaching PE is kind of an afterthought, once it was there I was like, oh ya, I guess I could teach PE (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

When Shane first mentioned that he switched from science to physical education the first thought that went through my mind was “I hope he does not say he switched because science was hard, and physical education was easier”. As he continued talking it became clear that this was not the case. *“Ya I think people don’t really realize the background that PE teachers have in terms of how the body works, physiology... a lot of the courses you are taking, you’re taking them with kinesiology students so you have similar backgrounds”* (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Hands-on

A major resonance throughout Shane’s story was his kinesthetic background, working with his hands, and learning by doing. Although he did not mention it at this point, I now wonder how the idea of teaching the things he loved, biology, anatomy, kinesiology, in a hands-on way, or more human way, may have helped him to make the switch to physical education. A later story that Shane told again reminded me of his hands-on nature:

I took my class to the weight room and I have them working on developing their own fitness programs....getting a chance to work with kids, they’re like, Oh what does this do? Oh, what does that do? How do I do this properly. You know, you are able to describe to them exactly what is working, exactly how they should be doing it (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

As Shane explained teaching in the fitness room, he became passionate in his tone of voice as he explained the hands-on learning that often takes place in this space. Again, his passion and joy for helping students learn became apparent.

You're Better Than That

I really had a keen interest in cars, four by fours, motor bikes, old muscle cars and stuff like that. It was something that my Dad and I related to; he drove some of those cars when he was my age...we grew up poor, but my dad would always build these old sleds and he would fix them up and we would bomb them around. You know mechanics was something I really found enjoyment in...when I was in grade 9 or 10 I started to get application materials from a big tech institute in the states, probably one of the tops for schools in mechanics...my dad kind of dismissed it and basically told me I was better than being a mechanic (Shane, March 1, 2010, personal conversation).

When listening to this story the thing that resonated with me were Shane's Father's words. Although his father had not graduated from high school at the time, he clearly wanted something more for his son. Maybe his father, in his own way, was telling Shane that he did not have to settle for something, that there were many opportunities to be had. Maybe his father was letting him know that he had confidence in him that he could be what he wanted to be. The fact that Shane's sister is now in medical school leads me to believe that this value for education was passed on to her as well.

This story evoked other interesting aspect; Shane was clearly gifted in working with his hands. This hands-on, or kinesthetic, interest also resonated though Shane's other experiences. When talking about paying for university he mentioned:

If you look at the things I have done to help pay for my schooling, you know, I have built bridges...you know, if I was less scholastically inclined I could frame for the rest of my life and be happy, or be a mechanic for the rest of my life and be happy, but you know you need to have an outlet...I guess...you know education has always kind of helped me focus (Shane, Personal communication, March 1, 2010).

As I reflected on Shane's words, I saw these experiences as being pieces of Shane's philosophical teaching puzzle. His value of education, the need to work with his hands in a human way, and the need for him to gain joy from watching others learn have all become apparent. I wonder what happens if Shane feels that his students do not value education? What happens if Shane is not able to teach in a hands-on way? What happens if that is not able to realize that "*aha moment*" of learning? As Shane enters his career as a teacher with imagined stories of who he may be, I wonder how his stories may shift if his imagined stories are not realized?

The Shift

They always tell you it's lots of work...but it is way more work than I ever would have expected. At the end of the workweek when I was building bridges I used to work between 10 and 12 hour days, six days a week. I am more exhausted now then after those weeks...I don't know maybe it is the physical pain when you are building bridges, you know you can get over it. But the mental exhaustion, constantly being on. You know if you're framing and you have a bad day, you go build somewhere else and you don't have to talk to anyone. You can swear and fire nails wherever you want. In the classroom you constantly gotta

be on, you gotta be, you get upset with kids, but it's always controlled and bottled...I just find it crazy exhausting (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Sundays

“How are things going?” I asked.

“Oh good, It is already Wednesday, the week is more than half over” (Shane, February 24, 2010, phone conversation).

That was the start of my initial phone conversation with Shane. We had emailed back and forth a few times, but this phone call was the first time I had talked to him. His words resonated with me strongly, as I remembered my feeling as a beginning teacher of heading into Thursday knowing I had only two more days to go before the weekend. I remembered the atmosphere in the staff room changing as the week progressed and conversations turning from school plans to weekend plans. It seemed that on Thursdays and Fridays people were in better spirits, there was more conversation, more laughter; teaching seemed easier.

After I got off the phone with Shane I wrote down a comment. “I wonder about Sundays” (February 24, 2010, Field Notes). During our second conversation the atmosphere and conversation were more comfortable. We both knew what to expect, and I asked Shane what his Sundays are like. He laughed:

Every Sunday I go through the same thing, you're scared shitless and you're waiting for the wheels to fall off, like is this the week that everything just kinda goes sour? Maybe the worst has already happened, you just have not realized it yet, you're just waiting for the absolute train to derail. The week when the kids

just rebel, and mutiny happens, things like that (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

As I listened to Shane's story I wanted to tell him that it got easier for me. As I began to know the students better, know my material better and made connections with staff, the Sunday's became easier. I wondered if Shane felt like his head was just above the water and that he was swimming in a break that he has never swum before. Did he feel like he could not predict the height of the next wave, and this uneasy, unknowing feeling was his Sunday? He continues on:

Sunday it just feels like I get this feeling like I did not do enough on the weekend, not enough planning, not enough marking. Am I actually ready for tomorrow? How many days do I have planned for? What am I going to do about this class? Did I print this stuff off? Is everything going to go sour? Is this student going to show up? With physical education I care more about whether the kids have fun. I should apply that to more of my classes. So I am always like, is this game going to be enjoyable (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation)?

I wondered how Shane dealt with this constant anxiety and, in our third conversation we talked about sustainability and he mentioned:

Just the accumulation, and seeing, and waiting things out, and every Friday you think, it is the weekend! Then Monday it is just right back in to it, and you think, alright it is Wednesday I can do this. Ya, eventually it just gets harder and harder to make it through the week (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

Even as I wrote this, I could not help but wonder how living in this constant flux was shaping this beginning teacher's professional and social life.

Juggling

September and October were very trying times for Shane, and to keep his head above water, or maybe keep himself sane, he had to make some changes.

I really made a concerted effort to budget my time better, and so I am a little bit better now with making this work time and this home time. Get to bed at a decent hour, that sort of thing...I have always valued sleep, and looking at it from a physiological perspective I know how valuable it is. So I would rather go to bed earlier and get 7 hours sleep, you know, get 6 hours sleep and have more prep work done...when I look at my evaluation, they say I need to work on my planning more, which is true, but I have to make a concession somewhere, and unfortunately it is here (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane spoke of making a clear boundary between work and home, that is between his life on the professional and personal landscape. He did not seem to mind putting in long hours; it was the feeling of never getting away from it that really seemed to frustrate him. With his job as a framer, at the end of the day he knew that he was done. It started up again the next day, but for this day he was done. He has made an effort to apply this feeling to teaching. He also alluded to allowing more time for things that he likes or values.

An area of Shane's story that resonated strongly with me was the thread of physical activity. He mentioned that now he had it scheduled into his calendar to make sure that he took time for it. I can remember using the fitness facility during

report card time at a school in which I taught. A colleague saw me working out in there and mentioned, “ You must not have enough work to do.” I responded, in a fairly direct tone that, “ I had plenty of work to do, but that being physically active and healthy trumped the work I had to do.” My colleague seemed caught off guard by my comment. I wonder how Shane, as a first year teacher, would be portrayed by his colleagues if he left some planning undone while he went for a run?

I guess it was probably the build up of like slogging through the mud so to speak. Just getting worn down to the point where I had a class where I just, you know, my office I can see in the gym so it is not like I left my class unattended, but I just left the class and went and sat in my office, and I was just like what is going on here. This is not going the way I want it to. You reflect on the day and the week and you just find that things do not add up. Just knowing myself, and knowing that, just thinking how long can I go at this rate with this type of stress, and this type of running in to a brick wall everyday? Eventually something was going to break, and I did not want it to be me physically or mentally, so I knew I had to change something (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

Personal and Professional Landscapes

These changes or shifts that Shane spoke of happened on both his personal and professional landscapes. The place of the changes is an important thing to think about when I wonder about how each of these landscapes may shape Shane’s identity as a teacher. In thinking about these shifts in Shane’s story, I also noted the personal and social changes. Shane seemed to be telling himself a different story of

what he was trying to do; he began to live differently. He spoke of personal changes: more sleep, set work time and school time, more physical activity. He also spoke of social changes: making more time to spend with friends, and working harder to make connections with students. These changes portrayed things that philosophically Shane finds to be important parts of his life and practice.

You talk about a breaking point of work and things like that, and I found that's what I had to do. I had to cut down my planning and marking and all the other things I was doing in the evening because the stress and frustration was boiling over and it was completely killing everything else that I had going on. So in order to keep my identity, keep myself sane and happy and healthy, I had to scale back what I was doing (March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

Something has got to give. Shane made a number of decisions to prioritize what was important to who he was as a teacher and a person.

Dilemma

No, no, I think that is the thing. Where I want to put my best is in the classroom, and so, you know, I am always going to be a little behind in my marking, my planning is probably never going to be quite as good because I want to be focused on what is going on in the classroom and I realize that they go hand in hand especially with planning. But when it comes down to it that is where I want to be doing the best I can. So by providing after school drop in floor hockey, by having a wrestling team, and volleyball team, doing the things that are extra curricular that cut in to my time to do all the other things I think it's just, it is going to get me farther (March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

As Shane reflected on who he was becoming he faced a dilemma:

Ya, and you are stuck with the same lesson all the time, stand and deliver. And you don't enjoy them as much, and the kids don't enjoy them as much. You feel like you are not putting your best foot forward, you know, you talk about honesty, I just feel like telling them sometimes, I am sorry, I am giving you guys all I can right now, in a few years I will be better...I am just finding there is not enough time. I was upstairs in the science lab looking for stuff for this unit, and I found a whole bunch of stuff for the past unit, and I was like "crap". Now they don't get to do that, and now I feel bad. It sucks, the kids are bored, and again it comes down to classroom management. Maybe if I was able to plan more engaging lessons they would be less inclined to mess around (March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane's honesty throughout our conversations was something that I appreciated. I knew it must have been difficult to speak of this when he felt like he was not doing the best job, especially when he was trying to do his best. My story of beginning teaching resonates with Shane's experiences in a number of different ways. I remembered feeling guilty that I was not able to give as much time as I wanted to the students. I remembered resenting the time spent with the curriculum as I felt that my time could be better spent trying to connect with students. I remembered feeling like I was a bit of a fraud, and that it was only a matter of time before someone found out. Like Shane, I valued time spent with students far more than the other intricacies of teaching, and I too made concessions. Sometimes my planning was weak, and my lesson objectives did not tie directly to the mandated

curriculum. But at the end of the day if I felt like I had connected with a student, or made a difference in some way, I was okay with everything else. I knew that the students had brought me to this place, and my stories to live included honoring the very thing that had brought me here; the students.

When Shane mentioned that the extra curricular activities are going to get him further, from my interpretation, he was not speaking about furthering himself, but furthering his connections to the students. This relational importance became clearer as our conversations continued.

Searching for Connections

In further conversations Shane and I discussed what is valued in the education system. The talk turned to standardized test scores, and student achievement. What makes a good teacher? I began to reminisce about my second or third day of teaching. I was walking around the school with the principal. He mentioned a teacher who had retired the year before, and said that he was one of the best teachers he had ever seen. The next words out of his mouth, unfortunately all too often denote effective teaching. "He always had a high standard of achievement scores. His students always did well." While I agreed that someone who can consistently help students to be successful with grades is doing something well, I worried that too often that puts the focus on the end product rather than the process. As I continued teaching that year, I heard many stories about the aforementioned teacher. "He had a way with the kids, he could explain anything to them in a story...he always seemed to have time for the students, they seemed to be drawn to him...he was a magician, I never once saw him have a management

issue...he was the type of guy that always seemed to be there to help out, no matter how busy he was." When I heard these stories of this teacher, I was disappointed I had not seen him teach. I thought that he sounded like the kind of teacher that I wanted to be. I wondered why the principal did not start with these stories of this teacher and how he made a difference in students' lives. Why was the first thing he told me in regards to standardized test marks?

Being a young teacher coming in you want to build relationships...you hate to come back to test scores. I think back to myself, in high school I probably brought the class average down. So I made my teachers look worse than they were and, you know, I was able, for whatever reason, I was able to make it to where I am now (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Through the inquiry into these words I came to understand more of Shane's identity, his stories to live by. His past experiences as a student have in some way informed his decisions of what is and is not important in his classroom. *"You know I am trying to give these kids other things. Possible life lessons, or you know maybe even just an adult that takes an interest in them (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversations).*

Shane's demeanor towards planning, grades, and mandated curriculum may come from his experience as a student when grades were not important to him. He did not have good grades growing up, and he is now a successful teacher in a district that hires very few new teachers to full time contracts. I could see that he told a story of himself in which learning made a difference and not necessarily grades. I wondered about certain teachers or individuals, people who showed an interest in

him, and that may have made a difference in Shane's life, that is, people who showed an interest in him and helped him along the way to becoming a teacher who wanted to live that way with his students.

Imagined Stories Reshaped...

Professional Landscape

I've got class averages of 50%, so the kids are not getting the information I am giving them. I've got behavior problems and you try to solve them by resorting back to just disciplinarian style, you are losing those relationships. At the end of the day it is like, what was I doing here all day? I did not build relationships and I did not pass on any knowledge (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversations).

As I reflected on Shane's stories of his experience, I noticed the things he imagined himself doing were building relationships with students, and watching them have that "aha moment". I saw these two things that brought him to teaching. As I turned to think of Shane's stories of his pleasure as he watched his sister and brother "get it". However, as I inquired deeper into Shane's stories, and thought about beginning teachers, I wondered what might happen to Shane if his imagined story could not be lived out on the professional and personal landscape?

The first time I yelled in class the kids were like, they did not really know what to do. They were looking at me weird, like that did not really work because it is not really me...I want a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere where we can joke around and have fun, but unfortunately you know with discipline problems that I am dealing with, all of that gets pushed to the side and I don't feel like I am

being who I want to be in the classroom (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

As Shane told this story, I saw Shane's imagined story shifting. Shane did not tell himself that he is a teacher that yells at students, yet he found himself yelling at students. As he spoke with me, he was making it visible that he was finding it hard to live out his imagined story of who he would be as a teacher. Shane's story of connecting with students becomes impossible, unlivable in a classroom where he becomes disciplinarian. At this point in time he sees no other way to try to avoid chaos, and to live his life as a teacher.

I am only focusing on classroom management and planning and how am I going to get through the curriculum. And you know a lot of the relationships are not getting built because I don't have time. Unfortunately, the way things are going, you know I have created an adverse relationship with some of the harder students I need to be reaching...unfortunately I can't build relationships to get them to work, so I have to force them to work, which further polarizes it (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

Personal Landscape

Just like Shane imagined what his life would be like on the professional landscape, he also had an imagined story of what his life would be like on his personal landscape. When Shane graduated from university he subbed for a portion of time and picked up a part time contract at the end of the year. This work prior to teaching full time may have changed Shane's perceptions of what his personal

landscape may be like as a teacher. When I asked Shane what he imagined his life as a teacher might look like he mentioned the phrase young urban professional.

I pictured first year teaching I guess just being out of school for the first time, as having more time then I did at school. School was booked up, especially me trying to pay for school. I was working 30 hours a week on to of my school schedule. So I [as a teacher] I saw myself joining sports leagues, or Friday night darts. That first summer me and some friends went to a big festival in Vancouver, and being able to do things spur of the moment, hit trips and that is kind of what I was hoping for. Like I said that young urban professional (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane found himself unable to live out this story. His evenings were spent at school planning, marking or coaching. His weekends were also spent doing things that pertained to teaching. If he did not spend time doing this, he felt sick as he thought about the upcoming week. *“It’s more work, and I find myself struggling with that. Do I want to be 27 years old and already the corporate man? This is basically what you have to be”* (Shane, March 15, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane’s imagined story is one he is unable to live out on his personal landscape. I wonder how this will shape Shane’s decision to stay in or leave the profession of teaching.

Sustaining Moments

Connections...

When Shane and I spoke of what he felt were sustaining moments, another common thread emerged.

Last semester I had a grade 12 class, and due to our school size, we have some odd classes, this was a class where I had 8 students. But they were literally my rock last semester...I would come in, they were really quite, but I was finding I had to talk to myself a lot of the time, no one wanted to speak up, they would just do anything I asked them to. You know I would set them up, and we could play games, trying to play games with 8 students can be difficult, so I would try lots of different things, and they did anything I could ever ask them to do. I found I made more connections with that group, they were a little bit older more mature (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

In this class Shane seemed able to live out more of his imagined story. The students enjoyed his lessons, he was able to experiment, he had no management issues, and connections were made with the students.

I play guitar, and a kid from my grade 10 class plays guitar, and we would chat about that on occasion. Another student, every time I was away for a day, he would come back and tell me that he missed me, just ridiculous things like that (Shane, March 8, 2010, personal conversation).

When Shane spoke of these experiences, he smiled and laughed. I never asked him, but I wonder if these were the experiences he was expecting? Were these the connections he was hoping to make? Was this the story of the difference maker, he was hoping to be?

In our last conversation I again asked Shane what types of things would keep him teaching.

I think for me it is kind of coming back to the students, and more necessarily the

relationships and I am building they seem to finally be starting to come about. Not in an overt way, like I have this one hellion class, absolutely off the wall that I have been dealing with all year. Finally it seems like overall maybe I am sending one less student to the office a day...sort of like small increments, so it feels like it is getting easier, and I don't know what exactly it is, maybe I am thinking the relationships (Shane, March 22, 2010, personal conversation).

Shane spoke again of the relationships; it became a kind of touch-stone for our conversations. It was all about the students. The good days and the bad days all revolved around the students. He did not say that more support, or more mentorship would sustain him. I wondered if Shane had more support would he become more effective at managing a classroom, which might allow him to make deeper connections with students? It seemed to be that more connections with students, more aha moments, more discussions about guitar, and more students missing him would be what sustained him.

Shane also spoke of things becoming easier as he progressed. He could not pinpoint exactly what it was that was making it easier. He mentioned maybe the relationships. He also seemed to be become more confident in his planning, and more versed in what to expect on a daily basis. Maybe, more confident in his abilities as a teacher.

Future Stories

I can not say if Shane will stay in the profession or not at this point. I do know that when I asked him about his uneasiness about next years contract he did not seem to be too concerned about it. He mentioned that whatever happened he was

confident that he would land on his feet. In fact, his biggest concern seemed to be that if he left, the students may see him as abandoning them. Shane seemed to be very positive about the future. He noted that he was looking forward to coming back revived, and ready to start all over again after the summer break. Shane used a phrase, "*for the time being*" a few times, with the intention that he was not sure what the future may hold. Shane talked often of developing as a professional and becoming a better teacher. He also queried about potentially getting his Masters and maybe even PhD so that he could teach at the university some day.

In our last meeting Shane seemed fairly confident that his probationary contract would be renewed, and he seemed excited for what the next year might bring for him. I wonder if this sense of excitement comes from being able to start over, and an inspiration to become that imagined teacher he had hoped. I also wonder how Shane's identity may be shaped if he is not able to live out this imagined story?