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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

# Social Geographies of Preservice and Early Career Teachers: Mapping Networks and Teacher Identity Development from Credential to Classroom

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Education

by

Peter Bjorklund

Committee in charge:
Professor Alan J. Daly, Chair
Professor Amy Binder
Professor Thandeka K. Chapman
Professor Amanda Datnow
Professor Megan Hopkins

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The dissertation of Peter Bjorklund is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

University of California San Diego

2021

# DEDICATION

To my partner, wife, and best friend Rebecca Bjorklund. You make me a better person and you make everything I do possible. I cannot thank you enough.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dissertation Approval Page ........ iii
Dedication ........ iv
Table of Contents ........ v
List of Abbreviations ........ vi
List of Figures ........ vii
List of Tables ........ viii
Acknowledgements ........ ix
Curriculum Vitae ........ x
Abstract of the Dissertation ........ xvi
Chapter 1: Teacher Identities and Social Networks ........ 1
Chapter 2: A Review of Teacher Identity Literature in the United States From 2008-2018 ........ 12
Chapter 3: Data collection and Study Design ........ 68
Chapter 4: Asking for a Friend: Teacher Identity and Tie Formation in Preservice Teacher Advice Networks ........ 78
Chapter 5: “We Can’t be Colorblind in the Classroom.”: The Influence of Peers and Program on Preservice Teachers’ Social Justice Teacher Identity ........ 121
Chapter 6: “Clearly this is veteran knowledge.”: Support networks and Teacher Identity of Preservice Teachers and First-Year Teachers ........ 161
Chapter 7: “I kind of have that place to sit.”: New Teacher Identity Verification Through Experiences of Belonging ........ 198
Chapter 8: The Teacher Me I Want to Be: A Longitudinal Study of Teacher Possible Selves from Credential to Classroom ........ 243
Chapter 9: Themes Across the Chapters: Boundaries, Belonging, and Optimism ........ 286
References ........ 306
Appendix A—Survey items used in the chapters ........ 335
Appendix B—Interview protocols ........ 339
Appendix C—Ego network survey ........ 350

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Teacher education program—TEP
Preservice teacher—PST
Early career teacher—ECT
English language arts—ELA

# LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Identity Process Model........................................................................................ 59
Figure 4.1 Network Structures Included in ERGM Models.................................................. 100
Figure 4.2 Advice Networks in Both Cohorts......................................................................... 104
Figure 6.1 Support Network Change Over Time.................................................................... 176
Figure 6.2 Support Network Composition Change Over Three Timepoints.......................... 178
Figure 6.3 Average Closeness in the Professional Network for Each Timepoint.................. 179
Figure 7.1 Conceptual Framework.......................................................................................... 209
Figure 7.2 Identity Verification at T1 and T2......................................................................... 215

# LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Themes found in the literature.................................................................. 15
Table 3.1 Demographics of Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts at Start of Study............ 70
Table 3.2 Interview participants.............................................................................. 71
Table 4.1 Demographics of Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts...................................... 96
Table 4.2 Descriptive Covariate Results for Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts............. 105
Table 4.3 ERGM Results for Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts.................................... 106
Table 5.1 Sample Demographics............................................................................. 129
Table 5.2 Interview Participants.............................................................................. 133
Table 5.3 Hierarchical OLS Regression on Teaching for Social Justice Beliefs................... 136
Table 6.1 Participants.......................................................................................... 172
Table 6.2 Ego network size and stability ratio for each participant.................................... 177
Table 7.1 Participants.......................................................................................... 211
Table 8.1 Participants.......................................................................................... 251

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Teacher-student relationships
Sense of belonging
Trust
Teacher identity
Peer-to-peer relationships

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**Bjorklund, P., Jr.**, Daly, A.J., Ambrose, R. & van Es, E. (2020). Connections and capacity: Preservice teachers' sense of belonging, social networks, and self-efficacy in three teacher education programs. *AERA Open. 6(1),* 1-14.

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**Bjorklund, P., Jr.** (2019). "Whoa. You speak Mexican?": Latina/o high school students' sense of belonging in Advanced Placement and honors classes**.** *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 24*(2), 109-131.

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**Bjorklund Jr., P.** (2018). Undocumented students in higher education: A review of the literature, 2001 to 2016. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(5), 631-670.

Pizmony-Levy, O. & **Bjorklund Jr., P.** (2018). International assessments of student achievement and public confidence in education: Evidence from a cross-national study. *Oxford Review of Education,* 44(2), 239-257**.**

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## MANUSCRIPTS IN PROGRESS

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Hopkins, M., **Bjorklund, P., Jr.**, & Spillane, J.P. (April 2019). Social networks and early career teachers' trajectories in the United States: Closeness and self-efficacy. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Toronto, Canada.

Hopkins, M., Weddle, H.R., **Bjorklund, P., Jr.**, Gautsch, L., Umansky, I.M., & Dabach D.B. (April 2019). Constructing opportunity: How context of receptions for newcomers shapes district policy. American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference, Toronto, Canada.

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# ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

## Social Geographies of Preservice and Early Career Teachers: Mapping Networks and Teacher Identity Development from Credential to Classroom

by

Peter Bjorklund

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of California San Diego, 2021

Professor Alan J. Daly, Chair

In the past few decades teacher identity has received increased attention in the research literature. Teacher identity is the foundation on which teachers build their practice and how they interact in the classroom. Moreover, it is a potential avenue to an increased sense of agency, professionalism, and resilience. Despite the growing breadth of literature there are gaps in the literature, specifically that identity formation is an inherently relational process; yet little scholarship has explored this idea using a framework that privileges relationships. Moreover, few scholars have used identity theory to explore teacher identity. In this dissertation I explored the how novice teachers develop their teacher identity from credential to classroom using social network theory and identity theory. Some salient findings across the chapters were that participants set social boundaries between themselves and others to define their teacher identity; participants' teacher identity both shaped and was shaped by their social networks; social justice teacher identity was strongly influenced by the teacher education program, but seemed to be less salient once participants entered the classroom; participants' acknowledged feeling their teacher identity constrained by being a novice teacher, but they were optimistic about becoming the teacher they wanted to become; and lastly, sense of belonging and value consonance played a role in teacher identity formation for participants.

# Chapter 1

## Teacher Identities and Social Networks

Over the past 25 years there has been a clear and consistent interest in teacher professional identity, also referred to as *teacher identity*[2] (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011), in the education literature. Teacher identity is the cornerstone of teachers' beliefs about their work and themselves. It bolsters feelings of professionalism and agency in the face of generally negative socio-political contexts, buoys resilience in teachers, improves their practice, increases feelings of commitment and efficacy, and can serve as a bulwark against the vulnerability, stress, and anxiety inherent in the job (Kelchtermans, 1996, 2009). Scholars agree that having an awareness and intentionality about developing a teacher identity gives new teachers a strong foundation with which they can build their pedagogy, agency, resilience, and practice (e.g., Alsup, 2006; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Flores & Day, 2006; Johnson et al., 2010). As such, it is incumbent upon teacher education programs (TEPs) to help preservice teachers (PSTs) build strong teacher identities as they transition to their own classrooms (Bullough, 1997). Hamachek (1999) contended that being aware of who one is as a teacher and how others perceive them is a critical step in becoming a good teacher. Moreover, he asserts, "*[c]onsciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are*" (Italics in original, p. 209).

Teacher identity has been explored across multiple disciplines and, despite several articles addressing the issue, a consistent definition remains elusive (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Peter Burke (1991) contended that, "[a]n *identity is a set of 'meanings'* applied to the self in a social role or situation defining what it means to be who one is (Burke & Tully, 1977). This set of meanings serves as a standard or reference for who one is" (p. 837, italics in original). As such, in this dissertation teacher identity is defined as the set of meanings teachers ascribe to themselves personally, socially, professionally, and politically that helps them to define what it means to be a teacher.

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[2] In this dissertation, the terms teacher identity and teacher professional identity will be used interchangeably.

Despite the lack of a clear definition, theories of teacher identity share common assumptions noted by multiple scholars (e.g., Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). These assumptions are well summarized by Rodgers and Scott (2008):

> (1)…identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple *contexts* which bring social, cultural, political, and historical forces to bear upon that formation; (2)…identity is formed in *relationship* with others and involves *emotions*; (3)…identity is *shifting, unstable, and multiple*; and, (4)…identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through stories over time. (p. 733, italics in original)

Rodgers and Scott (2008) averred that inherent in these assumptions is the idea that teachers should facilitate and foster an awareness of their identities and the contexts and relationships that shape them to give them agency and authority of themselves as teachers. Teacher identity "provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be,' 'how to act,' and 'how to understand' their work" (Sachs, 2005, p. 15). Moreover, it is the foundation of action and practice in the classroom, and teachers rely on it to navigate and evaluate their work and new situations as they arise (Buchanan, 2015; Hsieh, 2015; Merseth et al., 2008; Dickstein, 2008). Teacher identity determines how teachers teach, interact with their students, develop as teachers, and react to educational change and reform (Buchannan, 2015; Reeves, 2018). It "form[s] a foundation that influences action in the classroom" (Merseth, et al., 2008, p. 91). In short, the totality of teachers' work is framed by their teacher identity—it is at the core of what they do (Beijaard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Hsieh, 2015). It also serves to increase professionalism and agency for teachers in a political climate fraught with reform and accountability regimes (Reeves, 2018).

Teacher identity is particularly relevant in the current socio-political context of education. Characterized by constant reform efforts, accountability, and high-stakes testing, the socio-political climate is an affront to teachers' professionalism (Day & Gu, 2014). Media portrayals and political discourse about teachers and the public school system generally point to a glut of so-called "bad teachers" and failing public schools as a root cause of social ills (Berliner, 2013; Cohen, 2010b; Goldstein, 2011; Holmes et al., 2018). A strong sense of teacher identity can allay the negative sentiments brought on by the current socio-political context by increasing feelings of agency, efficacy, authority, and professionalism in teachers (Day, 2018; Day & Gu, 2014; Hitlin & Elder, 2007; Reeves, 2018). Beyond the socio-political context, teacher identity can serve as a bulwark against the stresses and everyday struggles that force so many teachers out of the profession in the first five years (Day & Gu, 2014; Ingersoll et al., 2018). Positive teacher identity can promote resilience and help teachers overcome feelings of dissatisfaction, dissonance, and self-doubt (Beijaard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Reeves; 2018; Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

In this dissertation, I will explore how novice teachers develop their teacher identity from credential to classroom and examine the interaction between their social networks and their teacher identity development. I argue that a strong teacher identity provides new teachers a firm starting point to begin building their craft, a foundation to help them weather the stressors and dissonance experienced by new teachers (Pillen et al., 2013), and a clearer understanding of who they are and what they stand for in the classroom and in their role as teachers (Bullough, 2008).

The factors enumerated above make manifest the importance of exploring teacher identity formation in teachers as they transition from TEPs to their own classrooms. Teacher identity is the foundation that drives the work of teachers, and it is paramount to explore how it is formed in new teachers to better understand how schools and TEPs can support PSTs and early career teachers (ECTs) in developing and maintaining their teacher identity. I will attempt to build on the teacher identity literature by addressing gaps and employing methods and frameworks that have been largely unused in the literature despite their relevance and clear connection to teacher identity—namely identity theory and social network theory. In the rest of this chapter, I will briefly describe the theoretical frameworks that I used to explore teacher identity to provide a general study overview and then describe the subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

## Overview of Theoretical Frameworks

Identity theory and social network theory can add to the teacher identity literature (discussed more in chapter 2), namely, adding a new we of understanding teacher identity, and to address the a dearth of scholarship that explores the social side of teacher identity development. Teacher identity is complex and nuanced, as such it is difficult to capture it with one definition or with one theory (Mockler, 2011a; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). The multiplicity of theories and approaches to researching teacher identity have created a rich literature that explores teacher identity in manifold ways. That said, identity theory (Burke & Stets, 2009) has been under-utilized and offers new avenue to add a different perspective to teacher identity work. In fact, identity theory captures many of the concepts and ideas that are discussed in the teacher identity literature, and therefore can be a useful organizing and analytic framework. Some scholars have recently begun to explore teacher identity through the lens of identity theory (e.g., Tsang &

Jiang, 2018; van der Want et al., 2015, 2018a, 2018b). I will build on that literature, but also address the social side of teacher identity development via social capital theory and social network theory.

Forming a teacher identity is a not an individual endeavor, it involves interactions with institutions and groups of people (Beijaard et al., 2004; Cohen, 2008; Danielewicz, 2001). Further, teacher identity, and identities more generally, is never fully attained, it is constantly being shaped and reshaped by these interactions (Beijaard et al., 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009; Danielewicz, 2001). Despite these facts, teacher identity literature—and identity theory literature more broadly—has not utilized a framework that privileges social interactions. I will address this gap in the literature by grounding this study in social capital theory and social network theory. In the sections below I will briefly describe identity theory and social network theory.

## Identity Theory

Identity theory scholars contend that an identity is a set of *meanings* through which people define who they are when they engage in a particular societal role, group membership, or particular characteristics about themselves (Burke & Stets, 2009). These *meanings* are understood as the responses that individuals have when they think about themselves in different identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013). Identity theory has roots in structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980). This framework suggests that identities depend on social structures and cultural meanings and expectations of roles, groups, and individual characteristics (Burke, 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). That said, identity theory does not deny that actors within these structures have agency (Tsushima & Burke, 1999). In other words, social behavior rooted in identities is not wholly determined by social structures; it is also negotiated through interchanges between people that shape and form their interactions (Stryker, 1980).

Identities serve in part to create expectations for relationships and interactions between people (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). Interactions take place between people who occupy positions and engage in named patterns of behavior based on the meanings they ascribe to each situation (Burke & Stets, 2009). Additionally, identities help people define who they are and give meaning and purpose to their actions and their lives (Burke & Stets, 2009; Thoits, 2012).

Scholars use identity theory to explain behaviors and interactions between people within social structures (Burke & Stets, 2009). They posit that people generally seek verification of their identity or *identity verification* (Burke, 1991; Swann, 2005; Turner, 2002). For example, when a teacher's teacher identity is activated, they will seek to verify their identity in their interactions with their students or peers. If they receive feedback from their interactions that verifies their identity, they will continue their behavior in the interaction. On the other hand, if they do not receive verification of their identity from others (*identity nonverification*) they will feel psychological discomfort and seek to address the situation by altering their behavior until their perceptions of the situation matches their teacher identity (Burke, 1991; Swann, 2005). It is easy to imagine a scenario where a PST or ECT whose teacher identity—e.g., the cool teacher—is not congruent with the way they perceive their students' actions towards them or the realities of their school site. As a result, they may face psychological stress and act in ways to attempt to align their perceptions with their identities (e.g. Merseth et al. 2008; Hsieh, 2015).

Identity theory presents a strong theoretical lens to explore teacher identity, its formation, and its relationship to behavior in the classroom. It offers an avenue to bring together what is otherwise an atomized and disparate field. Despite these strengths, identity theory does not go far enough to explore the social side of teacher identity formation—social capital theory and social network theory are frameworks that can bridge that gap.

### Social Network Theory

Teacher identity development is a fundamentally social undertaking (Beijaard et al., 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009; Wenger, 1998). Despite this fact, few scholars have used a social capital or social network perspective to explore teacher identity formation and change. Social network theory "provides a formal and conceptual way to think about the social world" (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 11). It is grounded in the belief that relationships among interacting units are related to the actions of individuals (Borgatti et al., 2018). The majority of social science uses an attribute-based focus to understand peoples' actions and behavior (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Social network theory foregrounds relationships between actors as drivers of peoples' actions, beliefs, and behaviors (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010, Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Social network theory helps me to focus this dissertation on the social side of identity formation—an inherently social endeavor—and bridge gaps in both the teacher identity literature and the identity theory literature. In this dissertation, I used identity theory and social network theory to guide my data collection, data analysis, and interpretation.

## The Study

Inspired by the work in teacher identity and theoretically grounded in identity theory and social network theory, I examined the social networks of two cohorts of PSTs (one single-subject and one multiple subject cohort) and I looked more specifically at the social networks and teacher identity formation of 16 PSTs in those cohorts over a one-year period—as student teachers—and nine of the 16 through their first year in their own classrooms as ECTs. This study will employ quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) to answer the following overarching questions:

*RQ1: How does teacher identity form over time as educators transition from credential to classroom?*

*RQ2: How do educators' social networks interact with the development of their teacher identity?*

The findings are presented as a series of journal article-style chapters. In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I critically explore the empirical literature on teacher identity in the United States over the last 10 years and detail some of the gaps in that literature. In Chapter 3, I discuss the general methods of the entire study. The findings chapters—Chapters 4 through 8—are a series of discrete but connected articles exploring different facets of my data. The chapters will look at the trajectory of participants from their TEP (Chapters 4 and 5) as they transition to their schools and complete their first year of teaching (Chapters 6, 7, and 8).

In Chapter 4, I will use exponential random graph models (ERGMs; Bjorklund & Mamas, in press; Lusher et al., 2013) examine the relationship between teacher identity and tie formation in advice networks of PSTs in the final month of their program. Identity is formed in part by our social networks and the connections within them (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009). Moreover, teacher identity also plays a role in how PSTs and ECTs build their social networks (Baker-Doyle, 2012). As such, it is important to begin this dissertation by examining the role of teacher identity in tie formation in advice networks. This chapter will be guided by the question, *What is the relationship between teacher identities and tie formation in PSTs advice seeking networks?*

In Chapter 5, I will take a mixed methods social network approach (Froelich et al., 2020) to explore the relationship between social networks and PSTs' social justice identity (Enterline et al., 2008; Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). PSTs' social justice teacher identity is fundamental to how they learn, and how they will shape their classrooms to address systemic oppression and teach their students (Chubbock & Zembylas, 2016; Farnsworth, 2010). PSTs social justice identity is socially negotiated between peers and contexts (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). In other words, peers and the TEP both play a role in shaping PSTs social justice teacher identity. In this chapter I used a mixed methods approach (Cresswell & Clark, 2011) to explore the following three research questions: (a) *Is there a relationship between close relationships with diverse peers and social justice teacher identity?* (b) *Is there a relationship between value consonance with the TEP and social justice teacher identity?* (c) *How does interaction with the TEP and their peers shape PSTs' social justice teacher identity?*

In Chapter 6, I explored the relationships between participants' professional support networks and teacher identity formation. I used a mixed-methods ego network approach (Baker-Dolye, 2015; Froelich et al. 2020; Perry et al., 2018) to explore how participants' professional support networks changed as the transitioned from their TEP into their classrooms, and how the relationships in these networks shaped participants' teacher identity. This chapter was guided by the research questions: (a) *How do support networks change as PSTs transition to their roles as teachers and through their first year of teaching?* (b) *Why do their professional support networks change over time?* (c) *How do their professional support networks contribute to teacher identity in ECTs?*

Chapter 7 I examined participants' experiences of identity-verification and sense of belonging in their first year of teaching using a connected mixed methods approach to analyze the data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). People seek identity verification through interactions with others and they often seek experiences and people who verify and validate who they believe themselves to be (Burke & Stets, 2009; Swann, 2005). Continuous identity verification increases social bonds between people and feelings belonging (Burke & Stets, 1999; Stets et al., 2018). Experiences of belonging also often serve as identity verification (Guibernau, 2013). In this chapter, I will offer a conceptual framework to examine the relationship between identity verification, experiences of belonging, and teacher identity in teachers during their first year at their new schools. As such, Chapter 7 will be guided by three questions: (a) *How do first-year teachers' feelings of identity verification change over the course of the year?* (b) *How do first-year teachers experience feelings of belonging in their new school?* (c) *What is the relationship between experiences of sense of belonging and identity verification in first-year teachers?*

In Chapter 8, I guided my data collection and analysis using possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986). I used possible selves theory as a window to explore teacher identity development as participants completed their teacher education program and moved through their first year of teaching. Hamman and his colleagues (2010) contended that exploring future teacher selves is a promising avenue to understanding teacher identity. Thus, in Chapter 8, I took a qualitative approach using interview data that was guided by the following questions: (a) *How do new teachers describe their possible teacher selves as they transition to from TEP to the classroom?* (b) *How, if at all, do teacher possible selves change during the transition from TEP to classroom?* (c) *To what or whom do new teachers attribute the success or failure in achieving their possible selves?*

In Chapter 9, I will make connections and synthesize the themes across these five chapters. Specifically, I will summarize and synthesize results, describe the limitations, and what this dissertation adds to the literature.

## Conclusion

In the current socio-political context, it is crucial to cultivate positive and cogent teacher identities in new teachers. It is paramount that the process of teacher identity development begins in TEPs, so that when PSTs transition to their school sites and start their careers, they do so with a strong sense of teacher identity and a deep understanding of themselves as teachers. This study contributes to the literature on teacher identity by thoroughly and explicitly exploring the role of social networks in teacher identity formation and by building on recent teacher identity research using identity theory. Moreover, it will contribute to identity theory and social network theory by pairing the frameworks in ways that are novel, both theoretically and methodologically. The findings can inform the organization and development of TEPs and collaboration at school sites. Further, the results can inform PSTs and ECTs so that they are better equipped to utilize their networks to address the vulnerabilities of being a teacher, address their own well-being, and ultimately become better teachers for their students.

# Chapter 2

## A Review of Teacher Identity Literature in the United States From 2008-2018

Teacher identity is the foundation from which teachers grow and learn to become the teacher that they envision themselves to be. It has a strong influence on the way teachers teach, interact with their students and peers, develop as teachers, react to educational change and reform, and respond to adversity and struggle. Despite its clear importance to educators, scholars of teacher identity have yet to find a unifying understanding of the construct. In an effort to explore this issue and other gaps in the teacher identity literature, in this chapter I will review the empirical literature on teacher identity in the United States from 2008-2018. After reviewing the literature and discussing the gaps in it, I will describe identity theory, social capital theory, and social network theory in more depth and argue that they are useful frameworks to address the gaps in this literature and offer some theoretical coherence in the space.

The purpose of this chapter is fourfold: (1) to map the teacher identity research landscape in the United States over the last 10 years, (2) to explore the gaps and weaknesses in the literature, (3) to understand the main themes in the literature to better situate and guide my dissertation, and (4) to argue the benefits of combining identity theory, social capital theory, and social network theory to explore and understand teacher identity. To these ends, I reviewed 51 empirical studies of teacher identity in the United States, all published between 2008 and 2018. As I discuss in the sections that follow, the literature shows that (a) teacher identities are rooted in school biographies and narratives—especially for preservice teachers (PSTs) and first-year teachers; (b) teachers frequently face identity dissonance in times of transition; (c) current national contexts erode teacher identity; (d) the school context is integral to teacher identity; and (e) teacher education programs (TEPs) play a significant role in teacher identity formation and can implement several approaches to facilitating teacher identity development. Before turning to a discussion of these findings and of the gaps and weaknesses in the literature, I will first explain my methods and inclusion/exclusion criteria for this review.

## Methods

There have been three widely cited literature reviews about teacher identity since the turn of the twenty-first century—Beijaard et al. (2004), Rodgers and Scott (2008), and Beauchamp and Thomas (2009). These are all at least a decade old, however, and the literature over the last 10 years has generally not been as well documented; Izadinia (2013) is one exception. All of the reviews named above and theories about teacher identity have noted that context—site, local, state, and national—has an impact on teacher identity (Akkerman et al., 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., Rodgers & Scott, 2008). National zeitgeist, policies, cultural symbols, and cultural discourse regarding teachers and education all impact teacher identity (Akkerman et al., 2011; Britzman, 1986; Buchanan, 2015; Bullough, 1997; Cohen, 2010b; Day & Gu, 2010; Sugrue, 1997). The United States education system is characterized by high accountability driven by standardization and test scores (Schultz & Ravtich, 2013; Stone-Johnson, 2014, Reeves, 2018), increased levels of privatization of schools (Reeves, 2018), teaching as a low-status job (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017), and, as noted in the introduction, high levels of teacher dissatisfaction. As such, in this review I focused on empirical studies in the United States to get a better sense of how these ideologies and facets of the education landscape are impacting teacher identity.

### Search Strategy, Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria, and Data Extraction

In the summer of 2018, I began to search two major databases in education and social science research: ERIC and Web of Science. I used the same search protocol for each, and only searched peer reviewed articles. My searches included the following terms: “teacher identity,” “‘teacher identity’ AND ‘United States,’” “teacher professional identity,” “‘teacher professional identity’ AND ‘United States,’” and “‘pre-service teacher’ AND ‘teacher identity.’” I also used the reference lists from identified studies to find other articles germane to this review.

These searches yielded 1,069 articles. After removing duplicates, I searched the abstracts of these articles to identify empirical (i.e., not theoretical) peer reviewed studies that were written in English, were set in the United States, and explicitly addressed teachers and student teachers in K–12 formal education settings. I excluded dissertations, policy documents, conference papers, and literature reviews. I also excluded studies that addressed specific teacher identities (e.g., science teacher identity; white teacher identity) as these articles describe discipline-specific and area-specific issues that were not necessarily germane to my broader study of general, cross-disciplinary teacher identity. After I excluded articles that did not meet my criteria, 51 articles remained.

I created an Excel database and coded the articles to capture author(s), year, research questions/purposes/hypotheses, framework(s), definition of teacher identity, group under study (PSTs, first-year teachers, experienced teachers, or a mix), methods, sample, data sources, and themes. I conducted full readings of the 51 articles that fit my inclusion/exclusion criteria to examine their findings as well as their strengths and weaknesses. As I read, I took notes on each article and created a list of salient themes.

## Results

Of the 51 articles that I reviewed, 49% ($n$=25) explored teacher identity in PSTs, 16% ($n$=8) looked at teacher identity in first-year teachers, 20% ($n$=10) examined teacher identity in teachers with two or more years of experience, and 8% ($n$=4) explored mixed samples of teachers (e.g., PSTs and first-year teachers). An additional 6% (*n*=3) explored the same group of teachers over time (e.g., PSTs through their first four years in the classroom), and 2% (*n*=1) did not follow a specific group of teachers. Methodologically there was not much diversity in these studies. The vast majority were qualitative (88%, *n*=45), while 8% (*n*=4) utilized mixed methods, and 4% (*n*=2) were quantitative. Overall, the articles highlighted that teacher identity is largely defined by school biography, that teachers face dissonance in transitions, that the national context of the United States is inimical to teacher identity, and that teacher education programs can play a large role in creating awareness of teacher identity (see Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1**
*Themes Found in the Literature*

| Author(s) (Year) | Biography | Dissonance in transition | National Context | School Context | Steps for TEPs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Baker-Doyle (2012) | | x | | x | x |
| Barnatt et al. (2017) | | x | | x | x |
| Boyd, Gorham, Justice, & Anderson (2013) | x | | | | x |
| Bradford & Braaten (2018) | | x | x | x | |
| Bryson (2017) | x | | | | x |
| Buchanan (2015) | x | x | x | x | x |
| Cohen (2008) | | | | x | x |
| Cohen (2010a) | x | | | x | x |
| Cohen (2010b) | | | x | | |
| Cook (2009) | x | x | | | x |
| Coward, Matteson, & Hamman (2012) | | x | | | x |
| Dassa & Derose (2017) | | | | | x |
| Dotger & Smith (2010) | | x | | | x |
| Dugas (2016) | | x | | | x |
| Eisenbach (2016) | x | | | | x |
| Erickson & Pinnegar (2017) | | | | | x |
| Freedman & Appleman (2008) | | x | | | x |
| Galman (2009) | x | x | | | x |
| Gatimu & Reynolds (2013) | | x | x | x | |

**Table 2.1**
*Themes Found in the Literature* (continued)

| Author(s) (Year) | Biography | Dissonance in transition | National Context | School Context | Steps for TEPs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gaudelli & Ousley (2009) | | x | | | x |
| Hamman, Coward, et al. (2013) | | x | | | x |
| Hamman, Gosselin, Romano, & Bunuan (2010) | | | | | x |
| Hamman, Wang, & Burley (2013) | | | | | x |
| Haniford (2010) | | x | | | x |
| Hildenbrand & Arndt (2016) | | x | | | x |
| Hong (2010) | x | x | | x | x |
| Hong, Green, & Lowery (2017) | | x | | | x |
| Horn, Noland, Ward, & Campbell (2008) | | x | | | x |
| Hsieh (2015) | x | | | | x |
| McGriff (2015) | | | | x | |
| Merseth, Sommer, & Dickstein (2008) | x | x | | | x |
| Miller & Shifflet (2016) | x | | | | x |
| Nichols, Schutz, Rodgers, & Bilica (2017) | | x | | | x |
| Noonan (2018) | x | | | | |
| Olsen (2008) | x | x | | | x |
| Phillips (2010) | x | x | | | x |
| Pinnegar, Mangelson, Reed, & Groves (2011) | x | | | | x |
| Reeves (2018) | | x | x | | x |
| Richmond, Juzwik, & Steele (2011) | | x | | | x |
| Rodrieguez & Cho (2011) | x | | | | x |
| Ronfeldt & Grossman (2008) | x | x | | | x |
| Schultz & Ravitch (2013) | | x | | | x |
| Sexton (2008) | x | x | | | x |
| Smiley & Helfenbein (2011) | | x | | | x |
| Sydnor (2017) | | x | x | x | x |
| Thomas & Mockler (2018) | | x | x | | |
| Urzúa & Vásquez (2008) | | | | | x |
| Vavrus (2009) | x | | | | x |

**Table 2.1**
*Themes Found in the Literature* (continued)

| Author(s) (Year) | Biography | Dissonance in transition | National Context | School Context | Steps for TEPs |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vetter, Meacham, & Shieble (2013) | | x | | | x |
| Weiner & Torres (2016) | | x | x | x | |
| Wenger, Dinsmore, & Villzgómez (2012) | x | | | x | x |
| Totals | 20 | 32 | 8 | 12 | 44 |

## The Centrality of School Biography

> There needs to be a deeper understanding of who PSTs are as they enter the profession and how they orient themselves in the learning-to-teach process. Students do not come in teaching collectively. They arrive as individuals with particular personal histories, understandings about teaching and learning, and decision paths that led them to choose to study to be teachers. (Pinnegar, et al., 2011, p. 639)

Several scholars of identity have averred that identities are embodied in the stories we tell about ourselves and, as such, our biographies play a large role in how we understand ourselves (Beijaard et al., 2004; Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). This is especially true for PSTs and first-year teachers, as they have little experience in the classroom as teachers on which to base their teacher identity (Boyd, Gorham, Justice, & Anderson, 2013; Merseth et al., 2008). In the remainder of this section, I explore the relationship between school biography and teacher identity in the literature.

A**pprenticeship of observation.** Several scholars included in this review asserted that teachers' school biographies—their apprenticeships of observation—impact their teacher identities (e.g., Boyd et al., 2013; Buchanan, 2015; Galman, 2009; Olsen, 2008). PSTs enter their TEPs with little else to inform their teacher identities other than their life histories as "person" and "student" (Britzman, 1986, Lortie, 1975; Sugrue, 1997). When they arrive, they generally have had 16 years of experience in the classroom as students (Britzman, 1986; Lortie, 1975). They begin the process of becoming teachers having completed what Lortie (1975) termed the "apprenticeship of observation," through which they have developed lay theories (Sugrue, 1997) about teaching and what it means to be a teacher (Lortie, 1975; Sexton, 2008). Their biographies as students and their notions of teaching via national zeitgeist and cultural symbols all contribute to this sense (Britzman, 1986; Olsen, 2008).

PSTs use their past experiences of teaching to frame their student teaching and what they believe students need, and to define what it means to be a good teacher (Hong, 2010; Hsieh, 2015; Sexton, 2008). Often, PSTs elect to pursue the teaching profession because they believe that they will be good at it based on this understanding as well as the criteria they have created via their apprenticeships of observation (Lortie, 1975; Olsen, 2008). "Children and young adults seem to decide what teaching is as they are simultaneously deciding what they are good at and allow for a self-confirming circle" (Olsen, 2008, p. 31). In short, their teacher identities are enmeshed in their experiences as students (Miller & Shifflet, 2016).

PSTs frequently use their experiences as students to form "common sense" understandings of what it means to teach and what it means to be a teacher (Boyd et al., 2013). These understandings may be misguided, as PSTs have typically only thought as students and never as teachers (Boyd et al., 2013). They view and remember their experiences through the student lens, with little thought to the preparation or purpose of the actions of their past teachers (Boyd et al., 2013; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). PST teacher identities formed by these experiences shape their engagement in their TEPs, what they were willing to learn, and their approach to student teaching (Sexton, 2008). For example, if a PST has had negative experiences with a pedagogical strategy, she may be less inclined to engage with it in a TEP, even if it has pedagogical value (Miller & Shifflet, 2016). PSTs frequently believe that, because they had academic success as students, they will be successful teachers (Hsieh, 2015; Olsen, 2008). Moreover, PSTs often accept the "way it was" for them as a student. As such, practices that were valuable to them as students are perceived as valuable to them as teachers as well as generalizable to all students—unfortunately, this is not always the case (Boyd et al., 2013; Hsieh, 2015; Miller & Shifflet, 2016).

In one example, Hsieh (2015) discussed the experience of James, a secondary PST teaching English. James had positive experiences with a teacher who utilized discussions to explore literature. He modeled his student teaching classroom in this way, despite the fact that it did not work well for the particular group of students he was teaching. This teaching style was so central to his teacher identity that he ultimately blamed the students for his shortcomings when it was clear that his lessons were not working as he had planned. His understanding of himself as a teacher, grounded in his experience as a student, hindered his ability to address his students' needs.

Beyond memories of academics, PSTs' memories of their emotions also play a role in their identity formation (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). The teacher identities of PSTs may be linked to emotional connections to specific teachers, subjects, lessons, and activities (Boyd et al., 2013; Cook, 2009; Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Philips, 2010). Like or dislike of a subject or a pedagogical approach may be conflated with sentiments PSTs have about teachers or experiences, while little thought is given to the intent behind the action (Boyd et al., 2013; Phillips, 2010; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Boyd and her colleagues (2013) found that PSTs struggled to separate teachers from their past with the pedagogies and subjects that they taught; their conceptions of good and bad teaching were centered on their affective feelings about their former teachers.

Miller and Shifflett (2016) explored how memories of being students affected the teacher identities of PSTs and their beliefs about their future selves as teachers. They found that qualities and actions of those former teachers—positive and negative—were integral to the teacher identities of PSTs. PSTs wanted to emulate teachers who had a warm and positive affect, made them feel loved in the classroom, were warm and nurturing, and fostered personal relationships with them. The ways PSTs perceived care was central to their identity formation and how they attempt to be caring in their own classrooms (Eisenbach, 2016). Additionally, PSTs wanted to emulate teachers who conducted fun classroom activities, took them on field trips, included art projects, and hosted class parties. In this study, the PSTs' teacher identities became enmeshed with these actions and qualities because of their emotional connection to them, not necessarily because of any pedagogical rationale or educational value (Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Utilizing these experiences to form an understanding of what it means to be a teacher led many PSTs to believe that getting to know students via their hobbies, interests, and so on, was more important than getting to know their learning needs or cultural strengths (Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Likewise, Sugrue (1997) found that PSTs tended to romanticize positive past experiences in ways that projected dominant lay theories about teaching.

At the same time, some PSTs' teacher identities are connected to negative experiences they have had in the classroom (Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Phillips, 2010); these experiences lead them to question how they were taught and to work consciously to avoid that style in their own practice (Boyd et al., 2013; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). PSTs in Miller and Shifflet's (2016) study tended to have stronger memories of negative experiences with teachers than positive experiences. Memories of teachers who embarrassed them or other students, were mean or cruel, or lacked an authentic connection with their students were seared into their memories. As a result, they were baked into their teacher identities and their visions for the type of teacher they feared becoming. It should also be noted that these factors are not only relevant to PSTs. Indeed, experienced teachers' identities are also impacted by their biographies in the classroom and this can have an impact on what they are willing to learn and how they are willing to grow (Noonan, 2018).

**Gender, race, ethnicity, and language.** Culturally, teaching is viewed as a feminized profession where traditionally female traits—for example, being nurturing and caring—are seen as integral to the work and what it means to be a teacher (Cohen, 2010a; Eisenbach, 2016; Olsen, 2008). Olsen (2008) found that gender was one of the main reasons that female participants in his study decided to pursue the profession—they reported growing up playing teacher, which was deemed a "gender-appropriate" form of play. Participants in a study by Galman (2009) reported similar gendered experiences. Moreover, many participants in Olsen's study had women in their family who were educators, and the notion of teaching being motherly and nurturing was central to their understanding of the work. Additionally, traditional gender norms are often enforced by the education system and ingrained in PSTs' understanding of their work (Vavrus, 2009). Vavrus (2009), for instance, found that PSTs' school biographies normalized heterosexuality and expectations of gendered behavior—PSTs may fear having to deal directly with issues of sexuality in their work, as they feel emotionally and cognitively unprepared to respond.

Race also impacts teacher identity. The nascent teacher identity of Ariel, a PST in a study by Bryson (2017), was informed in large part by her experiences as an African American in predominantly White schools. She felt that being one of few African Americans in her upper-level and advanced classes impacted her teacher identity; she always felt like an underdog and reported that her White peers acted surprised when she succeeded academically. Her teacher identity was further influenced by how she saw teachers treat her African American peers. She felt she was held to a high standard, but her peers were not; bearing witness to the struggles of her African American peers motivated Ariel to become a teacher and had a profound impact on her teacher identity. Like PSTs in other studies (e.g., Merseth et al., 2008; Rodriguez & Cho, 2011), Ariel's teacher identity was underscored by a desire to foster social change and social justice because of her past experiences.

PSTs' ethnicity and linguistic heritage can also play a role in forming teacher identity (Rodriguez & Cho, 2011; Wenger, Dinsmore, & Villagómez, 2012). In a study by Rodriguez and Cho (2011), a PST described a teacher who played along with other students who teased her by calling her Mexican despite the fact that she identified as Latina and was of Venezuelan and Costa Rican heritage. Her identity and heritage in that moment were made invisible by her classmates and teacher. The fact that the teacher—despite having an ostensibly good relationship with the participant—saw the teasing as harmless and joined in was hurtful to the PST's sense of self. This memory showed her they type of teacher she did not want to be.

Native Spanish-speaking participants in Rodriguez and Cho's (2011) study, including the one described above, felt that teachers in their past did not understand them and often misread their cues—such as silence—as signs of disengagement. In reality, these were indications of a need for further explanation or signs of thought and reflection. Additionally, in TEPs and placement sites, bilingual teachers' and PSTs' identities were often limited by colleagues who saw them as simply "the bilingual teacher." They felt they were often taught from a deficit perspective, and they did not want to do that with their own students. Moreover, Rodriguez and

Cho's participants felt that being multilingual was not valued in all contexts and that bilingual teachers were seen as "less than" mainstream teachers.

Collectively, these studies make clear that gender, race, ethnicity, and linguistic heritage all factor into PSTs' experiences as students as well as into teacher identities. Further, the fact that so few studies in this review addressed these issues underscores that this area is sorely in need of more research. Nevertheless, the notion that biographies play a pivotal role in teacher identity formation is central to many articles and is fundamental to the rest of this review. As noted above, scholars have averred that our identities are the stories we tell about ourselves to ourselves and others (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). The biographies of PSTs and teachers account for much of these stories; as such, they play an outsized role in their teacher identities.

## Identity Dissonance in Times of Transition

One of the more common themes in the reviewed literature was that teachers at all levels—PSTs, first-year teachers, and experienced teachers—deal with dissonance in their teacher identities, often as a result of transition or change. *Dissonance* is defined here as feelings of discontinuity, discomfort, and anxiety when PSTs' and teachers' understanding of themselves are challenged or disrupted by circumstances, information, or systems that run counter to their teacher identities. This finding is not a surprise, as previous work on identity and teacher identity has detailed the notion that it is dynamic and multifaceted, frequently being shaped and reshaped, and characterized by struggle (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Gee, 2000; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). It is important to document this dissonance, why it happens, and how PSTs and teachers address it.

Hong (2010) found that many PSTs and early career teachers leave the profession as a result of dissonance and the discomfort it causes them. Moreover, other work has shown that some who do not handle dissonance well are asked to leave their programs (Richmond, Juzwik, & Steel, 2011). While there are clearly negative aspects to dissonance, many authors have also pointed to it as a place for positive growth. If teachers are in a supportive and nurturing community when they face dissonance and conflict, and they are given the space to address the feelings, they can ultimately grow as teachers (Nichols et al., 2017; Sexton, 2008). The literature makes clear that dissonance of identity occurs at times of transition: from undergraduate to TEP, from TEP to the first year of teaching, and at times of reform and change for experienced teachers. I explore each of these transitions, including for teachers who are alternatively trained, in turn.

**From undergraduate to TEP and student teaching.** As noted in the prior section, teachers frequently enter TEPs having experienced the apprenticeship of observation or they have fostered teacher identities based on their biographies and experiences. Moreover, scholars have contended that, all too often, the notions that students bring to TEPs about what it means to be a teacher are faulty, as they have only thought as students and never as teachers (Olsen, 2008; Sexton, 2008). As such, when individuals enter TEPs and begin student teaching, their notions of what it means to be a teacher are frequently challenged by their instructors and their experiences as student teachers (Richmond et al., 2011; Galman, 2009). This creates dissonance as they work to reconcile the identities formed by apprenticeship of observation with the new realities of the TEP and their experiences student teaching. Research shows that this dissonance often goes one of two ways: PSTs either leave the program/profession, or they grow and strengthen their teacher identities (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Galman, 2009; Gaudelli & Ousely, 2009; Richmond et al., 2011). The literature reflects two key areas in this source of dissonance for TEPs: in their coursework and in their student teaching. I discuss each in turn.

***TEPs and coursework.*** When PSTs begin their TEPs, their individual beliefs about teaching and what it means to be a teacher can and often do conflict with the realities of coursework, creating dissonance (Galman, 2009; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Richmond et al., 2011; Smiley & Helfenbein, 2011). The romantic visions that PSTs may enter their programs with are often at odds with the fact that teaching is intellectual and progressive work (Galman, 2009; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Olsen, 2008). For some, TEP classes are the first opportunity to confront issues of privilege and power and the complexities of those realities (Galman, 2009; Olsen, 2008; Smiley & Helfenbein, 2011). They may have created simple explanations to complex issues and, when confronted with such complexity, PSTs may experience dissonance (Richmond et al., 2011; Smiley & Helfenbein, 2011).

When this happens, TEPs often place blame on the TEP and the faculty for not meeting their expectations; they may lament that the program is too rooted in theory and not in the actual practice of teaching (Galman, 2009; Richmond et al., 2011; Sexton, 2008). Further, they may argue that TEPs offer a distorted view of teaching (Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009). For some PSTs, this dissonance and despair may lead them to opt out of teaching and blame their failure to succeed on the program (Galman, 2009; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Richmond et al., 2011). Similarly, sometimes PSTs' visions of teaching are not aligned with other members of their cohort, which can be another source of dissonance and lead them to opt out (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Richmond et al., 2011; Sexton, 2008).

Some scholars have pointed out that dissonance in TEPs is necessary, and that it can be a catalyst for growth and strengthening teacher identity (Galman, 2009; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013;

Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Hong, Greene, & Lowery, 2017; Horn, Nolan, Ward, & Campbell, 2008; Phillips, 2010; Sexton, 2008). With this in mind, despite the fact that TEPs often do not focus on teacher identity, they can serve as vital places for teachers to address related dissonance (Galman, 2009; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009). Identity is dynamic and always shifting, which means that dissonance is part of teacher identity formation (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004). PSTs who are flexible and willing to face this dissonance are more likely to stay in their TEPs and grow in the programs (Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Horn et al., 2008). Discussion about dissonance with members of their cohorts and faculty can help PSTs develop a stronger teacher identity (Gaudelly & Ousley, 2009; Richmond et al., 2011). All that said, it is also important to note that too much dissonance can be a bad thing for PSTs, and that teacher identity also grows and strengthens through *consonance* with TEPs (Horn et al., 2008; Sexton, 2008).

***Student teaching.*** During student teaching, PSTs' teacher identity may conflict with their beliefs about what teaching is supposed to be versus what it actually is in practice (Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Hildenbrand & Arndt, 2016; Nichols et al., 2017). PSTs enter the classroom with a sense of how they think they will be as teachers, but the reality of daily teaching is often eye-opening and overwhelming (Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Nichols et al., 2017; Sexton, 2008; Vetter, Meacham, & Shieble, 2013). Moreover, the institutional constraints placed on teachers' autonomy may be at odds with PSTs' teacher identities (Galman, 2009; Olsen, 2008). This conflict can come from classroom roles that do not align with their vision of teaching, students in their classrooms who do not behave in a manner congruent with their notion of teaching, and cooperating teachers with different or problematic philosophies (Haniford, 2010; Gaudelli & Ousely, 2009; Merseth et al., 2008; Olsen, 2008).

Some PSTs want to be “the cool teacher” and others want to be perceived as kind, while some find it most important to give students complete autonomy to engage in social justice work or utilize specific pedagogies. These numerous and varying visions can conflict with the realities of classroom management and systemic structures (Hsieh, 2015; Nichols et al., 2017; Olsen, 2008; Vetter et al., 2013). Playing the role of authority figure and asserting hierarchical power structures as a student teacher was shown to be a source of dissonance for PSTs in several studies (Nichols et al., 2017; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Vetter et al., 2013). Moreover, feeling like a failure and not living up to their understanding of themselves as teachers can also be a source of conflict for PSTs (Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Merseth et al., 2008; Nichols et al., 2017; Vetter et al., 2013).

Student teaching placements can also be a source of dissonance. If PSTs’ expectations are not met or if the beliefs held by cooperating teachers are not similar to their own, PSTs may question their own identities (Nichols et al., 2017; Olsen, 2008). In some cases, they may have difficulty reconciling the teacher identities that their TEPs prescribed and the realities of their placements as student teachers (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Indeed, cooperating teachers have a large impact on teacher identity formation (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). Student teachers may feel conflicted about being in someone else’s classroom while attempting to find their own identities and experimenting with pedagogies not used by their cooperating teachers (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). A lack of identity alignment can negatively shape teacher identity, as PSTs may feel forced to be teachers they do not want to be (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013).

Nichols et al. (2016) explored how teacher identity emotional episodes (TIEE) in student teachers’ classrooms shaped their teacher identities. The researchers defined TIEEs as pleasant or unpleasant experiences that “served as referent points for navigating teacher identities” (p. 411). They focused on the agency involved in teacher identity development by exploring the *attributions* of teachers—that is, the rationales people provide themselves and others for the causes of events. Nichols and her colleagues averred that attributional responses are connected to emotional reactions that shape and are shaped by PSTs’ emerging teacher identities. Moreover, identities may influence how future emotional reactions emerge or are interpreted.

According to Nichols et al. (2017), incoming beliefs held by PSTs become the expectation for how things in the classroom could and should go. The researchers were shocked by the complexity of the work with one PST who asserted, “‘I never realized how difficult it is to be a teacher’” (p. 411). TIEEs either confirmed or led teachers to question their understandings of themselves as teachers. These emotional episodes were integral to teacher identity formation and, quite frequently, signaled a deep conflict between PSTs’ initial teacher identities and the realities of the classroom. PSTs who found symmetry with their beliefs and their student teaching placements were more apt to have more positive teacher identities. Many participants in the study were not the types of teachers they thought they would become, which caused dissonance. Stress came from the mismatch between their initial beliefs and their classroom experiences.

Transitions from the undergraduate years to TEPs and from TEP classrooms to student teaching are rife with dissonance. While this is necessary for growth—and is ostensibly inescapable—too much dissonance can result in PSTs opting out of their teaching careers before they have even begun. TEPs need to be places where PSTs can sort through dissonance and be given tools to address dissonance when they encounter it. Identity dissonance does not stop in

TEPs; frequently, PSTs go through more intense dissonance as they enter their first year of teaching. I explore this next.

**From TEP to first-year teacher.** Even with the dissonance of student teaching, student teachers may feel a sense of security when they are in other people's classrooms (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). Scholars have noted a shift in beliefs, goals, and teacher identity during teachers' transitions from teacher education classrooms to their own classrooms (Hamman, Coward et al., 2013; Hong, 2010; Sydnor, 2017). This transition is difficult and often fraught with dissonance, as the real experience of having one's own classroom often does not match the expectation of one's identity, and reality shock sets in (Cook, 2009; Barnatt et al., 2017; Dotger & Smith, 2009; Dugas, 2016; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Sydnor, 2017).

Novice teachers often enter their first year with what Weinstein (1988) called *unrealistic optimism*—overly ambitions expectations for what they will be able to do. Frequently, they are met with what Veenman (1984) termed *reality shock* when they enter the classroom and find out that they may not be able to be the teachers they expected to be. The mixture of unrealistic optimism and reality shock can create dissonance for first-year teachers, leading many to leave the profession (Barnatt et al., 2017; Hong, 2010). Almost one third (29%, *n*=15) of studies in this review addressed teacher identity in first-year teachers. This is because the principal site of struggle for first-year teachers is understanding themselves (Featherstone, 1993).

First-year teachers enter their new settings with expectations about how they are going to teach, what their colleagues will be like, and about their students—all of which are wrapped up in their teacher identities (Cook, 2009; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). Moreover, their identities are still largely influenced by their experiences as students as they make this shift from student to teacher (Barnatt et al., 2017; Cook, 2009; Hong, 2010). First-year teachers "must code-switch from the language of *student* to the language of *teacher,* and this transition can produce feelings of self-doubt and instability" (Dotger & Smith, 2009, p. 162, italics in original).

Many struggle to view themselves as genuine teachers who can do their jobs well (Dugas, 2016). A consistent theme for first-year teachers is their need to link their work as teachers to their personal identities (Dugas, 2016; Hong et al., 2017). For example, a first-year teacher who sees herself as someone who wants to fight the status quo may come to feel like she is part of it when she is forced to play the role of authority figure (Cook, 2009; Dugas, 2016). Similarly, she may believe that it is good practice to let students' interests guide the class, but is then faced with pressure to cover required content (Sydnor, 2017). These conflicts are particularly pertinent when first-year teachers have to address issues of classroom management.

Classroom management is often a site of dissonance for first-year teachers (Cook, 2009; Dugas, 2016; Hildenbrand & Arndt, 2016; Merseth et al., 2008; Vetter et al., 2013). Theories of teacher identity note that identity is formed by how a teacher is seen by others or when she is seen as a certain kind of teacher (e.g., Gee, 2000; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). New teachers want to be respected by their students for their decisions in the classroom, but they also want to be viewed as caring and fun (Dugas, 2016; Hildenbrand & Arndt, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013). The way new teachers perceive themselves and the way they want to be seen by their students are often linked to how they manage their classrooms (Dugas, 2016).

Sometimes, teachers' *perceptions* of how students view them is more important for teacher identity than how students actually feel about them (Dugas, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013). Their understanding of themselves often mirrors how they want to be seen by students—that is, fair and reasonable, or not mean (Dugas, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013). A need to be seen as reasonable often conflicts with a desire to be an authority figure (Dugas, 2016). A desire to be seen in a certain light can render some potentially effective practices impossible and interfere with the ability to address negative behavior (Dugas, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013). New teachers may feel that they are struggling between managing the classroom and being “the real me” (Dugas, 2016). First-year teachers can get so entangled in their own identity struggles that they do not see the reality that most student behaviors are not a reflection of the teacher as a person (Dugas, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013). Teachers may deal with this dissonance by attributing problems to others, by shifting their identities to meet expectations of their new schools, or by leaving the profession altogether (Barnatt et al., 2017; Hong, 2010).

The strength of teacher identity impacts how well new teachers adjust to new contexts and how they develop teacher identity in those contexts (Barnatt et al., 2017; Hong, 2010). For example, a strong teacher identity facilitates a sense of agency (Buchanan, 2015). This sense of agency is central to new teachers’ adjustment to new settings, as it gives them a belief that they can control the narratives of their identities and find continuity of self, even amidst dissonance (Barnatt et al., 2017; Buchanan, 2015; Hong et al., 2017). Agency allows teachers to be the teachers they want to be (Buchanan, 2015).

The way new teachers accurately understand and feel like they belong in their new environments affects how well they adjust to these new settings (Barnatt et al., 2017). More precisely, the dissonance of being a first-year teacher is often mitigated by having a sense of belonging at one’s school or district (Barnatt et al., 2017; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Hong, 2010). Similar to TEPs, if first-year teachers feel a sense of ideological fit at their school, there will be less dissonance, they will feel more supported, and the transition will be easier (Barnatt et al., 2017; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013). Moreover, if a teacher has a strong social network at the school, the dissonance can be allayed and teacher identity can be buoyed (Baker-Doyle, 2012;

Hong, 2010). Smaller social networks or a lack of social networks, inside and outside of the school, can be challenging to teacher identity and add to dissonance (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017; Hong, 2010). This is compounded by the fact that many first-year teachers come from collaborative TEPs and their teacher identities are grounded in collaboration. If that experience is not matched by their new school setting, they will encounter dissonance (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017). There is a dearth of literature on the relationship between PST and teacher social networks, sense of belonging, and teacher identity and more work needs to be done in this space.

Positive relationships with administrators matter as well for strengthening teacher identity in new teachers (Hong, 2010). Conversely, strong relationships with administrators who do not align with teachers' beliefs can erode teacher identity (Sydnor, 2017). Novice teachers typically do not know the language or the procedures of their community of practice and, as such, must learn them to become a part of that community (Dotger & Smith, 2009). Teachers' ability to be resilient and realize that "falling down" in the classroom is part of the process of becoming a teacher is also integral to mitigating dissonance (Cook, 2009, p. 286).

The ability to address dissonance remains "an invisible process" for first-year teachers (Cook, 2009, p. 289); they need to be given space to recognize and make meaning of it (Cook, 2009). TEPs can be spaces that provide teachers with tools—such as reflection—to deal with the dissonance of being a first-year teacher (Cook, 2009; Coward, Matteson, & Hamman, 2012). Entering teaching with stronger, more positive teacher identities can help TEPs to palliate dissonance, as they will be better able to address it and learn from it (Barnatt et al., 2017; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013). Further, those with weaker, less positive teacher identities will be less likely to challenge bad practices or resist unwanted changes to their identities (Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013).

**Alternatively-trained teachers.** Teachers who come to teaching through alternative routes—for example, teaching in a charter school without going through a traditional TEP, or as corps members with Teach for America (TFA)—also face dissonance. Similar to traditionally trained teachers, these teachers' sense of identity is influenced by their experiences as students (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Thomas & Mockler, 2018; Weiner & Torres, 2016). In some cases, it is even more influenced by their apprenticeship of observation, as they have not have the experience of student teaching or the coursework of a TEP to influence their teacher identities before entering the classroom (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013).

At some charter schools, teachers are asked to work a tremendous amount and maintain long hours, rendering the work–life balance not sustainable (Weiner & Torres, 2016). While many charter teachers in the study by Wiener and Torres (2016) initially felt like the high level of work, order, and discipline were commensurate with their identities, the expectations ultimately led to dissonance when they could not maintain the work rate. Additionally, the no excuses model of their school created dissonance, as it did not fit with their understanding of themselves as kind and caring teachers. Many teachers in the study hid their feelings of dissonance and conflict from colleagues and felt a general level of incompetence when they could not maintain the ambitious work rate that was imposed on them. As a result of this struggle and dissonance, many planned to leave the profession.

Corps members in TFA have reported feeling similar dissonance as the corporate branding and scripted methodology of the program did not align with their vision of teaching and what it means to be a teacher (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Often, these teachers have experienced academic, social, and economic success, and feel that their personal identity of being successful conflicted with the struggle in their classrooms—as one corps member put it, "'I'm just kind failing half the time'" (Thomas & Mockler, 2018, p. 9).

These teachers may fail to gain a true sense of teacher identity in their first year because they feel like visitors to the profession and recognize that their ability to be good teachers is limited because of their lack of experience and the fact that they planned to leave the profession after their obligatory two-year stint (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Moreover, Schultz and Ravitch (2013) found that many believed they had alternate pathways to careers outside of teaching, and that made it difficult for them to create strong teacher identities. They did not see teaching as a long-term career, and that created a sense of dissonance in their work (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). Despite several barriers to facilitating teacher identities, corps members placed in schools that identify with the message of TFA and have a lot of program alumni are more likely than their peers to foster strong teacher identities (Thomas & Mockler, 2018).

**Experienced teachers' identity dissonance during reform.** Teachers reconstruct their identities in the face of accountability reform (Buchanan, 2015). Moreover, reforms that remove autonomy and agency from teachers can create dissonance (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Reeves, 2018). Bradford and Braaten (2018) found that experienced teachers can feel dissonance and ultimately endure an erosion of teacher identity when top-down accountability reform efforts do not match their own teacher identities. In their qualitative study of one experienced teacher, top-down accountability reforms impacted her teacher identity by shaking her notion of what it meant to be a competent teacher. The reform effort was driven by accountability and a scripted curriculum that took away autonomy and agency and changed what it meant to be a competent teacher at the school. Moreover, the mandated instructional routines did not mesh with what she had come to know (and what the authors saw) as good science teaching practice. When things did not go well, she attributed the shortcomings to her own teaching—not the problematic curriculum—which created more dissonance and self-doubt.

These changes did not allow the teacher in Bradford and Braaten's (2018) study to meaningfully engage as a sense maker in her community of practice. Her vision of good teaching and learning—and her understanding of herself—was further eroded when the administration's evaluation processes focused on aligning with the scripted curriculum instead of on the work that was taking place in the classroom. Removing autonomy, agency, and professional judgment from the teacher was inimical to her teacher identity, and the evaluation system put in place further harmed her sense of self. Reform efforts like the one described by Bradford and Braaten are common in the U.S. national context, as many strive to increase the accountability of teachers. The next section describes this in greater detail.

## Teacher Identity in the Current National Context

Horn and her colleagues (2008) adroitly noted that "identities are constructed through culturally available descriptors, narratives, and archetypes embedding and linking the individuals in the contexts around them" (p. 62). The national context and zeitgeist have a strong impact on teacher identity and what it means to be a teacher (Bullough, 1997; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Day & Gu, 2010). Teacher professional identity and the way that teachers understand their work has changed as a result of national reform efforts toward accountability and more market mechanism utilized in schools—mandated curriculum, privatization, and testing (Day & Gu, 2010). Trust in teachers to perform their jobs well has been declining for the past few decades (Day & Gu, 2010). News headlines and chyrons on 24-hour news networks all decry the failing

U.S. education system. They call for more standardization and accountability of teachers, exhort the ostensible benefits of school choice and privatization, and frequently scapegoat teachers for the state of public schools and myriad social problems (Berliner, 2013). As such, in the United States, teaching has a lower social status than other professions that require similar levels of education, and public trust in education has steadily declined for decades (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Day & Gu, 2010; Dolton & Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2013).

Scholars suggest that the current national context is inimical to teacher identity. The reform regime creates what Ball (2003) called *values schizophrenia*, as teachers sacrifice their judgment, authenticity, and agency when they are forced to align with accountability, standards, and mandated curriculum that does not fit their understanding of teaching and what it means to be a teacher. The current national context has deprofessionalized teachers and is deleterious to teacher identity by taking away agency—what some scholars regard as the heart of positive teacher identity (Buchanan, 2015). Accountability reforms in public schools, charter schools, and alternative credential pathways, in addition to the current national discourse, all negatively impact teacher identity.

**Neoliberalism and national drives for accountability.** Scholars describe neoliberalism as an ideology of free-market economics, where everything should be run like a business and be driven by deregulation and accountability, and where management of the public sector by the private sector is privileged (Fisher-Ari, Kavanagh, & Martin, 2017; Reeves, 2018). In education, this ideology has manifested itself in the form of massive increases in demand for standardization and accountability via high stakes testing, privatization of education via charter schools, and alternate pathways to credentialing like TFA (Fisher-Ari et al., 2017; Stone-Johnson, 2014). All of these neoliberal visions of education have led to the erosion of teacher identity as “systems of schooling, teachers’ professional judgment, principled beliefs, and philosophies of teaching become secondary or even irrelevant to the primacy of performance and compliance with the accountability regime” (Reeves, 2018, p. 99).

Teachers’ ability to use their own judgment and their treatment as professionals have diminished, and the only things that appear to be important in these regimes are things that can be measured, such as test scores (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Fisher-Ari et al., 2017; Sydnor, 2017). This national zeitgeist for accountability impacts school contexts, but little research has explored how schooling contexts that favor accountability and neoliberal ideology shape and constrain teacher identity negotiation (Reeves, 2018). The research that has been done shows a negative impact—in particular, teachers’ identities are eroded by the routinization of their jobs and the shift in what it means to be a successful and competent teacher (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Reeves, 2018).

When district or school policy shifts to fit national neoliberal accountability and standardization regimes, it removes agency from teachers by way of organizational routines that oversimplify teaching. This takes away sensemaking abilities from teachers, ultimately undermining teacher identity (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Buchanan, 2015; Sydnor, 2017). Teaching becomes about compliance and performativity, which compromises professional practice (Bradford & Braaten, 2018). Mandated or scripted curricula and other accountability measures impede teachers’ ability to exert their professional judgment and professional vision (Sydnor, 2017). This can degrade the identities that teachers have built up over their careers (Buchanan, 2015).

In these schools where accountability is paramount, teachers are forced to align on mandated or scripted curricula that discount their voices and show a lack of faith in their competence (Bradford & Braaten, 2018). Teachers who identify as strong, competent, and innovative can be forced into using methods and pedagogies that change their sense of self and change how they understand their work (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Sydnor, 2017). Moreover, accountability and standardization routines alter who or what are deemed "authority sources—external sources that a teacher finds compelling and relies on for validation of who is a good teacher" (Clarke, 2009, as cited in Reeves, 2018, p. 100). Notions of who is a good teacher and what is good teaching are often put in the hands of people outside the school, which can lead teachers to feel what Santoro (2018) called *demoralization*.

Demoralization results from "processes that contribute to 'discouragement and despair' experienced as teachers' vision of good teaching and sense of integrity as professionals comes into conflict with job expectations" (Bradford & Braaten, 2018, p. 50). Demoralization undoubtedly has damaging effects on teacher identity and can be overwhelming to new teachers entering the field (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Sydnor, 2017). Parts of the accountability and standardization regime become significant aspects of teachers' realities and are incorporated into teacher identities of new generations of teachers in complex ways (Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Stone-Johnson, 2014). For example, teachers with weak teacher identities may allow low test scores to deflate their sense of teacher identity, despite understanding their limitations (Reeves, 2018). Additionally, some teachers who despise high-stakes testing may find solace in good test scores and seem to incorporate these accountability measures into their identities (Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013). As teachers accept these systems, their identities become more vulnerable to self-doubt and outside influences, as they constantly feel judged and yet are not allowed the agency to be the teachers they understand themselves to be (Buchanan, 2015; Reeves, 2018).

While it is clear that these reforms are detrimental to teacher identity, it is also obvious that teacher identity can impact how teachers address reforms and other challenges. Strong positive teacher identities can help them navigate damaging reforms and to address and evaluate situations as they arise (Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013). It can help teachers make sense of new reforms, changes, and practices as they are introduced and enacted (Buchanan, 2015). For example, in the face of strict accountability reforms, some teachers go above and beyond their roles to deal with affronts to their identities; others seek ways to resist the change and push back; and others acclimate and make the reforms part of their teacher identities (Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013).

**Charter schools and alternate pathways to credentialing.** Today's neoliberal education landscape has opened the door for entities to compete with traditional public schools. Charter schools and their ilk appeal to neoliberal sensibilities as they represent private-sector, often businesslike management of what was otherwise the work of the public sector. Moreover, proponents of such reforms believe that charter schools offer the magic elixir of competition, which will improve what they see as the nation's failing public schools. Many teachers join charter schools believing that the public school system is failing and stagnant (Weiner & Torres, 2016) and that charters are a viable alternative.

The teacher identities of educators in charter schools seem to be influenced by this national discourse. Weiner and Torres (2016) conducted the only study in this review that explored charter school teacher identity. They found that these teachers saw themselves as "go-getters" and, as such, different from teachers in traditional public schools. Moreover, they felt that teaching at a charter school offered them a higher social status and a more elite setting than they would have had at a traditional public school. Some came from traditional public schools in hopes of greener pastures after feeling demoralized and not supported. They believed that constant evaluation and observation by administration created a more professional atmosphere and that the organization and intense drive of the no-excuses charter school aligned with their sense of who they were and what the students needed. Interestingly, many noted that although they felt the school was positive and held them to a higher professional standard, it may not have looked that way from an outside perspective; it may have seemed like they were being overworked and micromanaged.

Overall, the teachers in Weiner and Torres's (2016) study held negative views of traditional public schools—from cultural symbols in the media and their life histories—and felt that they were low-status work places that were not doing a good job of teaching students. As a result, they were reluctant to enter the public school system. Their teacher identities were impacted by this narrative and the belief that the charter school was better aligned. That said, their initial enthusiasm waned as they tended to struggle with work–life balance: What they were being asked to do was not sustainable. The charter school became a place of self-doubt that engendered feelings of incompetence for participants who struggled to keep up with the pace of the work. Teacher identities eroded as participants were micromanaged, asked to do too much, and not given the space to voice their concerns. As a result, several participants in the study planned to leave the classroom.

Another outcome of the neoliberal education zeitgeist is the growth of alternative pathways to teaching, such as TFA (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Again, only a few studies have explored teacher identity in TFA corps members; I explored two of these in this review (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Comparable to their charter school counterparts, corps members may experience academic success and not necessarily view teaching as a high-status job (Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Even though they frequently have social justice bents, they enter the program with little intention of teaching long-term (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Study participants almost always reported having alternative career plans in mind—teaching was something to do before going out into the "real world" (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013).

Many corps members in TFA have struggled to gain a sense of teacher identity, as they consider themselves visitors or outsiders to teaching with little exposure to the profession beforehand (Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Some have reported feeling like they were just *acting* as teachers and not actually *being* teachers, as they begin to realize that their lack of long-term experience hindered them (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Thomas & Mockler, 2018). That said, even though their school colleagues may have treated them like teachers, Schultz and Ravitch (2013) found they often still failed to gain strong teacher identities in their first year. As their teacher identities eventually did begin to form, many corps members have reported feeling that their TFA identities conflicted with their nascent teacher identities, and that the scripting of lessons by TFA is not what real teaching looks like (Thomas & Mockler, 2018). One study participant noted, "'I am more of a verb than a noun'" (Thomas & Mockler, 2018, p. 14). Moreover, they described their placements by TFA as hindering their growth as teachers (Thomas & Mockler, 2018).

Overall, corps members face barriers that are built into the TFA model that impede teacher identity growth (Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Specifically, they develop teacher identities at a different pace relative to student teachers in traditional TEPs (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). TFA corps members are more likely than student teachers in traditional TEPs to draw on their apprenticeship of observation to understand teaching (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). In the studies by both Thomas and Mockler (2018) and Schultz and Ravitch (2013), charter school teachers and corps members started out with the idea that they were doing something that that aligned with their sense of self and was "better" than teaching in public schools. In each environment, their teacher identities were not supported or allowed to grow in a meaningful way. As such, their growth as teachers was hindered and many of them soured on the profession as they found the work difficult and not aligned with what they had envisioned it to be.

**Cultural symbols and conceptions of teaching.** As noted in the opening of this section, teacher identity is constructed—like other identities—through cultural symbols and narratives (Horn et al., 2008). High-accountability nations like the United States promulgate the neoliberal education narrative and negative cultural archetypes of teachers that paint a picture of teaching as low-status work (Thomas & Mockler, 2018). Teaching is not a lucrative job, and that signals a lack of respect for the profession (Weiner & Torres, 2016). Many who work in charter schools or through TFA see teaching as a profession that is not taken as seriously as other white collar work (Thomas & Mockler, 2018; Weiner & Torres, 2016). In many cases, teaching is seen as a fallback profession or a something to put on a résumé before entering the "real world" of work (Thomas & Mockler, 2018; Weiner & Torres, 2016). Media outlets often further this vision of teaching by disempowering teachers' voices in the national and policy discourse.

News outlets describe education and teaching in a way that increases the authority of accountability regimes and minimizes the voice of teachers (Cohen, 2010b). Cohen (2010b) conducted a study of education news articles from 2006 to 2007 in one newspaper in Chicago. She found two clear discourses regarding education. One she dubbed the *social language of accountability*, characterized by a report-like structure that aligns with institutional authority. In this narrative, schools are failing and numbers and statistics back all claims of this.

Accountability language elides the role of structural forces and poverty that are inimical to education. The articles only point to schools as failing institutions and the actors inside these schools as failures; they repeatedly include the word failure or versions of the word. Cohen asserted, “[t]he need to strengthen the validity of a claim through repetition signals it as a point of contestation, but masks the tension by engaging in only one worldview over others” (p. 112). This worldview is neoliberal, and poses the idea that there is no solution to these ostensible problems other than markets, competition, and accountability. Through the utilization of professional language and report-like structure, these articles convey a sense of authority and power and tend to drive public thought about the education system as a whole.

The second discourse Cohen (2010b) described is the *social language of caring*. This is where individual teachers are described by journalists as caring and loving individuals willing to continually go the extra distance for their students. These articles paint teachers as maternal, caring, and nurturing adults in the lives of their students. This discourse foregrounds the notion that individuals and relationships are paramount to teaching. In Cohen’s study, all of these stories came in the form of anecdotes, which do not carry the same level of authority as the articles using the social language of accountability. While ostensibly portraying teachers in a positive light, the articles do not describe them as individuals who deserve power and authority in creating policy or having voice over their work. Of the articles in Cohen’s study, 75% utilized the social language of accountability. These portrayals of teachers and failing schools diminished teachers’ voice in the public arena and perpetuated the narrative that teachers are not equipped to make authoritative decisions about their work. This erodes teacher identity.

## The Role of School Context in Teacher Identity

Several theories of identity and teacher identity assert that school context plays a major role in the development of teacher identity (e.g., Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Day & Kington, 2008; Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Wenger, 1998). Colleagues, school climate, administration, students, and parents all play a role in shaping teachers' understanding of themselves and their work. In this section I focus on the school context and explore the ways that colleagues, school climate and administration, and students shape teacher identity for PSTs, ECTs, and experienced teachers.

**Colleagues and peers.** "Identity is an ongoing argument that we make to others through a range of semiotic systems, rather than a static quality that we possess, and arguments have to be strengthened to be persuasive" (Cohen, 2008, p. 86). In other words, teachers are constantly negotiating their identities through interactions with others (Cohen, 2010a; McGriff, 2015; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013)—often, these "others" are their follow teachers. Colleagues are integral to identity formation in teachers and they can strengthen or erode teacher identity (Cohen, 2010a; Hong, 2010; McGriff, 2015). When teachers are acknowledged by their colleagues as professionally competent and feel endorsed by them, this strengthens their identities (Bradford & Braaten, 2018). Teachers view the values and practices of their network of colleagues as important constraints and resources for accomplishing their professional identities (Cohen, 2008; McGriff, 2015). "The power of the network to provide a source for learning, stabilization, and socialization into the figured world of schools cannot be overstated" (Barnatt et al., 2017, p. 1018). Shared beliefs by trusted peers play a role in fostering similar teaching identities in the school (Wenger et al., 2012). Larger professional networks can foster a stronger sense of teacher identity for new teachers (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Hong, 2010).

Baker-Doyle (2012) found that first-year teachers who actively networked and found collaborative partners formed more diverse networks and had an easier time adjusting to their schools and finding their teacher identities. Moreover, she found that different conceptions of teacher identity shaped the social networks of first-year teachers. Stronger teacher identity meant growing a larger network and reaching out to more people in the school. More trepidation about teacher identity and uncertainty about a future in the profession led to smaller networks and less active networks for new teachers. What is clear from this study is that context shapes teacher identity, but teacher identity also plays a role in shaping teachers' context by helping their networks.

Cohen (2008) averred that when teachers talk to each other, they make implicit and explicit claims of identity. Teachers take on several roles that form their identities and build shared meaning through discourse with colleagues (Cohen, 2008, 2010a). Through interactions, teachers confirm their roles and identities by making "identity bids"—implicit or explicit statements related to their teacher identities—looking for colleagues to recognize these statements and validate or reinforce their identities (Cohen, 2010a, p. 475). One is not free to perform any identity they like; identities are constrained by normative beliefs and practices of the systems where teachers are situated (Cohen, 2010a; McGriff, 2015). In these systems, talking about identity with colleagues, implicitly and explicitly, is central to the guidance of practice (Cohen, 2010a). These findings highlight the importance of reflective talk between teachers as an integral part of teacher identity formation (Cohen, 2010a).

**School climate and administration.** School climate can also impact beliefs and teacher identity (Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Hong, 2010; Sydnor, 2017; Weiner & Torres, 2016; Wenger et al., 2012). Sense of belonging at school makes teachers feel comfortable with their teacher selves and positively impacts their teacher identities (McGriff, 2015; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013; Weiner & Torres, 2016; Wenger et al., 2012). Sense of belonging is linked to fit between teacher identity and school culture (Buchanan, 2015). Highly collaborative and trusting school environments foster stronger teacher identity (Wenger et al., 2012). Teachers who feel more trust at their school sites feel safer and are more willing to grow and facilitate positive teacher identities (Sydnor, 2017; Wenger et al., 2012). Relationships with administration can have a notable and important impact as well.

Positive relationships with administrators are integral for strengthening teacher identity (Hong, 2010; Wiener & Torres, 2016; Wenger et al., 2012), while negative relationships can erode it (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Weiner & Torres, 2016). Perceptions of meaningful and insightful engagement and feedback from members of school administration can bolster teacher identity, while perceptions of a lack of engagement and of meaningless feedback can dampen it (Wiener & Torres, 2016; Bradford & Braaten, 2018). Additionally, positive relationships with principals can lead teachers to participate in curricula that clash with their identities (Sydnor, 2017). More work needs to be done to explore the connections between school climate, trust, sense of belonging, and teacher identity.

### The Role of TEPs in Teacher Identity Development

“Teacher identity—what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning and self-as-teacher—is of vital concern to teacher education. It is the basis for meaning making and decision making.…Teacher education must begin, then be exploring the teaching self” (Bullough, 1997, p. 21). Generally, TEPs are the first interaction PSTs have with teaching beyond that of being a student. In other words, it is the first time they cognitively move beyond the apprenticeship of observation and begin thinking about teaching with a professional mindset

(Dassa & Derose, 2017). Almost every article in this review discussed actionable ways that TEPs can foster teacher identity development and awareness in PSTs and help them utilize their teacher identities in the field. Moreover, they extolled the benefits of creating strong teacher identity in TEPs to buoy teachers in anticipation of issues and challenges they will face in the field. Helping PSTs develop teacher identities and understand the values upon which they base their teaching helps them to become critical and discerning in their practice (Reeves, 2018) and allows them to respond constructively to change and discontinuity (Buchanan, 2015). While TEPs cannot do everything to prepare teachers to go into the field and be successful (Barnatt et al., 2017; Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Hildenbrand & Arndt, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013), their goal is to facilitate a foundation for persistence in the face of challenges. Developing a strong teacher identity is one way to build that foundation (Barnatt et al., 2017).

Scholars have contended the TEPs need to make space for identity work in their curricula (e.g., Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Hsieh, 2015; Merseth et al., 2008; Sydnor, 2017). Several scholars have lamented the fact that identity work is not generally included in these programs; it is often minimized in favor of a skills-based approach to help teachers learn about classroom management (Barnatt et al., 2017; Dugas, 2016; Merseth et al., 2008; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). There are several things that scholars believe TEPs can do to remedy this and help PSTs purposefully begin the process of teacher identity development. I explore these next.

**Explicit discussion of teacher identity formation.** First and foremost, TEPs need to include explicit discussion about teacher identity development, dissonance, and issues that teachers will face in their work. PSTs should have the opportunity to experiment with, challenge, and work through their teacher identities (Dugas, 2016; Gaudeilli & Ousley, 2009; Haniford, 2009; Hildenbrand & Arndt, 2016; Horn et al., 2008; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). TEPs need to create spaces where dissonance is explicitly and repeatedly recognized as important and necessary for identity development and growth (Galman, 2009; Hong et al., 2017; Phillips, 2010; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Sydnor, 2017). More pointedly, these programs need to make teacher identities visible (Wenger et al., 2012). They should put PSTs in situations that create opportunities to interrogate beliefs and explore alternative possibilities (Olsen, 2008; Reeves, 2018).

TEPs should ensure that PSTs understand how each school is a unique world, and explicitly address how teachers' work impacts the school and how the school context will impact teachers (Barnatt et al., 2017). Moreover, they should focus on emotional experiences and dissonance that take place in the classroom, and in particular how they can address these experiences (Eisenbach, 2016; Hong, 2010; Nichols et al., 2017; Olsen, 2008). TEPs need to utilize dissonance as a tool for growth and help PSTs learn to address it (Cook, 2009; Galman, 2009; Horn et al., 2008). Moreover, they need to prepare them to anticipate and address the dissonance they will experience as they transition to their first year of teaching (Cook, 2009; Barnatt et al., 2017). TEPs should help teachers examine uncertainty and instability in their professional lives (Cook, 2009; Reeves, 2018). TEPs can put teachers in situations that are beyond the classroom—for example, simulated parent-teacher conferences—to help PSTs envision a broader set of roles and address the dissonance that may arise in those contexts (Dotger & Smith, 2009). Additionally, TEPs should teach the importance of forming supportive networks inside and outside of school (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Freedman & Appleman, 2008).

**Narratives and reflection.** Several scholars in this review noted the benefits of narrative and reflection for facilitating teacher identity awareness (e.g., Boyd et al., 2013; Cohen, 2010a; Coward et al., 2012; Hong, 2010; Merseth et al., 2008; Olsen, 2008). Several pointed to narratives like autobiographies as a tool help PSTs reflect on their apprenticeship of observation and what has led them to become teachers in the first place (Boyd et al., 2013; Olsen, 2008; Richmond et al., 2011). Narratives can become living tools that PSTs and their instructors continually return to in order to address the development of their identities (Olsen, 2008; Richmond et al., 2011; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). PSTs should also reflect with each other through dialogue and testimony about contradictions and dissonance they feel in order to foster identity formation (Bryson, 2017; Cohen, 2010a; 2008). These types of exercises can help PSTs confront and address conflicting narratives about their teacher identities (Richmond et al., 2011).

Buchanan (2015) asserted that critical self-reflection of identity can help make identity a conscious rather than automatic and unconscious tool to respond to change and discontinuity. Additionally, although not thoroughly discussed in the literature, some posited that experiences of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and privilege need to be explicitly reflected on as a part of narratives to foster a more complete picture of teacher identity development (Bryson, 2017; Galman, 2009; Rodriguez & Cho, 2011; Smiley & Helfenbein, 2011; Vavrus, 2009). Two methods of reflection that can be useful for teacher educators and PSTs are teacher metaphors and possible selves theory, which I discuss next.

***Teacher metaphors.*** Several studies in this review utilized metaphors about teaching from PSTs, novice teachers, and experience teachers as a window into their teacher identities. To elicit these metaphors, researcher would often ask participants to create metaphors that represented their understanding of themselves as teachers (e.g. Erikson & Pinnegar, 2017). These studies were grounded in the notion that metaphors underlie everyday language and reveal fundamental characteristics of a culture (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As such, “[t]eacher metaphors can serve as a framework that moves our understanding of teaching forward by making more explicit the intuitive knowledge teachers hold about themselves, their classroom and their practice" (Erickson & Pinnegar, 2017, p. 106).

Understanding the metaphors PSTs use to describe themselves as teachers or teaching in general can give teacher educators a better understanding how they understand themselves as they enter their programs and the profession (Pinnegar et al., 2011). Teacher metaphors can give teacher educators a window into what teachers are willing to learn, how they are willing to learn, and what obligations they believe they have as teachers (Erikson & Pinnegar, 2017; Pinnegar et al., 2011). All metaphors present certain teacher identities and understandings of the work that create different types of barriers for PST learning (Pinnegar et al., 2011). Moreover, metaphors can reveal variability in how teachers and PSTs understand student responsibility (Erikson & Pinnegar, 2017). Aside from providing windows into teacher identities, explorations of teacher metaphors "provide leverage points for teacher change and development (Erikson & Pinnegar, 2017, p. 119). Teacher educators should utilize and analyze teacher-constructed metaphors to examine the moral and ethical commitments that teachers are willing to make and enact in their practice (Erikson & Pinnegar, 2017). These metaphors can ultimately reveal more sophisticated ways for structuring teaching practice and developing teacher education (Erikson & Pinnegar, 2017).

***Possible selves theory.*** Teacher identity formation is not only about how teachers understand themselves in the present, but also about whom and what they want to become in the future (Beijaard et al., 2004; Hamman et al., 2010). To explore this future identity, a handful of studies in this review utilized possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

People have beliefs about themselves that are not anchored in social reality—these are beliefs about their potential, goals, hopes, and fears—in other words, their beliefs about their possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Markus and Nurius (1986) explained that these beliefs are derived from understandings of one's self in the past and the future as well as from social interactions and comparisons with other people. Possible selves provide incentives, frames, and guidance for future goals; moreover, they provide a way for people to interpret and evaluate their current situations. They serve as "cognitive bridges" between the present and future, guiding individuals from their current selves to the selves they will become. Often, possible selves are expressed in research through people's expected selves, hoped-for selves, and feared selves (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

Possible selves theory has been used extensively in several disciplines, including education; however, only recently has it been used to explore teacher identity (e.g., Hamman et al., 2010; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Hamman, Wang, & Burley, 2013). Hamman and his colleagues (2010) contended that teacher identity scholars have generally not considered the link between future aspirations and present identity. They noted that using possible selves theory to explore teacher identity offers several new insights to scholars and teacher educators. Possible selves theory allows researchers to frame the self and identity as a process and a relation over time, providing a way of understanding how interactions that occur in context are linked to emotions. The theory also has discursive qualities that allow PSTs to explore the multiple facets of their identities. Finally, these scholars argued that possible selves increase agency in identity through reflection (Hamman et al., 2010).

With respect to TEPs, possible selves theory may facilitate identity growth (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). It can provide PSTs with an avenue to work through dissonance and conceptualize processes of change regarding practice and identity (Hamman et al., 2010; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Incorporating possible selves into PSTs' coursework as part of their reflection can help them regulate their behavior and motivate them to achieve their goals (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008). Similar to teacher metaphors, it offers a lens into how PSTs regulate learning during student teaching (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). Thinking about the future helps student teachers to become better at reflecting on and framing current behavior towards visions of the future (Hamman et al., 2010; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008). Future-oriented talk, like discussing possible selves, is also a valuable tool for reflection and teacher identity development (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Urzúa & Vásquez, 2008). Lastly, possible selves theory can be a valuable evaluative tool for the effectiveness of interventions in TEPs (Hamman, Wang, & Burley, 2013).

## Discussion and Future Directions

Amidst a national context of standardization, accountability, declines in the teacher work force, and declines in the number of people enrolling in TEPs, developing teacher identity offers an avenue for teachers to address dissonance, promote resilience, and improve their own sense of professionalism. This review identified five key themes in the literature and pointed to ways that teacher identity development can play a central role in the development of PSTs and first-year teachers. Nonetheless, there are several areas that the research has not explored that warrant future research.

Despite the wealth of literature on identity and teacher identity that describes, in no uncertain terms, identity formation as a social endeavor, there has not been adequate exploration of the role that social networks play in identity development of PSTs, novice teachers, and experienced teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Gee, 2000; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Wenger, 1998). A supportive and well-connected social environment is crucial for teacher identity development (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Hong et al., 2017).

Only two authors in this review explicitly acknowledged the role of social networks in identity formation, and they noted the integral role that networks play in identity formation for PSTs and first-year teachers (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017). They both found that teacher identity was related to network formation, and network formation was related to teacher identity (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017). Barnatt et al. (2017) argued that "the power of the network to provide a source for learning, stabilization, and socialization…cannot be overstated" (Barnatt et al., 2017, p. 1018). In other words, social networks are integral to teacher identity formation and to addressing dissonance for PSTs and first-year teachers. Despite their importance, social networks are neglected in the teacher identity literature. I describe how I will attempt to bridge this gap below.

A second area that has not been discussed sufficiently in the research is the role of trust in teacher identity development. I use Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (1999) definition of trust: an "individual or group's willingness to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence that the latter party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open" (pp. 187–188). Several studies have shown that trust between teachers, and between teachers and administration, can have a positive impact on student outcomes, school climate, and innovation (e.g., Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Trust is integral to learning and collaboration for teachers and for students (Forsyth, Adams, & Hoy, 2011). When trust exists in educational spaces, people are open to being vulnerable and learning together (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999)—this provides fertile ground for teacher identity development and growth.

Some studies in this review noted that when teachers felt trusted by administration and peers, they had stronger teacher identities (Sydnor, 2017; Wenger et al., 2012). Moreover, teachers who were able to be more collaborative—which is correlated with trust—developed stronger teacher identities (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Wenger et al., 2012). In TEPs, relationships with trusting peers can give PSTs the space to address dissonance, to grow, and to develop stronger teacher identities (Horn et al., 2008). These few studies show that there is a relationship between trust and teacher identity development. Future research should create a more complete picture of the relationship between trust and teacher identity development.

Similar to trust, sense of belonging and its relationship to teacher identity—while ostensibly integral to identity formation (Gee, 2000; Wenger, 1998)—was not well represented in this review. Several scholars have explored student sense of belonging and its impact on students (e.g., Goodenow, 1993; Faircloth & Hamm, 2011; Juvonen, 2006), but relatively little research has been done to investigate sense of belonging and its impacts on PSTs and in-service teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Some articles in this review did discuss sense of belonging—without necessarily naming it—as fit or ideological fit (Buchanan, 2015; Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Sexton, 2008). Wenger et al. (2012) noted that sense of belonging at school made teachers feel comfortable with their teacher identities. Future research needs to look at the impact of sense of belonging—whether to a TEP program or a school—on teacher identity formation.

Fourth, while some studies in this review touched on race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and marginalized populations (Bryson, 2017; Rodriguez & Cho, 2011; Vavrus, 2009; Wenger et al., 2012), there is still a clear dearth of literature on the relationships between these important aspects of an individual and teacher identity. There is an area of scholarship that specifically explores white teacher identity using critical frameworks (e.g., Berchini, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2012), and I think it would be worthwhile for future research on general teacher identity to incorporate some of the critical frameworks used in white teacher identity studies. More work needs to be done to explore the role of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and teacher identity for underrepresented populations. Furthermore, more needs to be done to investigate the intersections of these identities and how they are integrated into teacher identity. Race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality all factor into personal identity. The fact that they are frequently left out of analyses of general teacher identity is a major gap in the literature that needs to be addressed.

Fifth, these studies were selected in part because they were conducted in a country where neoliberal reforms—standardization, accountability, privatization, etc.—abound, and teaching is considered a low-status job relative to other professions that require similar levels of education (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Reeves, 2018). That being said, only a handful of studies captured in this review began to address how the U.S. national context impacts teacher identity (e.g., Buchanan, 2015; Reeves, 2018; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013).

Akkerman and Meijer (2011) asserted that to best understand teacher identity, researchers need to conduct micro- and macro-analyses. The former explores the school setting and how teachers interact with various groups; the latter examine the past, present, and future narratives of teachers as well as the sociocultural landscapes teachers live in. More work needs to explore the impact of the sociocultural landscape via understanding the impact of national reforms, national zeitgeists, cultural symbols of teachers, and general public opinion on teacher identity. Similarly, future research should explore the identities of charter school teachers and alternatively credentialed teachers, especially compared to teachers in traditional public schools (Thomas & Mockler, 2018; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). In this dissertation I will use identity theory and social network theory to attempt to address some of these gaps.

# Theoretical Frameworks to Address Gaps in the Literature

## Identity Theory

An identity is a set of meanings through which people define who they are when they engage in a particular societal role (role identity), find membership in a particular group (social identity), or claim particular characteristics (person identity) that make them unique (Burke & Stets, 2009). Such meanings are the responses that individuals have when they think about themselves in various identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013). Identity theory scholars investigate these meanings, how they are developed, how they relate to each other, and how they affect behavior, thoughts, and emotions (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013).

Identity theory has roots in structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980). This framework assumes that people's identities depend on social structures—and the positions they hold in those social structures—as well as the cultural meanings and expectations of those roles, groups, and individual traits (Burke, 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). Society and social structures are created by enduring patterns of behavior and interactions between individuals (Burke & Stets, 2009; Merolla et al., 2012; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000). People interact in communities, organizations, and institutions through small networks of relationships by playing different roles that support their membership in those networks (Burke & Stets, 2009; Merolla et al., 2012; Stryker, 1980). Stryker (1980) posited that the ways that people engage in their identities are relatively fixed by social structures, social pressures, and the expectations of those identities within various contexts (Burke & Stets, 2009). For example, roles like pharmacist, professor, and truck driver are not created anew with each social interaction—their meanings are shared by participants in particular cultural contexts (Burke & Stets, 2009, 2015; Stryker, 1980).

That said, identity theory does not deny that actors within these structures have agency (Tsushima & Burke, 1999). In other words, social behavior rooted in identities is not wholly determined by social structures; it is also negotiated through interchanges between people that shape and form their interactions (Stryker, 1980). Identities create parts that people play, and people make decisions while navigating interactions with other actors and environments based on how they perceive themselves and their identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). As such, identity theory asserts that identities are constrained by social structures and expectations, and they are negotiated through people who take on particular roles in ways that make sense to them, relative to their contexts. This, in turn, creates the very structures that constrain behavior—social structures that emerge from the agency of actors (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2014a). When actors act within the constraints of social structures, these structures are maintained; when they challenge the constraints, social structures change (Burke & Stets, 2009; Merolla et al., 2012).

In identity theory, identities serve in part to identify a person and create expectations for interactions and the nature of those interactions—for example, teachers and students have expectations for their interactions based on their understandings of their identities (Burke & Stets, 2009, 2015; Stryker, 1980). Interactions take place between people who occupy positions and engage in named patterns of behavior based on the meanings they ascribe to each situation (Burke & Stets, 2009). Additionally, identities help people define who they are and give meaning and purpose to their actions and their lives (Burke & Stets, 2009; Thoits, 2012).

Scholars have posited that there are three bases of identity: social identity, role identity, and person identity (Burke & Stets, 2009). *Social identities* are based on a person's identification with or membership in a social group; they imply an in-group and out-group. They are generally depersonalized, and people in social identity tend to see themselves as “we” or “us” as opposed to “me” or “I” (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013). *Role identities* are expectations and meanings that are correlated with a social position and that influence behavior. All roles are generally embedded in groups, and role identities also provide social identities that are activated in different situations (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013). Finally, *person identities* are the characteristics that make a person unique; they act across roles and situations and, as such, are thought to have very high salience (Burke, 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009). In sum, social identities verify who one is; role identities verify what one does; and person identities verify a person as a unique and authentic individual. People hold multiple identities within each base of identity, as they occupy multiple roles, group memberships, and characteristics (Burke & Stets, 2009). These identities are hierarchically organized and activated in different contexts (Brenner, Serpe, & Stryker, 2014; Burke & Stets, 2009).

Three concepts are important to identity hierarchies: prominence, salience, and commitment. Identities that are more important to a person are said to have more *prominence* than other identities, and they are thus higher in the hierarchy (Brenner et al., 2014; Burke & Stets, 2009). All identities tend to influence each other, but higher-order identities tend to have a larger influence on lower-order identities than vice versa (Burke & Stets, 2009). Additionally, identity theory posits that identities activated across multiple contexts are more *salient* in the hierarchy (Brenner et al., 2014; Burke & Stets, 2009). And people are more *committed* to roles based on the number and strength of ties related to an identity in their social network (Stryker, 1980; Burke & Reitzes, 1991). Identities with higher levels of commitment are often more salient and more prominent (Brenner et al., 2014 Stryker & Serpe, 1982).

Identity theory posits that people seek to verify their identity (*identity verification*) through interactions with others (Burke & Stets, 2009). People seek experiences that verify and validate who they believe themselves to be (Burke, 1991; Swann, 2005; Turner, 2002). In situations where an identity is not verified (*identity nonverification*), individuals suffer psychological stress and seek to remedy the situation by altering their perceptions of the situation through behavior (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2014b). For example, a mother whose 'mother identity' includes "a certain degree of powerfulness" is met with a situation where she does not perceive actions of others match the degree of powerfulness that she has set for her mother identity (Burke, 1991, p. 839). The identity theory model suggests that "she will feel distress as a result of this incongruence," and to mitigate these feelings of distress she will alter her behavior—e.g. overtly assert herself in a firm manner—to adjust her perception of the situation (Burke, 1991, p. 839).

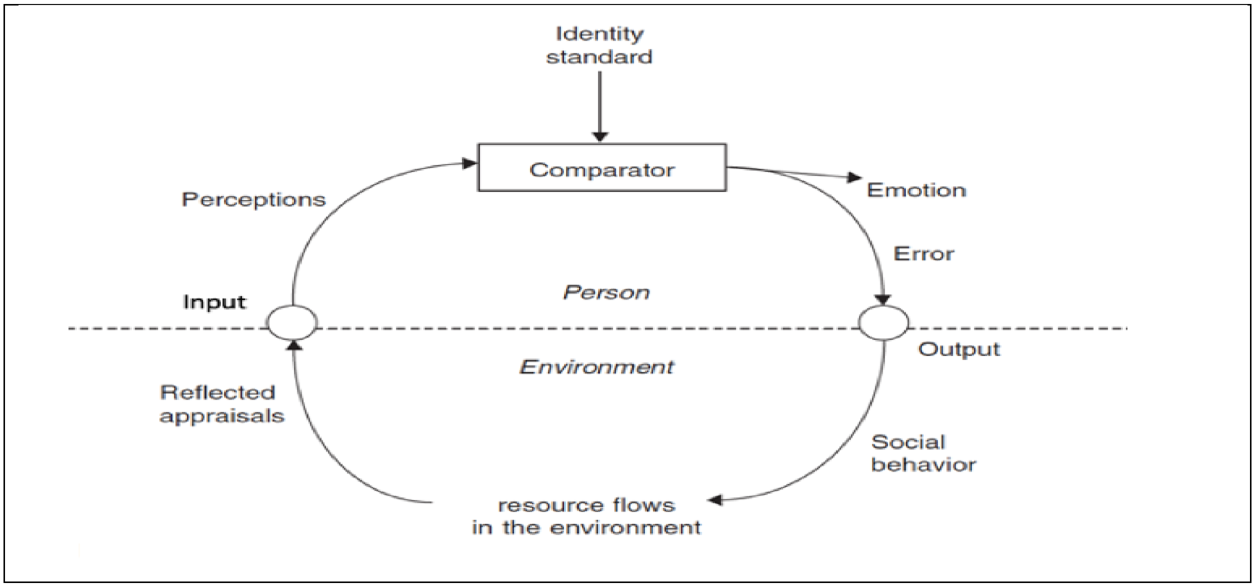

Identity standard
Comparator
Perceptions
Emotion
Error
Input
Person
Output
Environment
Reflected appraisals
Social behavior
resource flows in the environment

**Figure 2.1** *Identity Process Model (modified from Burke & Stets, 2015).*

Peter Burke (1991, 2008) developed a model to understand the identity process and how people engage with identity in their interactions with others (see Figure 2.1). According to Burke (1991, 2008) and Burke and Stets (2009), there are four main components to this model: the identity standard, inputs, the comparator, and outputs. First, each identity has a *standard* held by individual actors—that is, the way they see themselves in each identity. The meanings that define the identity standard are part of a person's memory and accessed as a means of comparison to the inputs. The *inputs* are the perceptions people have of their environment and interactions with others. Perceptions in this case are meanings that are relevant to an identity in a given context. The *comparator* then compares the identity standard to the inputs, and the difference between the standard and perceptions drives behavior. When there is little or no difference between the perceptions and the identity standard, people feel identity verification; when there is a difference between the two, people experience identity nonverification (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 2009). In both cases people—experiencing identity verification or nonverification—then behave (*output*) in a way that helps them match their perceptions to their identity standards. Either they continue their behavior (in the case of identity verification), or change their behavior to alter their perception of the situation (in the case of identity nonverification) as seen in the mother identity example above (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets 2009). This process is a continuous cycle that occurs within multiple identities at the same time as people interact with the world in different contexts (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Interactions that facilitate identity verification between people foster feelings of trust, social cohesion, and sense of belonging (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009, 2015; Stets, Burke, & Savage, 2018). Identity nonverification, on the other hand, leads people to behave in a way designed to change their perceptions of the situation to match their identity standard. Several studies have shown that identity nonverification is a source of stress and psychological discomfort (Burke, 1991, 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Asencio, 2008; Stets & Burke, 2014b; Swann, 2005). Put another way, "[o]ne sure way to get people stirred up is to tell them they are not who they think they are" (Swann, 1983, p. 33).

The inclusion of "resource flows" at the bottom of Figure 2.1 points to the importance of resources. Resources can be thought of as anything that helps maintain or facilitate identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Freese & Burke, 1994; Stets & Cast, 2007). People who have more resources (e.g., high social status, power, a strong network, material goods) are more apt to perceive identity verification and maintain their identities as they understand them (Burke, 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009, 2015; Stets & Cast, 2007; Stets & Harrod, 2004). Despite a desire to maintain an identity via identity verification, identity change happens in various situations.

Finally, identity theory scholars suggest that identity change is a slow process, as people generally resist it in their quest for identity verification (Burke, 2006; Burke & Stets, 2009). Ultimately, identity change means changing a person's identity standard (Burke, 2006; Burke & Stets, 2009). Scholars contend that there are four reasons for identity change: (a) changes in the situation; (b) identity conflict; (c) identity standard and behavior conflicts; and (d) negotiation in the presence of others (Burke, 2006; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2014a). First, changes in an actor's situation occur when *external* contextual forces create an environment where the identity standard is no longer viable—for example, the birth of a child may force a change in spousal identities (Burke, 2006; Burke & Stets, 2009). Second, identity conflicts are *internal* sites of identity change (Burke, 2006; Burke & Stets, 2009). In this scenario, identities are related to one another—and are often activated at the same time—but have conflicting standards, forcing change. As an example, Burke and Cast (1997) show that gender identities in husbands and wives change when their first child is born as the result of potential incongruities between gender identities and parent identities. The third scenario is when people must behave in a way that does not align with their identity standard (Burke, 2006; Burke & Stets, 2009). This arises when people are forced to change their behavior in a situation in such a way that it is not aligned with their identity standard and will thus eventually engender identity change (Burke, 2006; Burke & Stets, 2009). Fourth, and generally less dramatic than the first three forms of identity change, negotiation of identity occurs when an actor must accommodate other actors' identities to fit in with others (Burke, 2006; Burke & Stets, 2009). This arises not out of conflict, as in the first three, but out of adjustment to create a context for mutual identity verification between others (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Identity theory presents an avenue to explore teacher identity and to address some of the major gaps discussed above; it is a clear, cogent theory that offers a strong framework to describe and explore many of the phenomena described by teacher identity scholars. In particular, it provides a framework to explore issues of race, power, and teacher identity that are largely absent from the articles in this review. Despite the fact that teacher identity is often referenced in the literature as an example of a role identity (e.g. Burke & Stets, 2009, 2015; Stets & Serpe, 2013; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000), only recently have scholars explored teacher identity through the lens of identity theory (e.g., Tsang & Jiang, 2018; van der Want et al., 2015, 2018a, 2018b).

Prominent identity theorists Stets and Serpe (2013) argued that education is a space that is understudied through an identity theory lens, and more research should be done in the field using identity theory. Further, Burke and Stets (2009) averred that future research in identity theory should explore the properties that it shares with other theories. For example, social capital theory and social network theory share properties with identity theory that can push identity theory forward (Deaux & Martin, 2003; McFarland & Pals, 2005; Walker & Lynn, 2013), thereby improving our understanding of teacher identity development.

## Social Network Theory

As noted above, teacher identity formation (and identity formation in general) is an inherently social undertaking (Beijaard et al., 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009; Wenger, 1998). Yet few scholars have used a social capital or social network perspective to explore teacher identity formation and change. Thus, in this section I describe the potential for each body of theory. Social network theory "provides a formal and conceptual way to think about the social world" (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 11). It is based on the notion that relationships among interacting units are related to the actions of individuals (Borgatti et al., 2018). As opposed to the attribute-based focus of most social science research, relationships between actors are the central focus; the approach privileges the "web of relationships in which actors are embedded that both constrain and provide opportunities" (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010, p. 18; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The observed attributes of individuals are understood in terms of ties and social structures, and personal attributes are seen as secondary (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Social network theory is approached in two ways: theory of networks and network theory (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010; Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). The *theory of networks* is concerned with the antecedents of networks and network ties and tries to understand why they form or dissolve (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). In *network theory*, scholars are interested in the properties of networks and their relationship to outcomes (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). This can be explored at the whole-network level, the dyad level, or the actor level (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011; Daly, 2010).

In social network theory, networks consist of *actors* (people, organizations, companies, etc.)—also called *nodes*—who are connected by relationships or *ties* to one another. Ties can be considered weak or strong based on the type of tie or the frequency of the interaction embodied in the tie (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010). Additionally, certain ties—like bonding ties that form groups within networks—are generally considered strong, while bridging or brokerage ties across groups in a network are generally understood as weak (Daly et al., 2019).

Additionally, ties are generally thought of as *instrumental* or *expressive*. Instrumental ties are geared toward reaching organizational or professional goals; they may transfer resources, like work-related information (Moolenaar et al., 2012). Expressive ties are more social, intimate, or friendship-based. They tend to have an affective component, like support or advice about personal problems (Moolenaar et al., 2012). In social network theory, resources and information flow through ties in networks (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). As such, network theory scholars contend that network structures have the ability to catalyze or constrain social resources and actions of actors (Burt, 2004; Daly, 2010; Granovetter, 1973; Scott, 2013).

The structural position of an actor in the network determines information flows and outcomes for that actor (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010; Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). Actors with more ties are considered to have a more *central position* in the network and more exposure to the resources flowing through that network (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). More pointedly, actors who reach out to more people in their network have more outgoing ties (*out-degree centrality*); actors who are sought after by more people in the network have more incoming ties (*in-degree centrality*) and are more central to the network structure. Those with lower in-degree and out-degree are thought of as peripheral to the network (Borgatti et al., 2018; Scott, 2013);

actors with high in-degree and out-degree are understood as influencers in the network (Liou & Daly, 2018; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

While degree centrality is important for accessing resources, the connections to other people with whom an actor has ties, also known as *alters*, impact an actor's access to resources (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011; Lin, 1999). Lin (1999) posited that the status, resources, or power of alters is an important consideration in network theory. A tie with an alter who has more resources or status can facilitate more social capital for an actor (Borgatti et al., 2018; Burt, 2004).

In the educational context, scholars have found that dense teacher networks—those with a proportionately high number of ties—are related to the implementation and spread of change and teacher self-efficacy (Daly et al., 2010). Dense and highly collaborative networks have been shown to improve student achievement (Daly et al., 2014). Moreover, teachers' social networks can act as sources of help while also influencing teacher engagement, improvement in practice, and implementation of new reforms (Atteberry & Bryk, 2010; Cole & Weinbaum, 2010; Frank et al., Borman, 2004).

Very few studies have explored the social networks of PSTs (e.g., Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Bjorklund et al., 2020; Lopez Solé et al., 2018). However, nascent work on the networks of PSTs has found that network centrality in TEP cohorts is related to higher levels of self-efficacy (Bjorklund et al., 2020; Liou & Daly, 2020), higher levels of trust, and improved instructional practices (Liou et al., 2017). Strong social networks offer teachers a host of resources to improve their practice, benefit their students, and implement change, and they are related to a host of positive outcomes. As such, social network analysis provides a valuable lens through which to explore identity development among PSTs and ECTs.

### Strengths of the Theoretical Frameworks

Identity theory offers an avenue to unify much of the theory and ideas about teacher identity, how it is formed, how it changes, and how it impacts behavior. In addition to bridging gaps in the literature discussed in this review, this dissertation will also bridge gaps in the identity theory literature. As noted, identity theory uses the language of social network theory, but until recently had not utilized a social network approach to explore identity (Deaux & Martin, 2003; McFarland & Pals, 2005; Walker & Lynn, 2013). Further, despite teachers being seen as an archetypal role identity, scholars of teacher identity have only recently begun to utilize identity theory (Tsang & Jiang, 2018; van der Want et al., 2015, 2018a, 2018b), and education as a field has been under-researched through this lens (Stets & Serpe, 2013). Moreover, despite teacher identity development being inherently social, scholars have not used an approach that privileges social interaction—social network theory does—to understand teacher identity. Exploring teacher identity through the lenses of identity theory and social network theory will help to address many of the gaps in the literature. In this dissertation, I used these theories to guide my data collection, data analysis, and interpretation.

## Conclusion

The aim of this review was to get a better sense of the teacher identity research landscape in the United States over the last 10 years (2008–2018), to situate this dissertation within the literature, and to get a clear sense of the gaps in the literature to begin to address them. The studies reviewed highlight the impact of biography on teacher identity, the dissonance teachers feel during times of transition, the impact of national and school contexts on teacher identity, and what TEPs can do to develop teacher identity awareness among PSTs. This review, as well as the corpus of research on teacher identity outside of this review, makes manifest the importance of facilitating teacher identity awareness so that educators can purposefully use it to promote resilience, agency, professionalism, and well-being.

The current national reform climate is pernicious to teacher identity. Teachers are leaving the profession in high numbers due to dissatisfaction. It can be inferred that the national context that de-professionalizes teaching has played and continues to play a role in the increased dissatisfaction of teachers. Moreover, the current zeitgeist surrounding public education plays a part in creating and maintaining the low social status afforded teachers. This is more than likely one reason that enrollment numbers in TEPs are low and declining.

Understanding the current research on teacher professional identity offers a way to begin to understand why teachers are leaving the profession. Finding pathways to facilitate teacher identity awareness gives teacher educators and teachers themselves a tool to bolster resilience and fight back against de-professionalization in the current reform regime. Teachers with a stronger sense of teacher professional identity are more authoritative, agentive, and bold in their conviction to use their judgment to be the teachers they want to be, not the teachers that the national reform movement forces them to be. This resolve, coupled with a stronger understanding of self, offers a path forward to a re-professionalization of teaching that will benefit schools, students, and society.

# Chapter 3

## Data Collection and Study Design

As noted in Chapter 1, the findings of this dissertation research are presented in five discrete but connected journal article-type chapters. Each will draw from the data described below. That said, each chapter as a stand along article will also have its own unique methods section that will be driven by the broader research questions guiding the dissertation, but also but the specific research questions in each chapter. In the current chapter, I discuss the study design and data collection generally, including the context of the study, sample, and data collection.

### Context

The research took place at a TEP at a university in the southwestern United States. This rigorous and well-regarded program has a strong social justice bent and caters solely to graduate students. It includes a multiple-subject and single-subject track. The program employs a cohort model where PSTs in each track (multiple- and single-subject) take the majority of same courses together throughout the program in an attempt to create community and a cohesive learning environment (Seifert & Mandzuk, 2006). Collaboration is built into the design of this program as it encourages groups to get to know each other, support each other, and work together (Seifert & Mandzuk, 2006). As such, it was an optimal site to explore social networks and their relationship to teacher identity growth. Additionally, this TEP requires its teacher candidates to seek placements at schools that cater to underserved populations. The program awards candidates an M.Ed. and a teaching credential upon completion of the program. The site is representative of other TEPs in the region in terms of student population and the mission of the program.

## General Study Design

The study consisted of two phases: Phase 1 took place from fall 2018 through spring 2019 (the PSTs' preservice teacher year); Phase 2 was conducted from summer 2019 through spring 2020 (including their transition and first year of full-time teaching). It will be a include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods approaches (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), and featuring social network analysis (Daly, 2010; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Research began in the fall of 2018 with a survey and the start of observations of both the multiple-subject and single-subject cohorts in one of their TEP classes each week. These observations continued through the 2019 spring quarter and the conclusion of the program for participants. PSTs in both the multiple-subject and single-subject cohorts completed a second survey in May 2019. Additionally, I initially selected 16 candidates to take part in six interviews over the course of the study, as well as additional classroom observations in Phase 2. Below I will describe my sample.

## Sample

At the start of phase 1, there were 41 candidates in the multiple-subject cohort and 26 in the single-subject cohort (67 PSTs total; see Table 3.1). The multiple-subject cohort was 90% female, with an average age of 24 years. On average, multiple-subject candidates had completed their bachelor's degree 1.5 years prior to starting the program and averaged an undergraduate GPA of 3.45. In terms of ethno-racial identity, the cohort was majority White (52%), 20% Asian, 17% Latina/o, and 2% Black; 10% of participants identified as more than one ethno-racial group. All of the multiple-subject candidates started off the year observing cooperating teachers; they began their full student-teaching responsibilities in winter quarter. Unlike in the single-subject cohort, being interns was not an option for these candidates.

The single-subject cohort was 58% female, with an average age of 25 years old. On average, single-subject candidates had completed their bachelor's degree 1.82 years prior to the start of this school year and had an average undergraduate GPA of 3.33. Fifty-four percent of single-subject participants were student-teachers, while the other 46% were interns. This cohort had a plurality of Asian candidates (35%), with 27% identifying as White, 23% as Latina/o, and 25% identifying as more than one ethno-racial group. In regard to subject matter taught, 35% of

**Table 3.1**
*Demographics of Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts at Start of Study (fall 2018)*

| | Mean | SD | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Multiple-Subject Cohort (n=41)* | | | | |
| Female | .90 | | 0 | 1 |
| Age | 24.14 | 2.14 | 21.40 | 32.33 |
| Years since BA | 1.50 | 1.43 | .37 | 7.38 |
| Undergraduate GPA | 3.45 | .31 | 2.88 | 4 |
| Ethno-racial group | | | | |
| White | .52 | | | |
| Latina/o | .17 | | | |
| Asian | .20 | | | |
| Black | .02 | | | |
| More than one group | .10 | | | |
| *Single-Subject Cohort (n=26)* | | | | |
| Female | .58 | | 0 | 1 |
| Age | 25.19 | 2.45 | 22.04 | 31.98 |
| Years since BA | 1.82 | 2.26 | .37 | 9.38 |
| Undergraduate GPA | 3.33 | .26 | 2.88 | 3.87 |
| Student-teacher | .54 | | 0 | 1 |
| Ethno-racial group | | | | |
| White | .27 | | | |
| Latina/o | .23 | | | |
| Asian | .35 | | | |
| Black | - | | | |
| More than one group | .25 | | | |
| Subject taught | | | | |
| ELA | .19 | | | |
| Math | .31 | | | |
| Science | .35 | | | |
| World language | .15 | | | |

candidates taught science, 31% taught math, 19% taught English language arts (ELA), and 15% taught a world language. In the single-subject cohort, candidates either took on observation and student-teaching roles in the fall quarter or they began as interns. Interns differ from student-teachers in that that they are the teachers of record in their classes and they teach up to three periods per day in a middle or high school setting. I will utilize data from the entire cohort, but as noted above, I also selected 16 PSTs, from both the multiple-subject and single-subject cohorts, to examine in-depth through interviews and observations (see Table 3.2). This approach allowed me to explore the differences and similarities between my participants' teacher identity formation, their social networks, and their positions in their social networks to get a better understanding of how these factors impact formation of teacher identity.

**Table 3.2**
*Interview Participants*

| Name (Grade or Subject)[a] | Cohort | Ethno-Racial Identification | Time of Participation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Joelle (Kindergarten) | Multiple-Subject | White | Phase 1 |
| Anna (1st Grade) | Multiple-Subject | Mexican | Phase 1 |
| Cate (3rd Grade) | Multiple-Subject | Middle Eastern-White | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Tina (3rd Grade) | Multiple-Subject | White | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Janice (4th/5th Grade split) | Multiple-Subject | Chinese-American | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Leila (Kindergarten) | Multiple-Subject | Mexican | Phase 1 |
| Tara (Kindergarten) | Multiple-Subject | Mexican | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Kara (6th Grade) | Multiple-Subject | Black | Phase 1 |
| Marta (World Language) | Single-Subject | Mexican | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Jaime (ELA) | Single-Subject | Mexican | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Logan (World Language) | Single-Subject | Black and Chinese | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Sofia (ELA) | Single-Subject | Mexican | Phase 1 |
| James (Math) | Single-Subject | Mexican and White | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Diana (Science) | Single-Subject | White | Phase 1 and 2 |
| Julia (Science) | Single-Subject | Mexican | Phase 1 |
| Kaleb (ELA) | Single-Subject | White | Phase 1 |

[a] All names are pseudonyms.

The 16 teachers were selected based on network position as measured by the survey (e.g., central actors, peripheral actors, brokers), initial survey responses, and classroom observations. After phase one of the study, seven participants did not gain or pursue employment in a school setting—due to reasons of circumstance and choice—and were dropped from the study. Nine participants completed all six interviews.

## Data Collection

This study drew on multiple sources of data to triangulate my findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Eisenhardt; 1989; Yin, 2018). As noted above, there were two phases of the research: Phase 1 took place from fall 2018 through spring 2019, and Phase 2 was conducted from summer 2019 through spring 2020. Throughout these two phases, a variety of data were collected, including surveys, observations, and interviews. I did not explore the data from all of these methods in totality for each chapter included in this dissertation. Rather, I used from different parts of my data for each

### Surveys

At the start of the research, I gave candidates in both cohorts a brief presentation describing the study at the beginning of one of their class sessions. All participants signed a consent form in which they agreed to take two surveys over the course of the school year. I administered the first survey in October 2018 with the entire multiple-subject (*n*=41) and single-subject (*n*=26) cohorts in the TEP. In the May 2019 I conducted the second survey of the cohorts. From the time of the first survey to the second survey, three people withdrew from the multiple-subject cohort (*n*=38) and one person withdrew from the single-subject cohort (*n*=25).

The survey consisted of four social network questions that explored four different relationships amongst the cohorts. The first two social network prompts explored whom PSTs sought out for advice and for support. In each of these three network prompts, participants were asked about the frequency with which they sought advice and support from peers, (1) "Once a quarter," (2) "Monthly," (3) "Weekly," and (4) "Daily or almost daily"). Additionally, I asked participants to name people with whom they had a close relationship and people with whom they identify (Kilduff & Krackhardt, 2008). These network prompts were not base on frequency and were measured by the presence (1) or absence (0) of a tie. To improve validity and issues regarding memory, participants were given rosters of their cohort in the first survey, and these will be provided to participants in subsequent surveys as well (Scott, 2013). I also included several scales that measured beliefs about constructs like self-efficacy, trust, and sense of belonging. All scales had been validated in prior studies (DeVellis, 2017). To test my scales, I piloted the survey in the winter and spring of 2018 with 275 participants in three TEPs in the western United States. To further validate my social network prompts I conducted follow-up cognitive interviews with three pilot study participants. They were asked to put the network prompt in their own words and explain some of their choices to test that they understood the question as was intended (Fowler, 2014) In Appendix A, I included network questions and scales that were used in Chapter 4, Chapter 5, and Chapter 7.

### Observations

In order to gather information on the dynamics of the PST cohorts, how PSTs are situated within these communities of practice and networks, and how they interact with their peers and professors in their TEP, I conducted classroom observations of each cohort. I observed one three-hour class once a week for each cohort—a total of 46 observations (23 per cohort). During these observations, I took jottings and then, soon after, turned them into narrative field notes (Emerson et al., 2011). In my observations, I looked at the way participants interacted with each other, the group as a whole, and the curriculum. Moreover, I looked at ways that participants discussed their teaching and the students in their placement to use as a lens to understand their burgeoning teacher identities. I also used these observations as a chance to get to know my participants better. I interacted with PSTs and professor throughout the class and I joined group activities when my participation does not detract from the learning of the participants (Emerson et al., 2011).

During the 10-week fall quarter, I observed a class designed to explore the teaching of English language learners for each cohort. In the winter, I observed two different classes for each cohort. With the multiple-subject cohort, I observed a math methods course for the first five weeks and a seminar course for the second five weeks. (The multiple-subject methods class was only offered in Weeks 1–5, and the seminar was only offered in Weeks 6–10.) With the single-subject cohort, I observed a health education course for the first five weeks and their seminar course for the second five weeks. This allowed me to gain exposure to different learning environments focused on pedagogy. In spring 2019 I observed the multiple-subject cohort in their class on inclusive education and I observed the single-subject cohort in their five-week seminar course.

### Interviews

I planned to conduct six interviews with each participant over the two phases of the study. I used these interviews to gain a better understanding of each participant as a person and their experiences leading up to starting the PST program. These data also shed light on each participant’s teacher identity and how their relationships impacted their identity and beliefs. I used the interviews as follow-ups to surveys and observations to probe questions that arose from these data points. The interviews also shaped survey questions around teacher identity verification (See Chapter 7; Burke & Tully, 1977; Stets & Burke, 2014b). All interviews were grounded in identity and teacher identity theories (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Burke & Stets, 2009; Day & Kington, 2008; Oyserman & Markus, 1990; Wenger, 1998) and ego networks (Perry et al., 2018). See Appendix B for interview protocols and Appendix C for ego network survey.

The first interview was an oral history interview (Yow, 2005). These data offered a foundation to begin to understand the formation of teacher identity based on their experiences in life and in school prior to their entry into the TEP (Lortie, 1975; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). I asked participants about their life histories, student histories, and their paths to becoming teachers. In the second interview—conducted in February/March 2019—questions focused on participants' relationships in the cohort and how they have influenced their teaching, as well as about the program and how it has shaped their views on teaching. Relationship talk also offers a window into identity, as it tends to show who participants think they are and who they think they are not (Anthony & McCabe, 2015).

The third round of interviews were conducted in May and June 2019. At the beginning of the interview, I had participants complete a brief ego network survey (Perry et al., 2018) detailing their social support network. In interview 4 I asked participants questions that directly addressed issues of teacher identity and how they understand their work. As noted above, seven participants were withdrawn from the study at this point as they did not obtain or pursue employment in a school for the following year. For the remaining nine participants, the fourth interview took place in August 2019 and explored how they were feeling about their transition to their new schools. Additionally, I asked participants about their feelings surrounding public opinion and national debates about the teaching profession. The fifth interview was completed in

October 2019. These interviews basically mirror the second interview, but were adapted for each school site. Instead of asking participants about their relationships with their cohort-mates and their TEP, I asked about relationships with colleagues and school sites. Finally, I completed the sixth round of interviews in May 2020. Due to the COVID pandemic, all of these interviews were conducted via Zoom. The questions were similar to round three and were geared toward their teaching practice, their experiences as teachers, and how their teacher identity has evolved. Prior to interviews five and six, participants completed ego network surveys to explore their social support networks as they did prior to the third interview. Interview protocols are included in Appendix B.

## Positionality

My positionally as a White, cisgender male set me apart from all but one of my participants. During our interviews, I asked participants questions about race and ethnicity and how that related to their understanding of themselves as teachers. My race and gender may have made participants less willing to be open about their opinions and experiences with racism and discrimination with me. This dynamic may have limited some of the authenticity of their responses to some of my questions during interviews. Further, I was a cultural outsider to most of my participants and cannot begin to fully understand their experiences because I do not have a similar ethno-racial background or culture. This may have limited my interpretation of the interview data. By conducting participant checks (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) during the process, I hoped to overcome any bias or misconceptions that may have arisen because of my status as a cultural outsider. Moreover, I believe that during the course of this study I built trust with my participants, and I feel like by the end of the process they felt comfortable being open and honest with me about a range of topics. Also, I was a former teacher which hopefully helped to foster trust and openness due to a shared similarity between our experiences as teachers.

## Conclusion

Overall, I used quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches to explore teacher identity formation, from credential to classroom. Chapter 4 will examine tie formation and teacher identity in PSTs, Chapter 5 will investigate the role of social networks and the TEP in forming participants' social justice teacher identity, Chapter 6 will explore how participants' professional support networks change over time and how they relate to their teacher identity; Chapter 7 will explore identity verification and experiences of belonging during participants' first year in the classroom; and, finally, Chapter 8 will explore teachers' visions of their future selves over time. In the concluding chapter, Chapter 9, I will synthesize the findings and describe how they have added to the field.

# Chapter 4

## Asking for a Friend:

## Teacher Identity and Tie Formation in Preservice Teacher Advice Networks

> *Teacher identity—what beginning teachers believe about teaching and learning and self-as-teacher—is of vital concern to teacher education. It is the basis of meaning making and decision making.…Teacher education must begin, then, by exploring the teaching self. (Bullough, 1997, p. 21)*

Teacher identity is the cornerstone of teachers' pedagogy and work. It influences their choices, actions, and judgments in their classroom (Hong, 2010). Hamachek (1999) contended that being aware of who one is as a teacher and how one is perceived by others is a critical step in becoming a good teacher. Moreover, he asserted, "*[c]onsciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are*" (italics in original, p. 209). In this way, learning to teach is a process of identity formation—it is the process by which people define themselves as teachers and by which others start to view them as teachers (Danielewicz, 2001; Farnsworth, 2010). Having an awareness and intentionality about developing a teacher identity gives new teachers a strong foundation upon which they can build their pedagogy, agency, resilience, and practice (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Flores & Day, 2006). As such, teacher education programs (TEPs) provide a foundational space for preservice teachers (PSTs) to form their teacher identity (Danielewicz, 2001; Farnsworth, 2010).

Forming a teacher identity is a not an individual endeavor, nor is such an identity ever fully realized; it is constantly shaped by interactions with institutions and groups of people (Beijaard et al., 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009; Danielewicz, 2001). Relationships with trusted peers can foster a sense of belonging and give PSTs the space to grow and develop strong teacher identities (Hasinoff & Mandzuk, 2005; Horn et al., 2008). Indeed, PSTs often seek advice from peers to help them work through new ideas and experiences in the classroom (Weick et al., 2005).

A recent literature review (Bjorklund & Caduff, 2021) found that the outcomes and antecedents of educators' advice-seeking networks are a burgeoning area of research explored by several scholars in the past 15 years. Actors in teachers' advice networks have been shown to have an outsized influence on their practice and beliefs about reforms (Coburn et al., 2010, 2012, 2013; Spillane et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2014). Moreover, teachers who seek advice from colleagues with expertise are more likely to improve practice and sustain that practice over time (Coburn et al., 2012, 2013). Research exploring the antecedents of teacher advice seeking shows that tie formation is influenced heavily by the formal school organization and organizational routines, including formal leadership roles, peer learning circles, and teaching the same grade (Spillane & Hopkins, 2013; Spillane et al., 2012, 2015). Similarly, teachers who are viewed as having more expertise or teachers with certain paradigms are more likely to receive or send ties (Wilhelm et al., 2016).

Despite the growing research exploring teacher advice networks, few studies have explored antecedents and outcomes of PST advice networks. This study seeks to address that gap in the literature. Specifically, using a lens derived from theory of social networks, the purpose of this chapter is to explore the relationship between various facets of PSTs' teacher identity—including their possible selves and social justice identity—and their tie formation in an advice network. To this end, the current study explored teacher identity and tie formation in two PST cohorts in a graduate-level TEP—one multiple-subject (*n* = 38) and one single-subject (*n* = 25). Study participants were surveyed at the end of their program about their teacher identities and were asked to name peers from whom they sought advice to improve their teaching practice. Based on their responses to the network prompt, I created an advice network and then used exponential random graph models (ERGMs; Bjorklund & Mamas, in press; Lusher et al., 2013;

Robins et al., 2007) to explore the question: *What is the relationship between teacher identities and tie formation in PSTs advice seeking networks?*

This study adds to the literature in three distinct ways. First, despite the fact that teacher identity is inherently social, few studies have explored it through social network analysis (e.g., Walker & Lynn, 2013). Second, few studies have explored PSTs' advice networks, and fewer have explored the antecedents of these advice networks. Finally, though several studies have acknowledged the social nature of identity formation, few have looked at how identity may act as a force to shape interaction—namely, advice seeking. In the following sections I describe the prior literature about advice seeking and the theoretical framework that guided this research. I then describe the data analysis using ERGMs. Finally, I discuss my findings and the implications for teacher educators and for future research.

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In this section, I first summarize the relevant literature on the challenges of and positive effects of advice seeking. I then describe the theory of social networks and its usefulness as a framework for the current research. Next, I specifically explore the literature on the advice networks of teachers and PSTs, and then return to the importance of the formation of teacher identity. Finally, I present three hypotheses that guided this work, rooting them in identity theory, possible selves theory, and the centrality of social justice in teacher identity.

### Advice Seeking

Advice seeking is a specific type of help seeking. Help seeking can be defined as "the act of asking others for assistance, information, advice or support" (Hoffman et al., 2009, p. 1262). Brooks et al. (2015) contended that advice seeking differs from other types of help seeking in three ways: (a) it elicits information for a prescriptive course of action, (b) it retains agency in the decision process of whether or not to take the advice, and (c) it implies congruence of values between the advice seeker and the advisor (Brooks et al., 2015). In this literature review, I refer to help seeking and advice seeking interchangeably; I return to this distinction in the discussion section.

When individuals are faced with complex issues, problems, or situations, they tend to turn to others for information, help, and advice (Hoffman et al., 2009; Lee, 1997; McKnight & Peet, 2000). Help seeking is often associated with embarrassment and vulnerability. It can incur social costs, as it may signal an inability to complete tasks independently (Lee, 1997, 2002). It can make people feel powerless in front of others and undermine self-esteem (Lee, 1997). People may fear seeking advice or help due to fear of negative evaluation (Brooks et al., 2015). Two questions people often ask when looking for help are: Will it benefit my situation to seek out advice from person X? And will asking person X make me feel incompetent or embarrassed? (Hoffman et al., 2009). These concerns can be compounded when people underestimate the amount of discomfort others feel when they seek advice (Bohns & Flynn, 2010). In short, in certain situations, asking for help can be difficult and feel like a risk.

Despite these potential issues, research has shown that help seeking is related to several positive outcomes. It can improve learning, creativity, and performance for both the seeker and the giver (Brooks et al., 2015; Mueller & Kamdar, 2011). Contrary to the belief that help seeking can make someone look incompetent, recent scholarship has found that people who seek advice actually increase others’ perceptions of their competence (Brooks et al., 2015). Likewise, seeking advice from someone is tacit acknowledgment of their expertise, which can make the advice giver feel more confident and competent (Brooks et al., 2015). Moreover, being able to seek advice and discuss problems with others is essential to sensemaking and learning (Brooks et al., 2015; Weiks et al., 2006). Advice seeking is inherently social and interpersonal; as such, it is inextricably linked to social motives, like respect and recognition and reciprocity (Agneessens & Wittek, 2012; Lee, 1997; Small, 2017).

The quality of a relationship has a direct influence on advice seeking in that relationship (van der Rijt et al., 2013). For example, since advice seeking can make people feel vulnerable, people often seek advice from someone they trust (Hoffman et al., 2009; Levin & Cross, 2004; van der Rijt et al., 2013). People are also more likely to seek advice from individuals who are accessible and whom they perceive as experts (Hoffman et al., 2009; Levin & Cross, 2004). Trust can play an outsized role in advice seeking, as it can lead people to seek friends for advice, even if the expertise of that friend is questionable (Hoffman et al., 2009).

Trust, accessibility, and perception of expertise are related not only to advice seeking but also to the frequency of advice seeking and the perceived quality of the advice given (van der Rijt et al., 2013). In some settings, advice seeking can be hierarchical (van der Rijt et al., 2013), as people seek advice from higher-status individuals. Often, however, people seek advice from peers with similar status—called *lateral advice seeking*—as they may be more familiar with the issues that the advice seeker is dealing with, and their advice may therefore be more useful (Lee, 1997, 2002). Similarly, *homophily*—the tendency to seek others who are perceived to be similar—facilitates advice seeking (McPherson et al., 2001; Rivera et al., 2010; Small, 2017). A sense of similarly between people may lower the perceived transaction cost of advice seeking (Lazega et al., 2012; Small, 2017). Finally, advice relationships tend to be reciprocal (Agneessens & Wittek, 2012; Mueller & Kamdar, 2011). Mueller and Kamdar (2011), for example, found that help giving was positively related to help seeking and vice versa. Moreover, they found people with increased motivation were more likely to seek advice from others.

There is a robust literature that explores advice seeking in the workplace (e.g., Bonaccio & Paik, 2018) and in schools (Bjorklund & Caduff, 2021). That said, there is very little work that explores advice seeking between PSTs and their peers in TEPs and its relationship to teacher identity. As I discuss next, in this chapter I use theory of social networks to explore advice seeking between PSTs in order to help address this gap.

### Theory of Social Networks

Social networks give researchers a way to look at social systems that gives primacy to the relationships that make up the system in a network (Borgatti et al., 2018). This approach "provides a formal and conceptual way to think about the social world" (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 11). The study of social networks is grounded in the notion that relationships among interacting units are related to the actions of individuals (Borgatti et al., 2018). Social networks consist of *actors* (people, organizations, companies, etc.)—also called *nodes*—that are connected by relationships or *ties* to one another. A tie between two actors can denote a variety of relationships: friendship, kinship, work colleague, collaborator, or, in the case of this study, advisor or advisee.

Resources and information flow through ties in networks (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). As such, network scholars contend that network structures have the ability to catalyze or constrain social resources and actions of actors (Burt, 2004; Daly, 2010; Granovetter, 1973; Scott, 2013). Additionally, ties can be considered weak or strong based on the type of tie, the content of the tie, or the frequency of the interaction embodied in the tie (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010). Tie strength is a generally considered a function of time, intimacy, emotional intensity, and reciprocity (Granovetter, 1973; Kilduff & Brass, 2010; Marsden & Campbell, 1984). Lastly, scholars often as describe ties as either *instrumental* or *expressive*. Instrumental ties are geared toward reaching organizational or professional goals; they may transfer resources, like work-related information or advice (Moolenaar et al., 2012). Expressive ties are more social, intimate, or affect-based, like emotional support or friendship (Moolenaar et al., 2012).

Social network research is typically approached through one of two theoretical frames: network theory or theory of networks (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010; Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). In *network theory*, scholars are interested in the properties of networks and their relationship to outcomes (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). The *theory of networks* is concerned with the antecedents of networks and network structures; research in this vein explores the reasons that networks form or dissolve (Borgatti & Lopez-Kidwell, 2011). Previous research has shown that perceptions of social similarity between people (homophily) and physical proximity (propinquity) are both drivers of tie formation (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; McPherson et al., 2001; Siciliano, 2015; Small & Adler, 2019). Homophily can be based on personal characteristics or values (e.g., similar gender, ethno-racial group, or political beliefs) or on organizational characteristics (e.g., close workspaces, coincident break times, working in the same department), which can also create opportunities for propinquity (Reagans, 2011; Small & Adler, 2019; Spillane et al., 2012).

Beyond homophily and propinquity, *network structures* also influence tie formation (Lusher & Robins, 2013a; Snijders et al., 2006). For example, people may reciprocate ties—if someone confides in you about important issues it increases the likelihood you will confide in them (Lusher & Robins, 2013a). Similarly, network structures tend toward closure or transitivity: If Barney is friends with Fred, and Fred is friends with Wilma, Wilma will likely also be friends with Barney; put another way, a friend of a friend is a friend (Davis, 1963; Lusher & Robins, 2013a).

### Teacher and PST Advice Networks

Tie formation in teacher advice networks is a growing area of research (Bjorklund & Caduff, 2021). Studies have shown that advice networks are important to the learning and development of new and experienced teachers (Horn et al., 2020; Wilhelm et al., 2020). Colleagues within these networks influence teachers' practice, learning, and beliefs (Horn et al., 2020; Spillane et al., 2018; Wilhelm et al., 2020). They can play a role in how teachers sustain practices over time (Coburn et al., 2012, 2013), and are a valuable source for teachers in sensemaking and exploring new pedagogies (Pitts & Spillane, 2009). Teachers are more likely to change or adopt instructional ideas from trusted colleagues than from unknown experts (Horn et al., 2020; Kilduff & Tsai, 2003).

Scholars have found a host of reasons that teachers form ties in advice networks. One of the main factors is organizational norms and routines (Coburn et al., 2012, 2013; Spillane et al., 2012, 2015, 2017, 2018). For example, teachers who are assigned to teach the same grade level (homophily) or teachers whose classrooms are near each other (propinquity) are more likely to seek each other out for advice (Coburn et al., 2010; Spillane et al., 2015, 2017). Teachers who attend the same meetings or are part of the same on-campus team, like a professional learning circle or collaboration group, tend to seek each other out for advice (Horn et al., 2020). Teachers also tend to seek advice from colleagues who are in formal leadership positions (Spillane et al., 2018).

Expertise can play a role in advice seeking as well. When teachers are perceived to have more expertise, they tend to be sought out more frequently than their peers (Penuel et al., 2009; Spillane et al., 2018; Wilhelm et al., 2016). Advice networks are also characterized by homophily based on demographic characteristics like race and gender (Spillane et al., 2012). Likewise, teachers tend to seek advice from those with similar values about teaching or those they consider friends (Coburn, 2001; Siciliano, 2015; Wilhelm et al., 2020), although some research has found that similar beliefs are not related to tie formation (Spillane et al., 2017). Additionally, the culture of the school can influence advice seeking: A teacher who perceives their school's culture to be more competitive is less likely to send or receive advice from colleagues (Siciliano, 2015).

We know that connections with peers in TEPs are an important factor in PSTs' teacher identity formation (Hasinoff & Mandzuk, 2005). Supportive peer relationships—characterized by common understandings, reciprocity, and trust—can have a positive impact on teacher identity (Hasinoff & Mandzuk, 2005). That said, there has been little research that explores the social networks of PSTs (e.g., Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Bjorklund et al., 2020), and even less work has focused on the advice networks of PSTs. The little work that has been done shows that PSTs who trust their peers are more likely to be sought for advice, and that being central in a PST advice network is related to improved academic performance and self-efficacy (Civís et al., 2019).

Advice networks have also been shown to have a relationship to PSTs' persistence and whether they pass certification exams (Baker-Doyle & Petchauer, 2015). One study found that PSTs who are more central in an advice network have increased feelings of trust, sense of belonging, and value consonance with their peers (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021). Interestingly, Bjorklund and Daly (2021) found that centrality in a PST advice network had a stronger relationship to trust, sense of belonging, and value fit than centrality in a close friendship network, which was found not to have a significant relationship with these constructs. These findings ostensibly underscore the potentially important role of advice networks in PSTs' identity formation. This chapter builds on this work by exploring the relationship between teacher identity and tie formation in two PST advice networks.

## Teacher Identity

Over the past 25 years, research has shown why teacher identity, also referred to as *teacher professional identity*, matters for veteran and new teachers alike (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011). Teacher identity "form[s] a foundation that influences action in the classroom" (Merseth et al., 2008, p. 91). A strong teacher identity can provide a foundation for resilience and help teachers overcome feelings of dissatisfaction, dissonance, and self-doubt (Beijaard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Reeves; 2018; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). A critical awareness of teacher identity helps teachers respond to change, dissatisfaction, and discontinuity in their contexts instead of allowing these factors to become a source of dissatisfaction and discontinuity (Buchanan, 2015). Moreover, a strong teacher identity is paramount for maintaining teacher well-being (Day & Gu, 2010; Dugas, 2016). Teacher identity "provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be,' 'how to act,' and 'how to understand' their work" (Sachs, 2005, p. 15). In short, the totality of teachers' work is framed by their teacher identity—it is at the core of what they do (Beijaard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Hsieh, 2015). Research into teacher identity is integral to furthering the profession and understanding what it means to be a teacher in the current landscape (Day & Kington, 2008).

Despite the large body of literature exploring teacher identity over the past 25 years, a concrete definition of the concept remains elusive (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Drawing from identity theory (discussed in greater detail below), I define identity as a set of *meanings* through which people define who they are when they engage in a particular societal role, a particular group membership, or particular characteristics about themselves (Burke & Stets, 2009). These meanings are understood as the responses that individuals have when they think about themselves in different identities (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013). More pointedly, teacher identity is the set of meanings through which PSTs and teachers define their role as teachers and that guide and influence their behavior.

TEPs are one of the cornerstones of teacher identity formation. These programs are spaces for teachers to work through the project of becoming teachers and to negotiate teacher identity (Farnsworth, 2010). PSTs' experiences in TEPs with peers, teacher educators, cooperating teachers, and other agents serve as a foundation for teacher identity formation (Danielewicz, 2001). Becoming a teacher in a TEP is a process of identity formation—it is the process by which PSTs define themselves as teachers and by which others start to view them as teachers (Danielewicz, 2001).

When individuals enter TEPs, they typically have visions of what teachers are and what teaching is supposed to be (Britzman, 1986; Lortie, 1975). At the start of their program, their nascent teacher identities are enmeshed in their experiences as students (Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Often, they then learn that their perceptions of what teaching is and how it works are incorrect (Britzman, 1986; Olsen, 2008). This dissonance can be jarring, and having a supportive peer group can help PSTs to work through it, to make sense of it (Le Cornu, 2013). Relationships with trusting peers can give them the space to address dissonance, to grow, and to develop stronger teacher identities (Horn et al., 2008).

For PSTs and veteran teachers alike, teacher identity is dynamic and multifaceted, frequently being shaped and reshaped, and characterized by struggle (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Gee, 2000; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). The literature on teacher identity development makes clear that it is an inherently social endeavor (Bullough, 2008; Danielewicz, 2001). PSTs' decisions to interact with others during this process reveals their understanding of themselves and who they are (Bullough, 2008). Moreover, the individuals they interact with—their social network—can both inhibit or enhance identity formation (Bullough, 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Nias, 1989).

Understanding how teacher identities form and how they impact the actions of PSTs is integral to the work of teacher educators, as their job is to form teacher identities (Danielewicz, 2001). Despite the importance of teacher identity development in PSTs—and the fact that it is inherently social—few, if any, researchers have explored the relationship between teacher identity and how PSTs interact with their peers. As I discuss next, in this chapter I utilize identity theory, possible selves theory, and social justice teacher identity to explore teacher identity.

## Measuring Teacher Identity: Three Hypotheses

### *Identity Theory*

Identity theory is rooted in structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980). This framework suggests that identities depend on social structures and cultural meanings as well as expectations of roles, groups, and individual characteristics (Burke, 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). That said, identity theory does not deny that actors within structures have agency (Tsushima & Burke, 1999). In other words, social behavior rooted in identities is not wholly determined by social structures; it is also negotiated through interchanges between people that shape and form their interactions (Stryker, 1980). Moreover, identity theory scholars posit that people have multiple identities (e.g., father, Muslim, teacher, queer), and these identities are hierarchically organized and activated in different contexts (Brenner et al., 2014; Burke & Stets, 2009).

All identities tend to influence each other, but higher-order identities typically have a larger influence on a person's life and the actions and beliefs they hold (Burke & Stets, 2009). Identities that are more important to a person are said to have more *prominence* than other identities, and they are thus higher in the hierarchy (Brenner et al., 2014, 2018; Burke & Stets, 2009). Identity prominence is a person's affective connection to an identity and how they would like to see themselves in an ideal world (Brenner & DeLamater, 2016; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stets et al., 2017). Prominence can also be thought of as the worth or a value of an identity (Ervin & Stryker, 2001). Individuals are often more committed to and invested in identities that are more prominent (Stryker & Serpe, 1994).

Identity prominence is positively related to self-efficacy (Brenner et al., 2018; Serpe et al., 2019; Stets et al., 2017) and to higher feelings of self-worth (Serpe et al., 2019). It is linked to behavior, in that the more prominent the identity, the more it should guide behavior correlated with the meaning of that identity (Stets et al., 2017). In other words, identity prominence encourages individuals to enact behavior they associate with that identity (Brenner & DeLamater, 2016). Thus, in the current study, I hypothesize:

*Identity prominence will be significantly related to tie formation in advice networks.* (Hypothesis 1)

### ***Possible Selves Theory***

Possible selves are visions of what people want to be or are afraid to become (Markus & Nurius, 1986). They are derived from understandings of oneself in the past and the future, as well as from social interactions and comparisons with other people (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves provide incentives, frames, and guidance for future goals, as well as a way for people to interpret and evaluate their current situations (Markus & Nurius, 1986). They can serve as motivators for action and help determine what tasks people are willing to engage in, persist in, or quit (Cross & Markus, 1991). They are the “cognitive bridges” between the present and future that guide individuals from their current selves to the selves they are going to become; as such, they are frequently integral to decision making (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 961).

Possible selves are inherently social and are based on comparisons of others and interaction with others (Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006). Moreover, they are value-laden—that is, they are imbued with values shaped by social contexts (Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006). This theory has been used in a host of different arenas (e.g., Cross & Markus, 1991; Oyserman et al., 2006), but has only recently been used to understand the beliefs held by PSTs (Hamman et al., 2010,; Hong & Greene, 2011).

Possible selves are often explored by asking people about their expected selves and feared selves (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). In other words, who do they expect to be in the future, and who do they fear becoming? It should be said that fearing a certain possible self does not carry a negative connotation. For example, fear of becoming a boring teacher may indicate a conscientiousness and reflectiveness in a PST, as they want to focus on being a better teacher. Moreover, fear of becoming a bad teacher may motivate a PST to improve their pedagogy and instruction.

Scholars contend that possible selves theory is a particularly good framework for exploring the identity formation and development of PSTs and teachers in their first year of teaching (Hamman et al., 2010, Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). It offers a window into how PSTs regulate learning and understand their future during their student teaching (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). People build their possible selves with engagement in their social contexts, where they are valued either positively or negatively (Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006). Hong and

Green (2011) suggested that one of the major social contexts for PSTs is their TEP: “Preservice teachers develop and shape their sense of future self a teacher through their experiences, interaction, and learning during their teacher education program” (p. 494). Hamman, Coward, et al. (2013) suggested that the way PSTs think about their possible selves impacts how they learn to teach and how they identify as teachers. Given that possible selves guide behavior and action and are shaped in social context, I hypothesize that:

> *Measures of teacher possible selves will be significantly related to tie formation in the advice network.* (Hypothesis 2)

### ***Social Justice Teacher Identity***

Improving social justice is one of the fundamental goals of teacher education in democratic societies (Zeichner, 2006). The term *social justice* is widely used in TEPs and teacher education research (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2016; Enterline et al., 2008; Grant & Agosto, 2008); in fact, Zeichner (2006) contended that it is difficult to find a TEP in the United States that does not claim to prepare teachers to work toward social justice in their classrooms. While the term itself is ubiquitous, there is a lack of clarity and under-theorization of the concept in teacher education (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Enterline et al., 2008). That said, one through line in the literature on social justice teacher education is the idea of a distributive conception of justice (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Cochran-Smith, 2010; Enterline et al., 2008), meaning that the fundamental job of a teacher and of teaching is to “enhance students’ learning and their life chances by challenging the inequities of school and society” (Enterline et al., 2008, p. 270). Teacher education for social justice, then, has the goal of preparing PSTs to teach for social justice in K–12 classrooms and of supporting them in this endeavor (Enterline et al., 2008;

Zeichner, 2006). All teachers and PSTs have a relationship with social justice, even if that relationship is a lack of awareness of social justice issues (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015).

Beliefs about social justice are intertwined with teacher identity. More specifically, PSTs' ideas and beliefs about social justice shape what and how they learn and how they understand themselves and the work of teaching (Farnsworth, 2010). Desires to work on issues of social justice often play an outsize role in decisions to enter the profession and are often central to teacher identity development (Olsen, 2008). PSTs' histories and views on social justice influence their experiences as teachers and their identity development (Olsen, 2008; Sonu et al., 2012). Teachers' and PSTs' actions, experiences, and pedagogy are filtered through their beliefs (Enterline et al., 2008). As such, teachers' beliefs about teaching for social justice are an integral part of their teacher identity (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Chubbock & Zembylas, 2016).

There has been a growing overlap between the social justice teacher education literature and the teacher identity literature—this chapter seeks to add to it (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). PSTs' interactions with peers help them to grapple with conceptions of teaching for social justice and negotiate their social justice teacher identities (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). As such, I hypothesize that:

> *Teacher social justice identity will have a significant relationship with advice tie formation.* (Hypothesis 3)

In summary, identity and identity formation in all of these frameworks are inherently social. PSTs negotiate their teacher identities with their cooperating teachers, their students, and their faculty and peers in their TEP. Moreover, all of these frameworks assert that identity foments action and interaction. Identity is not only influenced by the people we interact with, it influences the people with whom we seek to interact (Stets & Burke, 2009). As such, it seems apparent that teacher identity (seen through multiple lenses) will be related to tie formation in an advice network. This study is unique in that it is one of the only studies that explores how identity is related to interaction using a theory of social networks framework and using ERGMs.

# Methods

## Data Collection

In May 2019, I surveyed students in two cohorts of a graduate-level TEP—one multiple-subject cohort (*n* = 38) and one single-subject cohort (*n* = 25). I gave a brief presentation to each cohort describing the project, and participants signed a consent form and were given time in class to complete the survey. The response rate was 100% for both cohorts.

To measure advice networks in each cohort, the survey included the following prompt: *Please select the frequency of interaction with members of the cohort from whom you seek advice to improve your teaching practice.* Their options for frequency of interaction were *once a quarter* (1), *monthly* (2), *weekly or almost weekly* (3), and *daily or almost daily* (4). Tie strength is a function of time, intimacy, emotional intensity, and reciprocity (Granovetter, 1973; Kilduff & Brass, 2010). I used high frequency interaction—seeking advice weekly or daily/almost daily—as a measure of tie strength (Marsden & Campbell, 1984, 2012). Scholars have noted that these are the most robust and enduring ties, and they represent trust and support (Granovetter 1973; Marsden & Campbell, 1984; 2012; Uzzi 1997, 1999). Moreover, strong ties are important for sharing complex information and the transfer of knowledge (Coburn et al, 2012; Uzzi, 1997, 1999). In short, strong ties are indicative of closer relationships and interactions that have the ability to improve teaching practice (Coburn et al., 2012). To create the strong tie advice network, all ties rated with a frequency of 3 or 4 were set equal to 1, and all ties rated with a frequency of 1 or 2 were set to zero.

I also used an identification network as an independent variable in my models (described in detail below). Along with the advice networks prompt, participants were asked the following question: "*With whom do you identify in your cohort? By 'identify,' we mean a person who you believe shares similar traits, values, beliefs, or experiences with you.*" This was not a frequency network like the advice network—a tie was either present (1) or it was not (0). This network prompt has been used in past research (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021).

To improve validity of both network prompts and issues regarding memory, each participant was given a roster of their cohort to refer to as they named peers from whom they sought advice (Scott, 2013). Further, I piloted the survey in the spring of the prior academic year with a separate cohort of PSTs. I also conducted follow-up cognitive interviews with three pilot study participants to confirm that they understood the network questions as they were intended. Specifically, I asked them to put the network prompts in their own words and explain some of their choices (Fowler, 2014).

**Sample**

The multiple-subject cohort included 38 PSTs (see Table 4.1) of whom 89% identified as female and 11% identified as male. The majority of the multiple-subject-cohort participants (55%) identified as white, 18% identified as Asian, 13% as Latina/o, and 3% as Black, while 11% identified with more than one ethno-racial group. PSTs in the multiple-subject cohort had the option of having a specialization attached to their credential. Overall, 21% specialized in bilingual education, 16% in math education, and 8% in American Sign Language; over half (55%) did not opt to complete a specialization.

Some participants had completed a minor in education during their undergraduate work at the same university and came straight into the program; others came from other institutions and/or were changing professions. Those who came from other universities or did not do their minor at the university (66% of the PSTs in the multiple-subject cohort) started in the summer to complete units equivalent to the education minor; in the fall, the two groups merged.

**Table 4.1**
*Demographics of Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts (spring 2019)*

| | Mean | SD | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Multiple-Subject Cohort (*n* = 38)** | | | | |
| Female | .89 | - | 0 | 1 |
| Summer start | .66 | - | 0 | 1 |
| Ethno-racial identity | | | | |
| White | .55 | | | |
| Latina/o | .13 | | | |
| Asian | .18 | | | |
| Black | .03 | | | |
| More than one group | .11 | | | |
| Specialization | | | | |
| Bilingual education | .21 | | | |
| Math education | .16 | | | |
| American Sign Language | .08 | | | |
| None | .55 | | | |
| **Single-Subject Cohort (*n* = 25)** | | | | |
| Female | .56 | - | 0 | 1 |
| Summer start | .40 | - | 0 | 1 |
| Ethno-racial identity | | | | |
| White | .28 | | | |
| Latina/o | .24 | | | |
| Asian | .32 | | | |
| Black | - | | | |
| More than one group | .16 | | | |
| Subject taught | | | | |
| English language arts | .20 | | | |
| Math | .32 | | | |
| Science | .32 | | | |
| World languages | .16 | | | |

The single-subject cohort included 25 PSTs; in this group, 56% identified as female and 44% identified as male. The largest ethno-racial group was PSTs who identified as Asian (32%), followed by those who identified as White (28%) and Latina/o (24%), as well as by those who identified with more than one ethno-racial group (16%). Thirty-two percent of participants were pursuing their credential in math, 32% in science, 20% in English language arts, and 16% in world languages. Forty percent of the single-subject cohort had completed their undergraduate degrees at different universities and therefore started in the summer program. All PSTs in the sample had been in a school placement and were either student teaching or interning when they took the survey.

### Data Analysis

Social network data violate the independence assumption used by many statistical tests (Lusher et al., 2020). Network structures can be thought of as social processes, and social processes in a network are dependent on each other (Lusher et al., 2020). For example, if Fred turns to Barney for advice, the likelihood that Barney will also go to Fred for advice increases—Barney's action reciprocates the tie was dependent on Fred's initial advice seeking. Using ERGMs, I was able to include social processes like these in my model. Beyond network structures, individual attributes can also affect tie formation in networks—ERGMs can model individual attributes. In other words, using ERGMs I was able to model network/structural characteristics and individual characteristics and examine their relationship to tie formation.

ERGMs are statistical models that examine tie formation in networks and address the fact that ties are, by their nature, dependent on each other (Lusher et al., 2020; Robins & Lusher, 2013a). ERGMs can be thought of as quantitative case studies for networks (Lusher et al, 2020). The concept behind ERGMs is that an observed network is just one possible configuration of a set of possible networks, given the characteristics of the observed network (Robins et al., 2007). ERGMs simulate a sample of random networks, given attributes of an observed network, and then compare the observed network to the sample to see if the patterns of tie formation in the observed network are significantly different from random chance (Robins & Lusher, 2013a; Lusher, 2011; Lusher et al., 2020).

One of the benefits of ERGMs is that they allow for the introduction of network structural effects into models (Lusher et al., 2020). ERGMs also give us the ability to analyze a range of social processes and personal attributes in models (Lusher et al., 2020). “When correctly specified, [ERGMs] support the estimation of parameters associated with variables of theoretical interest while at the same time providing an accurate characterization of the network structure in which individual relations are embedded” (Lomi et al., 2014, p. 439).

## Variables

In this section, I describe my outcome variable—strong ties in PSTs’ advice networks—as well as the structural and actor-level effects included in my models.

### *Outcome Variable: Strong Ties in PST’s Advice Networks*

As described above, at the end of the academic year I asked study participants whom they sought out for advice to improve their teaching practice. My outcome variable was the presence (1) or absence (0) of a tie in a PST’s strong tie advice network. Coefficients in ERGMs can be thought of as similar to log-odds in logistic regression models. I also include odds ratios for actor-level effects to ease interpretation of the results

### *Structural Effects*

The term *structural effects* refers to social processes of the network that are related to tie formation. I conditioned my models on several structural effects: *arcs*, *reciprocity*, and *activity spread* using geometrically weighted outdegree (GWOD); *popularity spread*, using geometrically weighted indegree (GWID); *transitivity*, using directed geometrically weighted edgewise shared partners (DGWESP); and *multiple connectivity*, using directed geometrically weighted dyad shared partners (DGWDSP). All are described below (Figure 4.1). Robins and Lusher (2013b) argued that these structural effects provide sufficient statistics to model the network. In particular, they are a good starting point for ERGM estimation, as they provide sufficient statistics to model the network and are relevant to social network theory. Each structural effect conditions the model on a social process (Lusher et al., 2020).

The arc term functions similarly to an intercept in a traditional regression model and controls for the number of ties (arcs) present in the network (Siciliano, 2015). Reciprocity conditions on the notion described above—that sent ties are often reciprocated in positive networks (Robins & Lusher, 2013b). Activity and popularity spreads control for the outdegree and indegree distribution in the network or the number of ties received and sent by each actor (Robins & Lusher, 2013b). A significant and positive activity or popularity spread indicates a centralized network structure where few actors are sending or receiving a disproportionate amount of the ties relative to their peers (Lomi et al., 2014). A negative and significant coefficient would indicate that ties are sent or received at a similar frequency by all actors (Lomi et al., 2014).

Groups of three (triads) are of interest social network scholars (Faust, 2010; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). For example, as noted above, triads tend toward closure or transitivity: When two actors are connected to a third actor, those connections increase the likelihood that they themselves will connect with each other—a friend of a friend is often a friend (Davis, 1963; Lusher & Robins, 2013a). To condition my model on this, I included a transitivity effect (closed triads) and a multiple connectivity effect (open triads). Transitivity and multiple connectivity are modeled together. Transitivity controls for closure (closed triads), and multiple connectivity controls for non-connected dyads that share a partner in common (open triads). Modeling both effects together provide a better sense of the type of triadic closure occurring in the network (Harris, 2014, Siciliano, 2015).

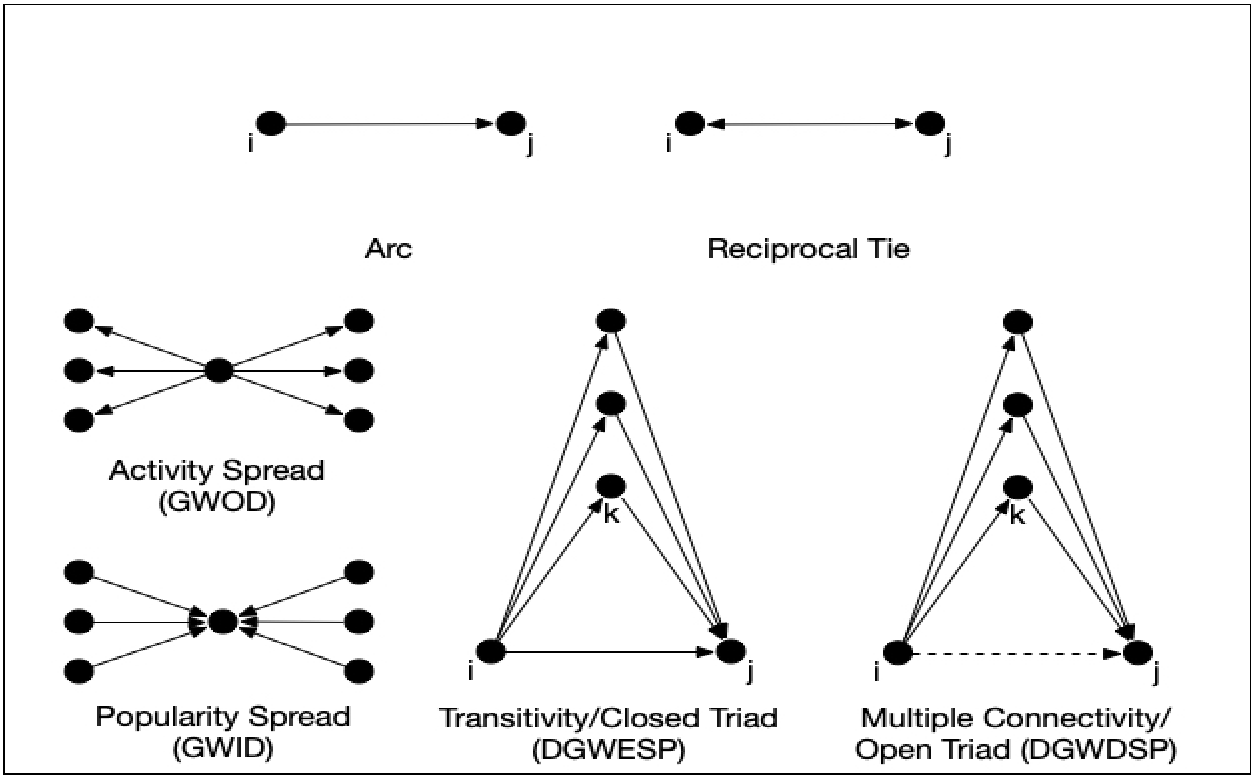

i
j
Arc
i
j
Reciprocal Tie
Activity Spread
(GWOD)
Popularity Spread
(GWID)
k
i
j
Transitivity/Closed Triad
(DGWESP)
k
i
j
Multiple Connectivity/
Open Triad (DGWDSP)

**Figure 4.1** *Network Structures Included in ERGM Models*

It is often necessary to use geometrically weighted effects in order to improve convergence of ERGMs (Snijders, 2011; Snijders et al., 2006). Geometrically weighted effects use a weighting parameter that attenuates the effect of structures (e.g., large numbers of triads or degrees) that may inhibit the model fit (Snijders, 2011). I included weighting parameters that offered the best goodness-of-fit for my models (Hunter et al., 2008).

**Edge Effects in the Identification Network.** Including edge effects in the ERGMs allowed me to condition the model on the existence of ties between dyads other networks. For example, I could condition on the likelihood of a tie forming in the advice network if a dyad also had a tie in a friendship network. In this instance, I used the identification network described in the previous section (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021).

A positive coefficient on this edge effect would indicate that the presence of a tie in the identification network between two participants would increase the likelihood of a tie in the advice network between those same two participants—that is, if participants identified with someone, they were more likely to seek or receive advice from that person. As noted above, people tend to seek advice from those they perceive as similar to themselves. Moreover, a sense of similarly between people may lower the perceived transaction cost of advice seeking (Lazega et al., 2012). By controlling for structural effects and controlling for this edge effect, I was able to make stronger and more "principled inferences" about actor-level effects in the models (Lusher & Robins, 2013b, p. 197).

### *Actor-Level Effects*

**Homophily and Propinquity Effects.** Ties tend to form based on homophily in gender, ethno-racial group, or subject taught (Coburn et al., 2012; McPherson et al., 2001; Spillane et al., 2015). To control for this, I incorporated actor-level effects for gender and ethno-racial identity homophily. Scholars have shown that propinquity, like homophily, increases the likelihood of tie formation (McPherson et al., 2001; Small & Adler, 2019). Thus, I incorporated effects to explore the relationship of being in the same specialization (for the multiple-subject cohort) or same subject area (for the single-subject cohort) and having the same TEP start time (summer or fall). These variables represent propinquity as well as homophily, as PSTs who shared specialization and subject area spent more class time together and had more structured interactions with each other than with their peers outside these areas. Peers with similar start times also tended to group together and had more opportunities to get to know each other.

**Sender and Receiver Effects.** Sender effects indicate the likelihood that a covariate—like identity prominence, feared selves and expected selves, and social justice teacher identity—

will be associated with sending a tie; receiver effects indicate the likelihood that a covariate will be associated with receiving a tie. For example, a PST with increased levels of trust is more likely to seek out others (i.e., send a tie) for instructional materials (Liou et al., 2020). I used four variables to measure different aspects of teacher identity (described in the literature review) and its relationship to tie formation.

To measure identity prominence, I used a scale created by Brenner et al. (2014, 2018) that measures how important teacher identity is to the participants and their understanding of themselves. It is a four-item scale that asked participants the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements like: "*Being a teacher is an important part of my self-image*" and "*Being a teacher is an important reflection of who I am.*" A higher score on this scale indicates participants placed a higher value their teacher identity ($\alpha = .81$).

To measure teacher possible selves, I used a scale created and validated by Hamman, Wang, and Burley (2013). This scale measures PSTs' beliefs about their expected and feared teacher selves in the following year (i.e., when they are in their first year of teaching). The expected teacher selves scale asked participants to read nine statements and indicate "how much you expect each to be true for you next year" using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*absolutely do not expect*) to 9 (*absolutely expect*).

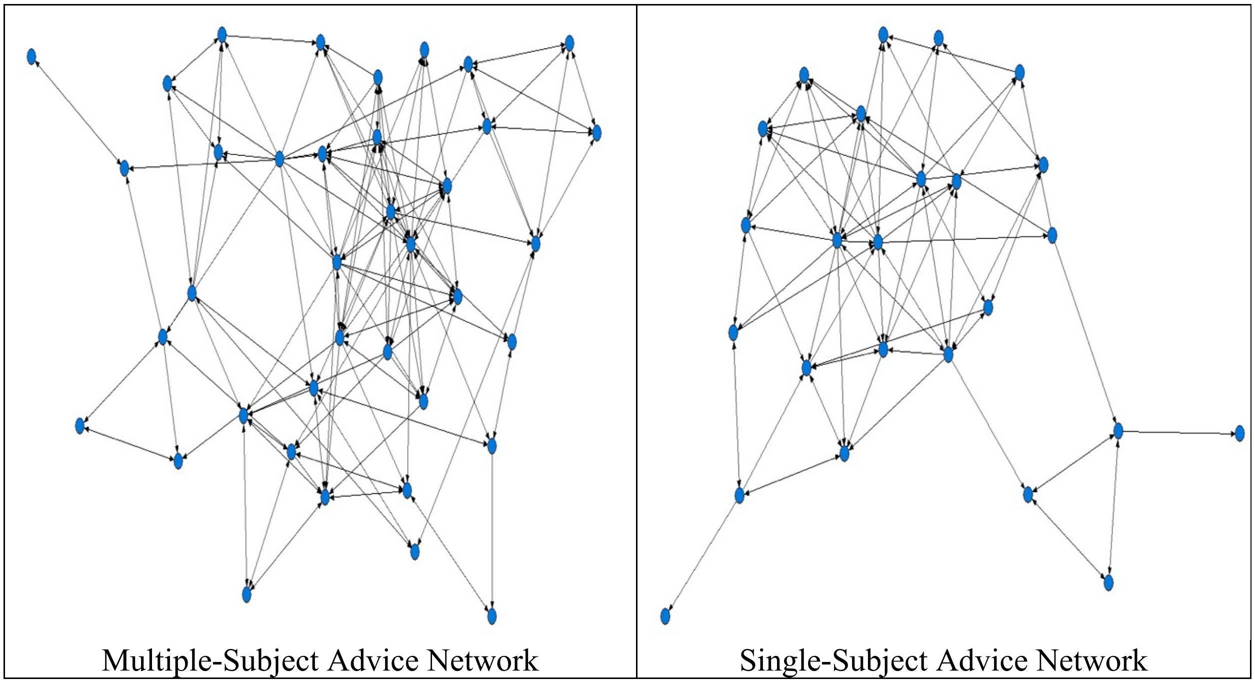
Hamman, Wang, and Burley (2013) found two factors in their expected teacher selves scale: expected professionalism and learning to teach. I used the learning-to-teach (Expected Self: Learn) scale in my models, which included four items like "*Learn from experienced colleagues*" and "*Learn new teaching strategies.*" A higher score indicates a stronger expectation of continuing to learn and be supported by colleagues at future school sites ($\alpha = .76$).

In the fear teacher selves scale, participants were asked to read nine statements and decide "*How much do you fear this could be true of you next year?*" using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*absolutely do not fear this*) to 9 (*absolutely do fear this*). Hamman, Wang, and Burley (2013) found three factors from this solution: fear of loss of control, fear of being an uninspiring teacher, and fear of being an uncaring teacher. I included the uninspiring teacher (Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching) scale in my models, which included items like "*Become a worksheet teacher*" and "*Be a boring teacher.*" A higher score on this scale indicates higher levels of concern about being an uninspiring teacher ($\alpha = .88$). I selected these two scales—as opposed to the three—because they provided the best model fit as measured by Akaike inclusion criterion (AIC) and Bayes inclusion criterion (BIC).

Finally, to measure social justice teacher identity, I used the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B) scale (Enterline et al., 2008). This scale was specifically designed to measure PSTs' beliefs about teaching for social justice (Enterline et al., 2008). Participants were asked about the extent to which they agreed with 12 items, including: "*Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons*" and "*An important part of learning to be a teacher is examining one's own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation.*" A high score on this scale indicates a stronger sense that teaching for social justice is core to their mission as teachers ($\alpha = .88$). All actor-level covariates were measured on a scale ranging from 1 to 9.

## Results

### Descriptive Network and Covariate Results



Multiple-Subject Advice Network

Single-Subject Advice Network

| Ave Degree | Density | Arc Reciprocity | Transitivity | Ave Degree | Density | Arc Reciprocity | Transitivity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4.7 | .13 | .63 | .43 | 3.8 | .16 | .57 | .40 |

**Figure 4.2** *Advice Networks in Both Cohorts*

Figure 4.2 shows the two advice networks.[3] Participants' average degree—the average number of ties sent and/or received by each actor—was 4.7 for the multiple-subject cohort, indicating that each actor was connected to about five others in the cohort. The average degree for the single-subject cohort was 3.8. In the multiple-subject cohort, density—the ratio of the number of ties present to the number of ties possible—was .13; in the single-subject cohort it was.16. Arc reciprocity represents the proportion of sent ties that were reciprocated. Both cohorts had relatively high levels of arc reciprocity, with 63% of sent ties in the multiple-subject cohort and 57% of ties in the single-subject cohort reciprocated.

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[3] All network maps and statistics in Figure 4.2 were created in UCINET (Borgatti et al., 2002).

Transitivity represents the ratio of transitive triads (e.g., Fred seeks advice from Wilma, Wilma seeks advice from Barney, and then Fred seeks advice from Barney) relative to the number of open triads (e.g., Fred seeks advice from Wilma, Wilma seeks advice from Barney, and then Fred *does not* seek advice from Barney). A higher ratio indicates a tendency toward triadic closure in the network. Transitivity in the multiple-subject cohort was .43, and in the single-subject cohort it was .40.

Regarding actor-level covariates (with possible values ranging from 1 to 9), the multiple-subject cohort average teacher identity prominence was 6.82 (*SD* = 1.68) and the single-subject average was 6.49 (*SD* = 1.33). For the Expected Self: Learn variable, participants in the multiple-subject cohort averaged 7.97 (*SD* = .89), while the average in the single-subject cohort was 7.68 (*SD* = .97). Regarding Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching, participants in the multiple-subject cohort averaged 4.66 (*SD* = 1.83). Single-subject participants indicated a higher average level of fear about being uninspiring: They reported an average score of 5.28 (*SD* = 2.50). Finally, on the LTSJ-B scale, multiple-subject participants reported an average of 7.72 (*SD* = 1.20), which was almost identical to the average for the single-subject cohort (*M* = 7.77, *SD* = 1.08). (Table 4.2.)

**Table 4.2**
*Descriptive Covariate Results for Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts (spring 2019)*

| | Mean | SD | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Multiple-Subject Cohort (*n* = 38)** | | | | |
| Identity Prominence | 6.82 | 1.68 | 2.00 | 9.00 |
| Expected Self: Learn | 7.97 | 0.89 | 5.25 | 9.00 |
| Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching | 4.66 | 1.83 | 1.00 | 7.67 |
| Teaching for Social Justice Beliefs | 7.72 | 1.20 | 3.50 | 9.00 |
| | | | | |
| **Single-Subject Cohort (*n* = 25)** | | | | |
| Identity Prominence | 6.49 | 1.33 | 4.00 | 9.00 |
| Expected Self: Learn | 7.68 | 0.97 | 5.75 | 9.00 |
| Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching | 5.28 | 2.50 | 1.00 | 9.00 |
| Teaching for Social Justice Beliefs | 7.77 | 1.08 | 6.00 | 9.00 |

### ERGM Results

Table 4.3 shows the final results of the ERGM analyses. The results are presented in log odds; for ease of interpretation, I transformed the log odds of significant edge and actor-level effects into odds ratios. A positive and significant coefficient for structural effects indicates the network structure is found in the observed network more frequently than would occur by chance. A negative and significant coefficient indicates a lower chance of observing that structure than by chance alone.

**Table 4.3**
*ERGM Results for Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts*

| | Multiple-Subject Cohort | Odds Ratios | Single-Subject Cohort | Odds Ratios |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Structural Effects** | | | | |
| Arcs | 1.36 | | -8.07$^{**}$ | |
| | (1.96) | | (2.01) | |
| Reciprocity | 3.29$^{***}$ | | 2.29$^{***}$ | |
| | (.42) | | (.51) | |
| Activity spread (GWOD) | -2.00$^{***}$ | | -1.50$^{*}$ | |
| | (.53) | | (.70) | |
| Popularity spread (GWID) | 1.09 | | 2.86$^{+}$ | |
| | (.90) | | (1.52) | |
| Transitivity/closed triads (DGWESP) | .55$^{***}$ | | .59$^{***}$ | |
| | (.10) | | (.15) | |
| Multiple connectivity/open triads (DGWDSP) | -.28$^{***}$ | | -.23$^{**}$ | |
| | (.04) | | (.07) | |
| **Edge Effect** | | | | |
| Identification network | 2.13$^{***}$ | 8.41 | 1.38$^{***}$ | 3.97 |
| | (.23) | | (.25) | |
| **Homophily Effects** | | | | |
| Same gender | -.44$^{*}$ | .64 | .12 | |
| | (.23) | | (.22) | |
| Same ethno-racial identity | .11 | | -.09 | |
| | (.17) | | (.26) | |
| Same specialization/subject | .10 | | .54$^{**}$ | 1.72 |
| | (.17) | | (.21) | |
| Same program start date | .42$^{*}$ | 1.52 | .22 | |
| | (.17) | | (.21) | |

**Table 4.3**

*ERGM Results for Multiple- and Single-Subject Cohorts* (continued)

| | Multiple-Subject Cohort | Odds Ratios | Single-Subject Cohort | Odds Ratios |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Sender/Receiver Effects** | | | | |
| Receiver: Identity prominence | $.24^{**}$ | 1.27 | .12 | |
| | (.09) | | (.13) | |
| Sender: Identity prominence | $-.12^{*}$ | .89 | $-.19^{*}$ | .83 |
| | (.05) | | (.08) | |
| Receiver: Expected Self: Learn | $-.30^{+}$ | .74 | $.34^{+}$ | 1.40 |
| | (.15) | | (.18) | |
| Sender: Expected Self: Learn | -.18 | | .05 | |
| | (.12) | | (.12) | |
| Receiver: Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching | .05 | | -.01 | |
| | (.07) | | (.07) | |
| Sender: Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching | $-.25^{***}$ | .78 | $.16^{***}$ | 1.17 |
| | (.05) | | (.05) | |
| Receiver: Teach for Social Justice Beliefs | .16 | | .20 | |
| | (.11) | | (.18) | |
| Sender: Teach for Social Justice Beliefs | $-.13^{*}$ | .88 | $.24^{*}$ | 1.27 |
| | (.06) | | (.10) | |

$^{+}p$ <.10. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

Reciprocity was positive and significant, and it predicted tie formation in both the multiple- and single-subject cohorts. Additionally, the negative and significant coefficient for activity spread indicates that participants in both networks sought advice from a similar number of their peers. The positive, marginally significant popularity coefficient in the single-subject cohort indicates there was a small number of participants who were sought out by more peers for advice relative to others. Finally, the significant positive DGWESP—in combination with the negative and significant negative DGWDSP—indicates that this network tended toward transitive closure to a greater degree than would be expected by chance alone.

The edge effect was the strongest indicator of tie formation in both the multiple-subject (*exp* [2.13] = 8.41) and single-subject network (*exp* [1.38] = 3.97). This means that if a tie existed between two actors in the identification network, they were almost eight-and-a-half times more likely to have a tie in the multiple-subject advice network and almost four times more likely to have a tie in the single-subject network.

The homophily effects provided mixed results between the cohorts. The coefficient for gender homophily was significant and negative for the multiple-subject cohort (*exp* [-.44] = .64), meaning that being the same gender made tie formation 36% less likely; there was no significant gender homophily effect in the single-subject cohort. In the single-subject cohort, teaching the same subject increased the likelihood of a tie between two participants by 72% (*exp* [.54] = 1.72); there was no significant effect for being in the same specialization in the multiple-subject group. Starting the program at the same time increased the likelihood of a tie by 52% (*exp* [.42] = 1.52) in the multiple-subject cohort and had no significant relationship with tie formation the single-subject cohort.

Similarly, the sender and receiver effects provided mixed results between the two cohorts. Stronger teacher identity prominence increased the likelihood of being sought for advice (receiving a tie) in the multiple-subject cohort by 27% (*exp* [.24] = 1.27). Increased teacher identity prominence decreased the likelihood of seeking advice by 11% (*exp* [-.12] = .89) in the multiple-subject cohort and by 17% (*exp* [-.19] = .83) in the single-subject cohort. That was the only effect that shared both significance and direction between the two cohorts.

An increase in the Expected Self: Learn effect decreased the likelihood of receiving a tie 26% (*exp* [-.30] = .74) in the multiple-subject cohort, but increased the likelihood of receiving a tie by 40% (*exp* [.34] = 1.40) in the single-subject cohort. An increase in the Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching effect decreased the likelihood of sending a tie by 22% (*exp* [-.25] = .78).in the multiple-subject cohort but increased the likelihood of sending a tie by 17% (*exp* [.16] = 1.17) in the single-subject cohort.

Finally, increased beliefs about teaching for social justice beliefs decreased the likelihood of sending a tie by 12% (*exp* [-.13] = .88) in the multiple-subject cohort but increased the likelihood of sending a tie by 27% (*exp* [.24] = 1.27) in the single-subject cohort. The ostensibly contradictory results of teacher identity in these two cohorts is discussed in detail below.

## Discussion

As PSTs work through the project of becoming teachers and create their new teacher identities, TEPs play an especially important role (Bullough, 1997; Danielewicz, 2001). PSTs may begin their programs with inaccurate visions of what teaching is based on what they experienced as students (Britzman, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). As they confront this dissonance, a supportive peer group is especially valuable (Baker-Doyle & Petchauer, 2015; Le Cornu, 2013). This type of support can give PSTs necessary space to reconcile their beliefs with their realities and to develop strong teacher identities (Horn et al., 2008). In short, relationships in TEPs—especially advice-seeking relationships—can be an important counterweight to the difficulties of learning to teach.

In the past 20 years there has been an increased focus on social networks in education settings (Daly, 2010). Moreover, there is a growing body of research exploring teachers' advice networks (Bjorklund & Caduff, 2021). There has also been an increase in research that explores PSTs' social networks (e.g., Baker-Doyle & Petchauer, 2015; Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Bjorklund et al., 2020), but little is known about the advice networks of PSTs. Even less is known about how teacher identity is related to advice-seeking networks.

This chapter described the findings from a May 2019 survey of two PST cohorts—one single-subject and one multiple-subject. The survey included scales and items that explored participants' teacher identities and their social networks. The findings shed light on the relationship between advice networks and teacher identity for these PSTs. While the structure of the two networks, the structural effects in the ERGM models, and the homophily variables were not the main focus of this chapter, it is important to briefly touch on these findings to get a better general sense of PST advice networks and their characteristics.

Overall, the characteristics of the two advice networks, despite large difference in nodes, were similar in many respects. They had similar average degree and density; arc reciprocity and transitivity were relatively high and similar for both networks. Regarding structural effects, the high levels of reciprocity were expected, as there was no formalized hierarchy between students in the program. Mueller and Kamdar (2011) suggested that advice givers tend to also be people who seek advice.

Looking at activity spread and popularity spread, advice seeking (activity spread) was generally equal in the two networks. Participants in both cohorts sought roughly the same number of people for advice. This make sense, as they were all peers with similar status, leading to lateral advice seeking (Lee, 1997, 2002). In the single-subject cohort, popularity spread was positive and moderately significant, indicating that a few people were sought out for advice more often than their peers. This could indicate that some people served as the main catalysts for new ideas or were thought of as more expert than their peers. This type of network structure could have a positive effect if the advice of central actors is sound; it could also have the negative effect of stifling ideas and advice from actors on the periphery (Centola, 2021).

The positive transitivity effect and negative multiple connectivity effect in both networks revealed a tendency toward closure. This also indicates the formation of clustering into subgroups within the network (Robins & Lusher, 2013b). Given that this survey was conducted at the end of the year, it makes sense that groups formed as participants got to know each other over time. Moreover, networks have a tendency to cluster. This type of clustering in TEP networks is supported by past literature (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Davis, 1963; Lusher & Robins, 2013a). As I discuss in the next chapter, clustering of friend groups can have an effect on teacher identity. The effect comes through with respect not only to who is in the cluster, but also to who is outside the cluster.

The identification network edge effect was the strongest predictor of tie formation in both models. This is not surprising, as people tend to seek advice from those with whom they feel similar (McPherson et al., 2001; Rivera et al., 2010). Moreover, advice seeking—as opposed to help seeking more broadly—implies a congruence of values between advice seeker and advice giver (Brooks et al., 2015). Feeling similar to the person from whom advice is sought can lessen the perceived social costs—such as vulnerability—of seeking advice (Lazega et al., 2012; Lee, 1997, 2002). Finally, advice relationships tend to be reciprocal (Agneessens & Wittek, 2012; Mueller & Kamdar, 2011).

There were mixed homophily effects between the cohorts. Being the same gender was negatively associated with advice ties in the multiple-subject group and was not significant in the single-subject cohort. This makes sense: In the multiple-subject cohort, 11% of the sample identified as male; if they only sought out women for advice this could have skewed the results. The gender identity breakdown in the single-subject group was roughly equal and it had no significant impact on tie formation.

Interestingly, ethno-racial homophily was not significant in either cohort. This could be due the fact that the survey was administered at the end of the year. As people have time to learn about the expertise and experiences of others, they become more likely to seek them out based on those things rather than due to homophily (Coburn et al., 2010). Teaching the same subject, however, was one of the strongest predictors of tie formation in the single-subject group. This supports previous findings in school settings that show teaching the same subject or the same grade level increases the likelihood of tie formation (Horn et al., 2020; Penuel et al., 2010; Spillane et al., 2012, 2015). Notably, few studies have explored this phenomenon in a TEP setting.

In the multiple-subject cohort, having the same start time was one of the strongest predictors of tie formation. As noted above, PSTs who did not earn their undergraduate degree and education minor at the university started in the summer, about 2 months before their peers. This seems to indicate that the relationships formed in these two groups in the first few months of the program held through until the end of the academic year. This effect was stronger for the multiple-subject group than for the single-subject group. This is likely because the single-subject PSTs who started in the summer program worked primarily in their subject groups. Moreover, throughout the year, subject groups were routinely grouped together in their classes and worked together on subject-specific material. This supports a significant amount of research that shows how formal school and organizational struggles play an outsized role in tie formation in informal networks (Horn et al., 2020; Spillane et al., 2012, 2015, 2017; Spillane & Shirrell, 2017; Wilhelm et al., 2016, 2020). Additionally, people often seek advice from peers with similar status—lateral advice seeking—as they may be more familiar with the issues that the advice seeker is dealing with, and their advice may therefore be more useful (Lee, 1997, 2002). In the next three sections, I discuss the results of the teacher identity variables in both cohorts.

## Hypothesis 1: Identity Prominence and Tie Formation

The first hypothesis posited that identity prominence would be significantly related to tie formation in advice networks. As described above, an identity that is more prominent is more central to a person's understanding of themselves and is more valued relative to other identities (Ervin & Stryker, 2001). As such, it is a reflection of how they would like to see themselves in an ideal world (Brenner & DeLamater, 2016; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stets et al., 2017). People invest more and are more committed to identities that are more prominent (Stryker & Serpe, 1994).

PSTs' teacher identity prominence was a significant predictor of tie formation in the advice network, which supports Hypothesis 1. Teacher identity prominence was a predictor of giving advice (receiving ties) in the multiple-subject cohort, but not in the single-subject cohort. It could be that those members of the multiple-subject cohort with stronger teacher identity prominence were more visible to their peers as people who could help with sensemaking and working through issues around teaching. This relationship between advice giving and teacher identity prominence could also be because being sought for advice is a tacit acknowledgement of expertise (Brooks et al., 2015). As such, PSTs who were sought out more for advice may feel increased teacher identity prominence as a result. It is interesting that this was not significant in the single-subject network. More research will have to be done to explore this difference.

The only consistent effect in both networks was that teacher identity prominence was negatively related to advice seeking. In other words, as PSTs' teacher identity prominence increased, they were less likely to seek advice from their peers. Identity prominence has been liked to increased feelings of self-worth and self-efficacy related to that identity (Brenner et al., 2018; Serpe et al., 2019; Stets et al., 2017). It is possible that PSTs who reported higher levels of teacher identity prominence felt more confident about themselves as teachers and were less likely to seek advice from their peers.

Though they did not explore advice networks, Bokhove and Downey (2018) found that as PSTs' self-efficacy increased over the course of the year, the number of people they sought out for support decreased. This could explain the current results. At the end of the year, those with higher teacher identity prominence did not seek advice from their peers. Finally, it could be that identity prominence drives individuals to act in ways that they associate with that identity (Brenner & DeLamater, 2016). Those with increased teacher identity prominence may see seeking advice from PST peers as not commensurate with how teachers act, and they may instead seek advice from outside their network. Additionally, they may see advice seeking from peers as an admission that they do not have the answers, which may be in conflict with their teacher identities (Brooks et al., 2015; Hoffman et al., 2009; Lee, 2002)

### Hypothesis 2: Possible Selves and Tie Formation

The second hypothesis posited that measures of teachers' possible selves would be significantly related to tie formation in the advice network. As described earlier, possible selves are conceptions of what people strive to be or are scared to become (Markus & Nurius, 1986). They are relevant to tie formation because they provide incentives, frames, and guidance for future goals—in short, they provide a framework for current action to meet future goals. Possible selves are often motivators for action and help people decide how to engage in tasks and how to persist in reaching goals (Cross & Markus, 1991). Using a possible selves framework is especially useful for understanding teacher identity development among PSTs (Hamman et al., 2010).

In the current research, the models included two variables associated with future teacher selves: Expected Self: Learn and Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching. The first indicates a PST's belief that they will have a supportive group of teachers at their placement and that they will learn from them. The second indicates a PST's fear that they will be uninspiring to their students.

In the multiple-subject cohort, the Expected Self: Learn variable was negatively associated with giving advice (receiving ties); in the single-subject cohort, it was positively associated with giving advice. Similarly, the Feared Self: Uninspiring Teaching variable was negatively associated with advice seeking (sending ties) in the multiple-subject cohort and positively associated with advice seeking in the single-subject cohort. These mixed results seem contradictory, but in fact they support the notion that possible teacher selves and teacher identity more broadly are related to how PSTs act.

Possible selves theory suggests that a PST will act in a way that they feel is commensurate with their expected and feared selves—to meet goals or to avoid becoming the teacher that they fear. Moreover, the way PSTs think about their possible selves affects how they learn to teach and how they understand themselves as teachers (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). These results support this notion, as there is a relationship to PSTs' actions within the network. The mixed results could be because of different cultures and climates within the two cohorts. Advice seeking can incur social costs, as it may signal an inability to complete tasks independently (Lee, 1997, 2002). Likewise, it can make people feel powerless in front of others and undermine self-esteem (Lee, 1997). People may fear seeking advice due to concerns about negative evaluations from peers (Brooks et al., 2015); they are more likely to seek advice from peers who are having similar experiences, however, as this similarity may limit social costs (Lazega et al., 2012; Small, 2017).

If specific teacher identities are more common or more accepted in a particular cohort, then they may be more likely to engender advice seeking or advice giving; if they are less common or accepted, they may inhibit advice seeking or advice giving. For example, it may be that the fear of being an uninspiring teacher was more accepted by the single-subject cohort and, as such, PSTs in that cohort felt more comfortable seeking advice from their peers. Conversely, it may be that in the multiple-subject cohort the fear of being an uninspiring teacher was not common or accepted in the same way; this could have influenced PSTs who were concerned about this to seek out their peers less often.

Another explanation for the relationship is that the concern about being an uninspiring teacher may have been more unnerving for the single-subject cohort than it was for the multiple-subject cohort. Anxious individuals are more likely to seek advice than non-anxious individuals (Gino et al, 2011). As such, it could be that the anxiety associated with this feared self was felt more acutely by the single-subject cohort, which made them more likely to seek advice from their peers.

A final explanation is tied to the notion that people are more likely to turn to peers who are going through similar challenges, as they may have relevant and specific advice (Lee, 2002; McKnight & Peet, 2000). It is possible that PSTs in the single-subject cohort could turn to their subject-area peers for advice, and that there was a clear similarity between them that did not exist in the multiple-subject cohort. The familiarity of the challenges faced by PSTs in the same subject area may have made them more likely to seek advice from peers than those in the multiple-subject group, who did not necessarily share the same similarities.

What seems to be clear from these results is that beliefs about possible selves are related to advice seeking and advice giving (supporting Hypothesis 2). What is less clear is how the climate or culture of these cohorts is related to PSTs' possible selves and how it affects their interactions. Identity is inherently social, and people react to social situations based on their identity and how it is perceived in that social situation (Burke & Stets, 2009). The perception of the identity within the social context has a relationship to how an individual enacts that identity in that space. This also seems evident from the results related to Hypothesis 3, which I discuss next.

## Hypothesis 3: Social Justice Identity and Tie Formation

The third hypothesis posited that teacher social justice identity would have a significant relationship with advice tie formation. As discussed earlier, ideas about social justice are intertwined with teacher identity, even if teachers are not aware of social justice or do not incorporate it into their teaching (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). PSTs' histories and views on social justice influence their experiences as teachers and their identity development (Olsen, 2008; Sonu et al., 2012). Using Enterline et al.'s (2008) LTSJ-B scale, I found that PSTs' social justice teacher identity had a significant relationship with advice seeking, supporting Hypothesis 3. Similar to with the possible selves variables, however, the effects were mixed between the two cohorts.

An increase in the LTSJ-B scale was negatively related to tie formation in the multiple-subject cohort but positively related to tie formation in the single-subject cohort. As with the possible teacher selves variables, these ostensibly contrary relationships may be due to the climate of each cohort. When PSTs have a strong social justice teacher identity and do not feel like it is matched by their peers or by their cooperating teachers, they can feel a lack of sense of belonging; moreover, the mismatch can cause conflicts between PSTs' beliefs and their interactions with those around them (McKay & Manning, 2019). They may not want to seek out advice from others who they feel do not share their visions for social justice. Moreover, they may feel less inclined to seek advice or may feel the need to mute their true social justice teacher identities if they feel like their vision of social justice is not shared by others (McKay & Manning, 2019). Conversely, the negative relationship between social justice teacher identity and advice seeking may stem from a strong belief that advice seeking would be admitting a lack of understanding of particular issues and would be incongruent with a strong social justice teacher identity (Lee, 2002; Burke & Stets, 2009).

In the single-subject cohort, the positive relationship between social justice teacher identity and advice seeking could be related to a stronger culture of teaching for social justice within the cohort. Teaching for social justice is a complex endeavor, and when people are faced with complex issues they tend to turn to others for advice (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009; Hoffman et al., 2009; Lee, 1997; McKnight & Peet, 2000). In the single-subject cohort, sentiment for teaching for social justice may have been more aligned, as such teachers with a stronger social justice teacher identity may be more willing to seek advice from their peers (Hoffman et al., 2009).

Due to the cross-sectional and relational nature of this research, I am only able to offer possible scenarios that may account for tie formation patterns related to social justice teacher identity. Future research should explore the ways that social justice identity manifests in multiple-subject versus single-subject PSTs to see how they differ, if at all. All PSTs have a relationship to social justice regardless of whether or not they are aware of it (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). Moreover, teaching for social justice is the foundation for most teacher education programs (Zeichner, 2006).  Chapter 5 further investigates the role peers play in fostering social justice identity.

## Conclusions and Implications

Teacher identity development is a social endeavor that is core the to the project of TEPs. The literature shows that advice seeking helps teachers work through and better understand themselves (e.g. Coburn et al., 2012; Horn et al., 2020). Moreover, being able to seek advice and discuss problems with others is essential to sense making and learning (Brooks et al., 2015; Weick et al., 2006). Despite this fact, little is known about the advice-seeking patterns of PSTs. Even less is known about the relationship between teacher identity and advice seeking.

This chapter adds to the literature by exploring the relationship between PSTs' teacher identity and their advice networks using ERGMs. Advice networks between PSTs in TEPs are lateral advice networks—they are not hierarchical and are between people of the same formal status. Seeking advice can improve learning, creativity, and performance for both the seeker and the giver (Brooks et al., 2015; Mueller & Kamdar, 2011). Advice networks can build capacity in teachers (Coburn et al., 2012) and "robust social networks can facilitate diffusion of knowledge, increase problem solving, and organizational performance" for teachers (Coburn et al., 2010, p. 49). If this is true for teachers, it is important to explore the advice networks of PSTs—how they form and what outcomes they bestow on those embedded in them.

This chapter shows that teacher identity is related to advice seeking and advice giving in these networks. Moreover, it ostensibly shows the interplay between context and enacting an identity. Fitting my model in two networks and using ERGMs to control for structural/social processes adds strength to the findings related to teacher identity (Borgatti & Cross, 2003; Lusher & Robins, 2013b). Future research should explore the importance of lateral advice networks for PSTs, how they affect teacher identity development, and how PSTs use these interactions in sense making and in understanding their work.

This work holds three implications for TEPs. First, it seems to confirm the notion that organizational routines and roles established by programs (e.g., subjects taught or start times) have a relationship to advice seeking (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Coburn et al., 2010; Small, 2009). In other words, TEPs have the ability to shape informal networks between PSTs. As such, TEPs may want to focus on the types of relationships they hope to foster between their PSTs and to help PSTs establish effective advice networks. Future research should explore what organizational structures and routines are related to tie formation in PSTs. Second, TEPs may also want to explore what teacher identities are valued within cohorts and how the interplay of those identities and values may impact informal relationships between PSTs. And third, TEPs may want to examine how different teacher identities manifest in multiple-subject cohorts relative to single-subject cohorts, as well as how those manifestations affect learning and relationships.

Future research on PSTs' advice networks should explore the information that flows between the ties of these relationships, the types of advice PSTs seek from their peers, and the role that peer advice seeking and advice-giving play in TEPs and teacher identity development. More attention should be paid to mixed-methods and qualitative network approaches to better understand the nuances of advice seeking between peers in TEPs (e.g., Baker-Doyle & Petchauer, 2015; Froelich et al., 2020; Thomas et al., 2020). One limitation of this study is that, despite offering perspective about why teacher identity drives tie formation, it does not reveal the causal mechanisms driving tie formation. Mixed-method and qualitative network research would provide a more nuanced understanding of why ties form and what their content is. In the next chapter I explore the role of PSTs' and early-career teachers' support networks and how they are related to teacher identity formation as PSTs become new teachers.

# Chapter 5

# "We Can't be Colorblind in the Classroom.": The Influence of Peers and Program on Preservice Teachers' Social Justice Teacher Identity

> *"I am what I can and will do, but also…what I cannot do and will resist doing"*
> *(Benson, 2003, p. 64)*

Teachers' practice and pedagogy are inextricably linked to teacher identity, which influences most aspects of teachers' work, from lesson planning to relationships with students (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Danielewicz, 2001). Hamachek (1999) contended that being aware of who one is as a teacher and how one is perceived by others is a critical step in becoming a good teacher. Moreover, he asserted, "*[c]onsciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are"* (italics in original, p. 209). For PSTs and new teachers, having an awareness and intentionality about developing a teacher identity provides a strong foundation on which to build pedagogy, agency, resilience, and practice (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Flores, 2006). Thus, one of the core functions of teacher education programs (TEPs) is to shape preservice teachers' (PSTs') teacher identities (Bullough, 1997; Danielewicz, 2001; Farnsworth, 2010).

At the same time, one of the main goals of TEPs in democratic societies is to work toward social justice and train teachers who can disrupt systemic inequities (Zeichner, 2006). Recently there has been increased overlap between the social justice teacher education literature and the teacher identity literature (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). The resulting scholarship underscores that all PSTs and teachers have a relationship with social justice and that social justice beliefs are deeply intertwined with teacher identity (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). PSTs' social justice teacher identities, like any identity, are influenced through social practice and interaction with others (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). As such, the purpose of this chapter is to examine how PSTs' interactions with their peers and with their TEP influence their social justice teacher identities.[4]

The term *social justice* is widely used in TEPs and in teacher education research (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2016; Enterline et al., 2008; Grant & Agosto, 2008). In fact, Zeichner (2006) contended that it is difficult to find a TEP in the United States that does not claim to prepare teachers to work toward social justice in their classrooms. Teaching for social justice is rooted in an understanding that systemic oppression and wide disparities exist in "educational opportunities, resources, achievement, [and] in positive outcomes between minority and/or low-income students and their white middle-class counterparts" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a, p. 350). This stance is often paired with the idea that teachers are both educators and advocates committed to reducing these disparities and disrupting systems that perpetuate inequity through redistribution of opportunities and to recognizing and respecting minoritized groups (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009b). Teaching for social justice is ultimately grounded in the idea that the main goal of teaching is "enhancing students' learning and life chances by challenging inequities in school and society" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a, p. 350).

PSTs' social justice teacher identity is integral not only to how they learn but also to how they will ultimately shape their classrooms to address systemic oppression and teach their students (Chubbock & Zembylas, 2016; Farnsworth, 2010). The desire to work on issues of social justice often plays an outsize role in people's decisions to enter the teaching profession, and it is often central to their identity development (Olsen, 2008). Moreover, PSTs' histories and views on social justice influence their experiences as teachers and their identity development (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Olsen, 2008; 2011; Sonu et al., 2012). Teachers' social justice identities are also influenced and formed through social practice and interaction with others (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015).

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[4] Throughout the chapter, the terms *social justice identity* and *social justice teacher identity* are used interchangeably.

Teacher identity formation—like all identity formation—is a dynamic and inherently social process (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Burke & Stets, 2009) that is constantly being negotiated in different social spaces (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). Despite this, few studies have examined the role that interactions with peers and professors play in social justice teacher identity development (e.g., Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Burke & Stets, 2009). This mixed-methods chapter therefore adds to the literature by exploring how PSTs' relationships with their peers and their program are related to their social justice teacher identities. I used social network analysis and interviews in a connected mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) to answer the following research questions:

*RQ1: Is there a relationship between PSTs' close relationships with diverse peers and a social justice teacher identity?*

*RQ2: Is there a relationship between PSTs' value consonance with their TEP and a social justice teacher identity?*

*RQ3: How does interaction with the TEP and peers shape PSTs' social justice teacher identity?*

Below I explore the literature regarding teacher education for social justice, social justice teacher identity, and theory of social networks. I then describe my qualitative and quantitative methods and the findings. I conclude with implications for PSTs, TEPs, and further research.

# Literature Review

## Social Justice in Teacher Education

The term *social justice* is widely used in TEPs and teacher education research (Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2016; Enterline et al., 2008; Grant & Agosto, 2008). Despite (or because of) its ubiquity in these contexts, social justice is both ambiguous and undertheorized (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009b; Enterline et al., 2008). Although critiques of social justice teacher education argue that it is focused on attitudes and beliefs and not on content (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009b), it is fundamentally intended to "enhance students' learning and their life chances by challenging the inequities of school and society" (Enterline et al., 2008, p. 270). Improving social justice is arguably one of the fundamental goals of teacher education in democratic societies (Zeichner, 2006).

Social justice teacher education is meant to give PSTs the tools they need to teach for social justice in K–12 settings (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a), including to disrupt inequities and to think about and interpret their work through a social justice lens (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009b). It "also involves how teachers pose questions, make decisions, and form relationships with students and how they work with colleagues, families, communities, and social groups" (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a, p. 350). One through line in the literature on social justice teacher education is the idea of a distributive justice and the need to recognize and respect marginalized social groups (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Cochran-Smith, 2010; Enterline et al., 2008).

## Social Justice Teacher Identity

Social justice teacher identity is the meaning PSTs give to their role as teachers in relation to social justice beliefs and principles (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Burke & Stets, 2009). PSTs' social justice identity is integral to shaping how they learn and how they understand themselves and the work of teaching (Farnsworth, 2010). Importantly, identity is not only about who someone is and what they do; it is also about who someone is *not* and what they will *not* do (Benson, 2003). This is an important point for social justice identity, as it implies that the meaning teachers ascribe to teaching for social justice can predict what they will or will not do for their students. For example, if teachers refuse to see differences between groups of students, they are essentially erasing their students' identities and maintaining the status quo, which benefits dominant social groups (Boylen & Wollsey, 2015). Moreover, teachers who do not value social justice may be resistant to learning practices and methods associated with it or they will not be inclined to have necessary but difficult conversations about race and inequity (Daniel, 2009; Miller Marsh, 2002).

Teachers' and PSTs' actions, experiences, and pedagogy are filtered through their beliefs and their social justice identities (Enterline et al., 2008). Their social justice teacher identities are shaped by interactions with peers and by their programs (Olsen, 2011). This chapter explores the social side of social justice teacher identity development by examining the role of interactions with peers and the TEP in its development. Social network theory, which I discuss next, provides further context for the research.

## Social Network Theory

Social network theory "provides a formal and conceptual way to think about the social world" (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 11). The study of social networks is grounded in the notion that relationships among interacting units are related to the actions of individuals (Borgatti et al., 2018). Since identity formation is inherently social, it makes sense to use social networks as an avenue to learn more about how social interactions are related to PSTs' identity formation.

Social networks consist of *actors* (people, organizations, companies, etc.)—also called *nodes*—who are connected by relationships or *ties* to one another. A tie between two actors can denote a variety of relationships: kinship, work colleague, collaborator, or, in the case of this study, close friends. Social network structures can catalyze or constrain social resources and actions of actors (Burt, 2004; Daly, 2010; Granovetter, 1973; Scott, 2013). Additionally, ties can be considered weak or strong based on the type of tie, the content of the tie, or the frequency of the interaction embodied in the tie (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010).

Tie strength is generally considered a function of time, intimacy, emotional intensity, and reciprocity (Kilduff & Brass, 2010; Granovetter, 1973; Marsden & Campbell, 1984, 2012). Another way to operationalize strength of a tie is through *multiplexity*. A multiplex tie represents the overlap of two or more relationships (Verbrugge, 1979). Multiplex ties expand the ways and dimensions through which people know and interact with each other and represent stronger relationships between people (Small, 2017). In this chapter, I use multiplex relationships to represent strong ties between study participants. The idea is that strong ties represent close relationships that are more intimate and more likely to affect people's opinions and ideas about teaching for social justice (Davies et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1997).

## Methods and Data

Data for this chapter were collected from PSTs enrolled in a master's of education credentialing program at a large public university in the southwestern United States. The broader 2-year study focused on teachers as they completed their TEP and moved through their first year of teaching. The program had an explicit social justice bent, with a commitment to equity and partnerships with low-income urban schools. The program placed all participants in schools that worked with minoritized and underserved communities for their student-teaching placements.

The program worked in a cohort model, with the same students grouped together for several classes during a semester or quarter and over the course of the school year (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006). Cohorts are designed to foster community, relationships, and supportive social ties between participants (Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006).

I used a concurrent mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) to collect data in this phase of the study (see Chapter 3). This chapter focuses on teachers in the last two quarters of their TEP. Specifically, I administered surveys to two cohorts of PSTs—one multiple-subject and one single-subject—in the final month of their program (in May 2019). The findings in this chapter draw from three interviews with each participant: the first in October/November 2018, the second in January/February 2019, and the third in May/June 2019. In line with the connected mixed-methods approach, quantitative data from the survey informed part of the qualitative data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The sample and methods for each part of the study are detailed below.

## Quantitative Data

### *Survey Sample*

As mentioned above, I surveyed the students in two cohorts—one multiple-subject cohort (*n*=38) and one single-subject cohort (*n*=25)—in a graduate-level TEP in May 2019. I gave a brief presentation to both cohorts describing the project, and participants signed a consent form and were given time in class to complete the survey. The survey measured two networks with the following prompts:

- **Close relationship network prompt:** *Of the cohort members, with whom do you have a close relationship? By "close," we mean a person whom you trust with personal information and/or spend time with in informal settings.*

- **Advice network prompt:** *Please select the frequency of interaction with members of the cohort from whom you seek advice to improve your teaching practice.*

The close relationship network was a binary network where participants either selected a cohort mate as a close relationship (1) or did not select them (0). In the advice network, I asked about the frequency with which they sought advice from other members of their cohort. Their options for frequency of interaction were *once a quarter* (1), *monthly* (2), *weekly or almost weekly* (3), or *daily or almost daily* (4). For the analysis described in this chapter, a strong tie existed when an individual sought advice weekly/almost weekly or daily/almost daily.

After creating both networks, I combined them into a multiplex network, which represents the overlap of two or more relationships (Scott, 2013; Verbrugge, 1979). Multiplex ties are considered strong and enduring, as they represent relationships with multiple facets and multiple dimensions (Granovetter, 1973, Scott, 2013). In the current study, for a tie to exist in the multiplex network, it had to exist in both the close relationship network *and* the strong-tie advice network. Education research has found that stronger ties tend to be a greater source of influence than weaker ties on practices, beliefs, and uptake and implementation of new skills (e.g., Frank et al., 2004; Siciliano, 2016). Strong ties are indicative of closer relationships and interactions that can improve teaching practice and influence opinions (Coburn et al., 2012; Davies et al., 2011).

To improve validity of my networks and issues regarding memory, each participant was given a roster of their cohort to refer to as they named peers from whom they sought advice (Scott, 2013). Further, I piloted the survey in the spring of the prior academic year with a separate cohort of PSTs and conducted follow-up cognitive interviews with three pilot study participants. Pilot participants were asked to put the network prompts in their own words and explain some of their choices. This allowed me to test whether they understood the questions as intended (Fowler, 2014).

The overall sample for the survey was 63 PSTs (see Table 5.1). Sixty percent of the sample were in the multiple-subject cohort, and 89% percent of the sample identified as female. PSTs who identified as White made up 44% of the total sample; PSTs who identified as Asian were 24% of the sample, and Latinas/os represented 18% of the sample; those who identified with more than one ethno-racial group comprised 13% of the sample; and PSTs who identified as Black made up 2%. Participants' average undergraduate GPA was 3.41, with a minimum of 2.88 and a maximum of 4.00. All PSTs in the sample had been in a school placement and were either student-teaching or interning when they took the survey. (Interns were the teacher of record for one class without being fully credentialed.)

**Table 5.1**
*Sample Demographics—May 2019 (n=63)*

| | Mean | SD | Min. | Max. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Demographics* | | | | |
| Female | .89 | - | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| Multiple-subject cohort | .60 | - | 0.0 | 1.0 |
| Ethno-racial identity | | | | |
| White | .44 | | | |
| Latina/o | .18 | | | |
| Asian | .24 | | | |
| Black | .02 | | | |
| More than one group identity | .13 | | | |
| Undergraduate GPA | 3.41 | .29 | 2.88 | 4.00 |
| *Independent Variables* | | | | |
| Value Fit | 7.15 | 1.52 | 2.33 | 9.00 |
| EI Index by Ethno-Racial Identity (x10) | .98 | 6.41 | -10.00 | 10.00 |
| *Dependent Variable* | | | | |
| Teaching for Social Justice Beliefs | 7.74 | 1.16 | 3.50 | 9.00 |

*Note*. Values for ethno-racial identity do not add to 100% due to rounding.

### *Survey Variables*

***Dependent Variable: LTSJ-B Scale.*** To measure social justice teacher identity, I used the Learning to Teach for Social Justice-Beliefs (LTSJ-B) scale (Enterline et al., 2008). This scale was specifically designed to measure PSTs' beliefs about teaching for social justice (Enterline et al., 2008). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they believed 12 items like "*Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons*" and "*An important part of learning to be a teacher is examining one's own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation.*" A high score on this scale indicates a stronger sense that teaching for social justice is core to the individual's mission as a teacher ($\alpha$=.88). On a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*), participants averaged a score of 7.74 (SD=1.16), with a minimum score of 3.5 and a maximum score of 9 (see Table 5.1).

***Independent Variable: Value Consonance.*** To explore the relationship between the program and PSTs' social justice identities, I used a value consonance scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). This three-item scale measured how much participants believed their views and beliefs about teaching and education were consonant with the TEP. Example items are "*I feel like my values match the values of emphasized in the program*" and "*I feel like this program shares my views of what constitutes good teaching.*" The scale ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 9 (*strongly agree*), with a higher score indicating a stronger sense of value consonance ($\alpha$=.86). On average, participants' scores were 7.15 (SD=1.52) with a minimum of 2.33 and a maximum of 9 (see Table 5.1). As noted above, the TEP under study had a social justice bent; as such, it would seem that if a participant's values were a fit with the program, this would have a positive relationship with their social justice teacher identity.

***Independent Variable: Ethno-Racial EI Index.*** Finally, to measure the relationship between social peers in participants' social networks and social justice teacher identity, I used an ethno-racial external-internal (EI) index (Borgatti et al., 2018). Scholars have found a relationship between having friends outside of one's ethno-racial group and increased positive feelings about diversity and increased positive feelings about outgroups (i.e., groups outside of one's own group; Bahns et al., 2015; Davies et al., 2011). They have posited that this relationship is because friendship involves contact over time and in varied situations, which allows people to form meaningful relationships that can shape attitudes (Davies et al., 2011; Pettigrew, 1997). As such, using the multiplex network, I found the EI index (Borgatti et al., 2018) using UCINET (Borgatti et al., 2002) for each participant based on their self-identified ethno-racial group.

An EI index is a measure of the proportion of people in an actor's ego network who are from the same group (internal) or a different group (external). The EI index ranges from -1.0 to 1.0, where a score of -1.0 indicates complete homogeneity in network ties (i.e., all the people in the actor's ego network identify with the same ethno-racial group as the participant) and a score of 1.0 indicates complete heterogeneity in network ties (i.e., all of the people in the actor's ego network identify with a different ethno-racial group than the actor). In short, a score that is closer to -1.0 indicates more relationships with peers with the same ethno-racial identity and a score that is closer to 1.0 indicates more relationships with peers with a different ethno-racial identity. I multiplied the EI index by 10 to make it easier to interpret. As shown in Table 5.1, the average ethno-racial EI index was .98 (SD=6.41), with a minimum of -10.00 and a maximum of 10.00.

### ***Survey Data Analysis***

To analyze the quantitative data, I conducted a hierarchical ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression (Petrocelli, 2003). A hierarchical OLS regression involves including several predictor variables into a regression in a sequential manner to explore the importance of each set of predictors. Importance is measured by how much it adds to the predictive power of the model (Petrocelli, 2003). The change in the amount of variance explained by a model ($\Delta R^2$) and change in the F-statistic ($\Delta F$) between sets of predictors measures the predictive power of the model.

I entered variables in two steps. In Step 1, I included control variables: gender identity, undergraduate GPA, ethno-racial identity, and cohort. All of these variables have been found to have an association with how people experience their TEP and how they understand their teacher identities (e.g., Brown, 2014; Bullough & Knowles, 1990; Olsen, 2008). In Step 2, I entered my variables of interest—value fit and ethno-racial EI index—into the model, not only to explore the individual relationship these variables have with social justice teacher identity but also to see how they changed the $R^2$ as a pair. These two variables are proxies for relationships in the cohort (EI index) and feelings about the program (value consonance).

## Qualitative Data

### *Interview Sample and Data Collection*

After the initial survey in the fall of 2018, I selected 16 PSTs to interview over the course of the year based on network position (Daly, 2010; Liou & Bjorklund, 2021) as measured by the survey (e.g., central actors, peripheral actors, brokers), initial survey responses, and classroom observations. Table 5.2 lists each of the 16 participants as well as their cohort and ethno-racial identification.

I conducted three semi-structured interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) with the 16 participants three times over the academic year—in October/November 2018; in January/February 2019; and in May 2019. I transcribed each interview verbatim. I also attended one 3-hour class every week for the entire year for each cohort (two classes per week) to conduct observations and write field notes (Emerson et al., 2011). This amounted to 45 observations across the two cohorts. During the observations, I focused particular attention on the 16 selected participants and their social interactions with their peers. I typed field notes as soon as possible after the end of each observed class (Emerson et al., 2011). The observations gave me a better sense of the social dynamics within each cohort and I was able to see how participants engaged during class. Moreover, I was able to form positive relationships with PSTs in each cohort.

**Table 5.2**

*Interview Participants (n=16)*

| Name (Grade or Subject) | Cohort | Ethno-Racial Identification |
|---|---|---|
| Joelle (Kindergarten) | Multiple-Subject | White |
| Anna (1st Grade) | Multiple-Subject | Mexican |
| Cate (3rd Grade) | Multiple-Subject | Chaldean-White |
| Tina (3rd Grade) | Multiple-Subject | White |
| Janice (4th/5th Grade Split) | Multiple-Subject | Chinese-American |
| Leila (Kindergarten) | Multiple-Subject | Mexican |
| Tara (Kindergarten) | Multiple-Subject | Mexican |
| Karen (6th Grade) | Multiple-Subject | Black |
| Marta (World Languages) | Single-Subject | Mexican |
| Jaime (ELA) | Single-Subject | Mexican |
| Logan (World Languages) | Single-Subject | Black and Chinese |
| Sofia (ELA) | Single-Subject | Mexican |
| James (Math) | Single-Subject | Mexican and White |
| Diana (Science) | Single-Subject | White |
| Julia (Science) | Single-Subject | Mexican |
| Kaleb (ELA) | Single-Subject | White |

*Note.* All names are pseudonyms. ELA = English language arts.

To validate analysis of participants via their interviews, I conducted a participant check after the completion of their program (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Based on prior interviews and interactions with the participants, I created short narratives (memos) that described them as teachers and described their feelings about teaching for social justice. I read each participant their memo and gave them a copy to review. The participants all said that my analysis captured their understandings of themselves as teachers.

### *Interview Coding and Analysis*

The first interview (in October/November) was an oral history of the participants (Yow, 2005); the second interview (in January/February) focused on PSTs' feelings about their cohort and program; the final interview (in May) focused on their teacher identities after their first year of student-teaching. The connected mixed-methods approach allowed me to use quantitative data from the survey to inform part of the qualitative data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

All qualitative data were uploaded into NVIVO software for coding, and then I used a two-cycle coding process (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016). Guided by the quantitative results in the first coding cycle, I read the interviews from each participant and coded any passages related to issues of teaching for social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a)—for example, discussions about race, equity, structural inequality, teaching students from minoritized backgrounds, and so on. I also coded any passages that were related to their interactions with peers and the TEP and to how their peers and the program shaped their teacher identities.

After one round of coding, I ran queries in NVIVO to extract coded excerpts. I then reviewed the data to find overarching patterns and create a smaller number of codes that captured these broader patterns and themes (Miles et al., 2014). In the second cycle of coding, I took a inductive approach to search for emerging themes (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016). The following themes emerged:

- **Close relationship influences on social justice teacher identity:** These codes were expressions of the ways that peers who were considered close relationships directly influenced the social justice teacher identities of participants.

- **Boundary making:** These codes included instances where participants drew clear boundaries between themselves and their peers in their program. Identity formation is not only about who one *is* but also about who one is *not* (Benson, 2003).
- **Program influence:** These codes were expressions of participants' feelings about how the program impacted their social justice teacher identities.

The goal of gathering these qualitative data was to get a better explanation for the quantitative results and a deeper understanding of how peers and the TEP impacted social justice teacher identity for the 16 participants.

## Findings

### *Quantitative Results*

As noted above, I ran a hierarchical OLS (Petrocelli, 2003); Table 5.3 shows the results. In Step 1, I included demographic variables that accounted for over one quarter of the variance in the outcome variable ($R^2$=.26). In this model, PSTs who identified as Asian scored on average .814 ($p<.01$) lower than their White peers on teaching for social justice beliefs. Undergraduate GPA was significant and positively related to teaching for social justice beliefs ($b$=.986, $p<.01$). Specifically, a one-point increase in undergraduate GPA was associated with an almost one-point increase in social justice beliefs.

In Step 2, I added the variables of interest, which increased the explanatory power of the model by 19% ($\Delta R^2$=.19). Value consonance was significant and positively related to social justice beliefs ($b$=.173, $p<.05$), as was the EI index ($b$=.062, $p<.001$). Here, a one-unit increase in the EI index (x10) was related to a .062 increase in social justice beliefs. In other words, participants with a higher number of strong ties with people outside of their ethno-racial group reported a stronger social justice identity, controlling for demographics. The standardized

**Table 5.3**
*Hierarchical OLS Regression on Teaching for Social Justice Beliefs* (*n*=63)

| | Teaching for Social Justice Beliefs | Standardized Coefficients of Significant Variables |
|---|---|---|
| Female | -.147<br>(.254) | |
| Ethno-Racial Identity | | |
| Latina/o | -.238<br>(.269) | |
| Asian | -.814$^{**}$<br>(.259) | -.410 |
| Black | .051<br>(.796) | |
| More than one | -.454<br>(.318) | |
| Undergraduate GPA | .986$^{**}$<br>(.343) | .339 |
| Multiple-Subject Cohort | .155<br>(.209) | |
| ***Step 1 $R^2$*** | .26 | $F$=2.89$^{*}$ |
| Value Consonance | .173$^{*}$<br>(.070) | .309 |
| EI Index by Ethno-Racial Identity (x10) | .062$^{***}$<br>(.017) | .470 |
| ***Step 2 $\Delta R^2$*** | .19 | $\Delta F$=5.54$^{***}$ |
| Intercept | 3.204$^{*}$ | |
| $R^2$ | .45 | |

*Note.* Standard errors are in parentheses.
$^{*}p < .05$. $^{**}p < .01$. $^{***}p < .001$.

coefficients show that the EI index had one of the strongest relationships with social justice beliefs in the model ($\beta$=.470, p<.01). These findings indicate that a one-standard-deviation increase in the EI index was associated with almost a one-half-standard-deviation increase in social justice beliefs. The final model accounted for almost half of the variance in the outcome variable ($R^2$=.45). Next, drawing from the interview data, I explore the mechanisms that are potentially driving these results.

## Qualitative Results

### *Close Peers Shape Social Justice Identities*

The quantitative results described above indicate that a participant's social justice beliefs were positively related to the proportion of people in their network who identified with different ethno-racial groups than their own. The results potentially support the notion that PSTs' social justice identity is influenced through social practice and interaction with others (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015), as having more friendships in the cohort with people outside of the participant's ethno-racial identity was related to stronger social justice identity.

Interviews and observations showed that participants often had relationships with diverse peers, and these relationships were integral to their social justice teacher identities. The evidence suggests that many close relationships in the program formed because of similarity of social justice identities. In past research, the link between diverse friend groups and positive outlooks on diversity has been difficult to disentangle (Bahn et al., 2015). Participants in the current study felt like their close peers helped them to shape or solidify the social justice identities that they entered the program with but did not change them drastically (Olsen, 2011).

Cate, for example, was a PST in the multiple-subject cohort. She had an EI index of 10, indicating that all of her close friends identified with a different ethno-racial group than hers. She was the child of immigrants from the Middle East and lived in a very tight-knit ethnic enclave with others who immigrated from her parents' home country and shared the same ethnic and religious background. Prior to coming to the TEP, Cate worked for Child Protective Services and in early childhood education focusing on children with autism. In our first interview, she said that she always viewed herself as a teacher and that in her youth she always taught her cousins and worked extensively as a teacher in her church. She came into the program with very strong views about the work of teaching. She developed close friendships with three women, two of whom identified as Latina and one of whom identified as White; she felt like her friends' experiences strengthened her social justice teacher identity. She explained how they shaped her understanding of herself as a teacher:

> Marisol and Tara, they're both…English is their second language, like me. And I think we share in this idea of drawing from a student's funds of knowledge. You give value to someone's culture, you give value to their past, their language, their heritage.…Me and Marisol actually [did] our first project in this program…on funds of knowledge.…And we grew closer because of that. My relationships with them have strengthened my resolve to value the strengths and diversity that my students bring to the classroom.

Cate's experiences before the program strongly influenced her social justice teacher identity and she was able to find close friends in Marisol and Tara, whom she felt shared similar backgrounds and social justice identities. Cate was able to learn and grow with her friends as they strengthened and broadened the beliefs she came to the program with. Other research has shown that PSTs' histories of diversity and social justice prior to entering the TEP tend to have a strong influence on their social justice identities (Olsen, 2011).

Studying social justice topics drew Cate closer to her peers and strengthened her resolve in valuing her students. She believed that being a teacher meant celebrating the cultural assets and funds of knowledge that her students brought to the classroom. Utilizing students' funds of knowledge in the classroom is a valuable tool in teaching for social justice, as it challenges the ideas of what knowledge counts as valid in the classroom (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Gonzáles et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). Moreover, it views marginalized students through an asset-based lens and recognizes their unique contributions as valid knowledge (Gonzáles et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). Engaging in relationships with her friends in the cohort helped Cate bolster her social justice identity and gave her a space where that identity could be nurtured and strengthened. She and her friends seem to have connected in part due to their similar social justice identities, and those relationships strengthened her identity.

Similarly, Julia was in the single-subject cohort and she was teaching high school science. She identified as Latina. Julia's EI index was also 10, again indicating that all of her close peers identified with a different ethno-racial group than her own. Part of her reason for entering the program was her admiration for a particular faculty member whom she had as a professor during her undergraduate years. She also had an extremely positive experience volunteering at a zoo with teachers over the summer, and she noted the influence they had on her decision to teach.

Julia said that she became oriented to social justice issues in high school when she befriended a diverse group of people who shifted her opinions on several social justice topics. She suggested that her friends in the program also influenced her social justice identity:

> I think they've shown me what it takes to be a teacher because I've seen them do it, and like the lesson plans, and the passion that they have. Communicating with parents, and just, like, the grit and fighting with your students, but for their well-being. And they've [Ana and Reilly] kind of taught me that because I've seen it, and I've seen through their struggles and my own. But I feel like I'm doing it right because they're doing it too, and they're going through the struggles that it takes to be a teacher, the sleepless nights, the battle with your students. [By battle with students] I mean, like, a lot of students don't want to be taught, and a lot of them would rather be invisible in the back of the classroom. It's like a great teacher doesn't let that happen, and they just fight for their students. Ana…started calling parents, learning more about their home life, and she refused to let them fly under the radar. And that really inspired me to do something different.

Similar to the findings of Cochran-Smith et al. (2009a), Julia's social justice identity meant not letting students slip through the cracks. Her close friends gave her ideas about how to address her students' needs; they helped her to see and embody this practice. They were going through the same struggles that she was, and they lifted each other up to get through the challenges and work for their students. Importantly, Julia seemed to see her students through a deficit frame (Valencia, 2010). She believed that they did not want to be taught and that she had to battle them to not let them slip through the cracks. She felt like they would prefer to be invisible, but good teachers don't allow that to happen: They find a way to create meaningful learning for all of their students (Cochran-Smith, 2010).

Anna was a PST in the multiple-subject cohort. She identified as Latina and came into teaching because of an experience in her undergraduate education. Like the two prior participants, Anna's EI index was 10; her network comprised close peers who identified with a different ethno-racial group than her own. Anna was doing observations of what she described as a highly skilled elementary school teacher who had an extremely "difficult and diverse" classroom. She said the teacher was amazing and was able to foster a positive classroom environment for all of her students, and that is what made Anna want to go into teaching.

In the TEP, some of Anna's friends had changed her ideas about a project that was part of the state curriculum pertaining to the states' historic missions. She said that many students in her cohort thought the project was problematic because it did not include the perspectives of Indigenous people. Instead, it created a narrative that the Spanish, who built the missions, were benevolent and kind to Indigenous populations. She described how she and her friends in the cohort wanted to change the way the project was taught. She found that they could challenge the inequities in the system but were worried about rocking the boat as first-year teachers:

> …[T]hings are changing. And even all our schools are still traditional, that you can be that person, even if it's your first year to change it up.…We're worried for the first year of teaching that we're going to not step up and say things that we think are important because we don't want to be fired or something, or

> disliked.…[Like with the] missions project, presenting the perspective of Indigenous people more than the other side. Then I know Daphne and I talked about that recently, and how we could do it in our classrooms.

Anna felt like being a social justice teacher meant pushing back against traditional norms that maintain inequity in school—like teaching the missions project—and being able to "change it up" (Athanases & Oliveira, 2007, 2008; Cochran-Smtih et al., 2009a).

Through conversations with her friends, Anna learned that she could be a change agent in her school even if it was her first year. Moreover, her friends in the cohort showed her a new way to think about a problematic lesson by critiquing and challenging the dominant narrative of the curriculum (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995). Her friends helped her adopt a critical stance and critically engage with the dominant-narrative content that was inequitable, inaccurate, and potentially harmful to students (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a). She also used her friends to discuss her concerns about teaching this way in new schools and worrying that they could face repercussions. It is common for new teachers who want to teach for social justice to face barriers and challenges in their schools (Athanases & Oliveira, 2007, 2008). Anna found solace in her conversations with her friends and was able to think about how to introduce stories that countered the dominant narrative in classrooms.

In contrast to the study participants discussed so far, Janice had an EI index of -10, indicating that her network consisted of peers who identified with the same ethno-racial group that she did. She was a candidate in the multiple-subject cohort and identified as Chinese American. In her words, she came to teaching by a process of elimination. She said she always wanted to be a teacher in the back of her mind but resisted because she felt like the largely Chinese tight-knit community in which she grew up would not respect her choice. She talked about going back to her community and teaching:

> I think there are so many parents who are very ill-informed, Chinese parents who are ill-informed about what it means to be a successful student or just a successful child in school. I think just being able to have the knowledge that I have now to really show them that's not just about who can do the most math problems and homework and reading logs and all that stuff. But it's just showing that students are capable in many ways, and you're able to really express your thinking in more than one way.

To counter the parents' narrative, Janice said she would often talk about privileging care and love toward her students in her teaching as a way to address the issues she saw in her community. She credited her close friends in the program with helping her to shape and solidify her pedagogy of care:

> I think in general we still believe pretty similar ideas, about caring for our students and everything, but…our dialogue about it really helps solidify my beliefs. I mean, I think that teaching is…caring for our students and trying to meet their social-emotional needs too, in the sense that we want to know the students and care for them. But also, to see it as a way that we can also express our love for them and love for the students, even though they might not have a lot of support from their families and things like that.

Cochran-Smith (2010) averred that a common theme at the heart of teaching for justice is care and love for students. That said, caring teachers can maintain the status quo by conflating care with expecting less from students of color and not setting high standards for them (Nieto, 2008). Janice's conversations with her close friends in the cohort solidified her beliefs about care and making sure her students knew they were loved. She wanted to buck what she saw as the troubling way that parents from her community viewed teaching and learning. The theme of care was common across all of Janice's interviews, but she did not always talk about how it would manifest in the classroom. Additionally, she seemed to view her students through a deficit lens: She indicated that she thought they may not have love and support from their families so it was incumbent upon her to give it to them.

Janice's current students were mostly Black or Latinx; this view that their families did not love and support them is part and parcel of deficit views of minoritized families that are rampant in schools (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Moll et al., 1992; Valencia, 2010). While Janice's close peers were able to solidify her notion of caring as social justice identity, they may also have reinforced or not been able to disabuse her of her deficit frames. Sleeter and Milner (2011) noted that the more ethno-racially homogenous a TEP is, the more homogenous the experiences of the students. Janice's close friends were people with similar backgrounds and ethno-racial identities. The lack of close relationships with others outside of her own experiences may have limited her ability to move past a deficit mindset of her students and learn about different perspectives.

The four participants above represent the two extremes of the EI index, but the relationships between their peers and their social justice identities were similar to the participants in the middle of the EI index spectrum as well. Across all interviews, close peers shaped participants' social justice identities. Many participants came to the TEP with social justice identities based on past experiences, and the relationships they had with their peers did not seem to play a radical role in changing them—rather, their peers helped to hone and solidify those beliefs (Olsen, 2011). Moreover, their close relationships helped them work through ideas they had about teaching and how to address issues they had in the classroom.

Complex ideas about teaching and learning are facilitated through strong relationships (Coburn et al., 2012). As such, it is clear that the close relationships in the cohort had a meaningful but not necessarily transformational impact on participants' social justice identities. Interestingly, peers from the cohort who were not close relationships also helped shape participants' social justice identities in meaningful ways—through the creation of boundaries, which I discuss next.

### *Setting Boundaries to Define Social Justice Identities*

The notion of identity—the understanding of the self in relation to others—is paradoxical: It is what makes people the same as well as what makes them different (Benson, 2003; Lawler, 2014; Mockler, 2011b). As noted earlier, identities and understanding of self are grounded in who we are and what we will do, but also in who we are *not* and what we will *not* do (Benson, 2003). Put succinctly in the epigraph of this chapter, "I am what I can and will do, but also…what I cannot do and will resist doing" (Benson, 2003, p. 64).

An interesting finding that came from the interview data was that connections in participants' social networks were important to identity formation, but similarly important was who was *not* in their social networks. As participants formed strong bonds with their groups of friends, they also created symbolic social boundaries between themselves and others (Binder & Abel; 2019; Carter, 2006; Lamont et al., 2015; Lamont & Molnár, 2002); this was in large part due to their social justice identities. In most social activities, individuals create social boundaries or distinctions to identify themselves into a group, apart from others—it is what makes them similar to each other but different from others (Binder & Abel; 2019; Carter, 2006; Lamont et al., 2015). Supportive groups—like those the participants found with close peers—make it easier to foster boundaries (Carlone et al., 2015). Individuals shape their identities by knowing who they are and who they are not willing to become (Benson, 2003).

In both cohorts, participants tended to describe peers they thought were not meeting the ideal of social justice set by the program. Cate, for example, described how being a teacher was extremely important to her. She wanted to give back to her community and knew that teaching in underserved communities would be difficult. She contrasted her strong desire to be a teacher and to give back to some others whom she did not view as fully committed to the project:

> I've heard, for example, Kara has made a comment that teaching was her Plan B, and she's only here because it was her Plan B.…There's this misconception that teaching is easy…and you don't really have to be smart to be a teacher. She's sort of upholding that misconception.…That made me not want to talk to [her] or not want to be in a relationship with [her]. Because what am I gonna learn from [her]? I chose this profession not because I'm gonna get paid the best or not because it was the easiest. No, because I love those kids; I want to work in the community that I grew up in and give back—that's why I'm here.…I specifically chose this program.…I have faith in this program and its goals of equity and doing work in underserved schools.…They don't have an understanding of how to appreciate their students' diversity.

During the interview, Cate became quite animated in her description of this other group of peers. She felt like they did not take the work of becoming a teacher as seriously as she did, and she felt like they did not care about social justice in the same way that she did. Later in the interview, when asked about how her views were similar or different from her peers in the cohort, she said:

> I think they're similar, but I think they're superficially similar on their part. They say all of the right things about "inclusivity" and "student-driven," and things like that. So they're saying the same things that I believe in, but I just don't know if they really know what that means. I've been in classrooms before; teaching is not new to me. My first placement…was not my first time in a classroom. And I know students and I've worked with a lot of students who are not privileged and are in low-income schools and Title I schools and whatnot.…I grew up in those schools. That's where I came from.

Cate used the feeling that her peers did not have the same investment in becoming teachers that she did and the perception that they were not engaged in class to draw boundaries around her social justice identity and around them. She explicitly mentioned coming to the program because of its focus on equity and social justice, and she felt like the peers she was working with did not share her values or her value of the program. She compared her experience in early childhood education and having been in the classroom to others who did not know what they were doing or did they know what they were embarking on.

Kara, the woman Cate derided in the passage above, was the only Black woman in the multiple-subject cohort. Similar to Cate, her parents were immigrants from West Africa, and

Kara grew up in a largely African American community. She noted her difficulties as a student in K–12 schools with fitting in with African Americans, as she was more closely connected to her East African identity. She described being harassed in high school by African American peers who would tell her "You're not Black" because she did not have the same cultural upbringing they did.

Kara came to being a teacher after trying a few different things in college. Confirming Cate's concern, Kara did say that teaching was her "back-up plan" after majoring in film as an undergrad. She took education as a minor after not seeing a future in film. In observations, Kara had a strong group of friends with whom she interacted, but she said she did not feel like they had an influence on her as a teacher. It seemed like the people she was not friends with had a stronger influence on her social justice identity. Describing some of her peers outside of her close friend group, Kara said:

> They're all goody-goodies.…Yeah, we're in a master's program and this is important, but I feel like they take it way too seriously sometimes, because a lot of what we do is just busy work, and they're super into it.…Half of them are White savior complex, even if they don't realize.… Just like, the teacher who's like, "Oh my god, I'm going to go in and save all of these kids, and be the best teacher ever." There's nothing wrong with wanting to be the best teacher, but it's different when you want to be the best teacher because you actually want to teach the kids, and when you think you're saving them from life.

Kara set boundaries around her group, herself, and others in the program by saying that they had White savior complexes and that ultimately she had little faith that they would be able to adequately address the needs of students of color. She thought they were all coming to these classes with a deficit frame—that they all wanted to help students.

Ziechner (2018) noted that TEPs and their training programs often maintain a discourse of "'Helperism,' the emphasis to save students from their broken communities rather than recognizing and building on the strengths and funds of knowledge that exist in these communities" (p. 270). Kara acknowledged what she saw as "helperism" in her peers and set her social justice identity in contrast to them. Personal experiences make PSTs of color aware of deficit thinking and structural inequalities in society and schools (Brown, 2014; Salinas & Castro, 2010).

Kara had experienced social inequities in ways that her White peers had not, and that made her acutely aware of the structural inequalities in education and the workplace that placed a disproportionately high number of White people in positions of power. She saw part of her social justice teacher identity as someone who could be a role model for students of color, namely Black students (Brown, 2014; Sleeter, 2017). This is in line with Sleeter's (2017) findings that PSTs of color often feel like they have insights about their communities and that they can effect positive change as role models in those communities.

Kara drew boundaries between herself and many of her White peers, and she seemed to feel like her peers would go through the program without understanding how their deficit views would be damaging to students who did not look like them. Kara's views of her peers seemed to point to how an overwhelming presence of Whiteness in TEPs can leave students of color feeling unsupported (Brown, 2014; Sleeter, 2001, 2017). Moreover, the perceived lack of awareness of the Whiteness of her peers seemed be part of how she drew social boundaries for her own social justice identity.

Another student in the multiple-subject cohort who drew social boundaries around her peers and her social justice identity was Joelle. Joelle was enrolled in the TEP's American Sign Language (ASL) program—a specialization within the multiple-subject cohort. Five students in the cohort were enrolled in the ASL program, and while they had some different classes and a different overall trajectory from those not in the ASL program, they took classes together. Joelle identified as White and was one of two deaf PSTs in the cohort. All of her family members knew ASL, and most were deaf. She became a teacher because she wanted to be a role model for deaf and hard-of-hearing students:

> I thought if I became a teacher, then I could work with students, and I could… See, these deaf kids really need deaf role models. They don't have a lot of chance. They only are having hearing people as a role model, so they don't have that.…Hearing people can't give them, I don't know, the best…we call it "deafhood." It's something that you know from the inside. And I think that they miss a lot as a result of that. And if they have parents that can hear, they're gonna miss language access, cultural access, identification access. And I think that's part of my role in the community, is to give that back. So I thought becoming a teacher might be a good starting point, because I wasn't sure what I was gonna do, so I'm doing it.

Joelle's decision to become a teacher was grounded in a social justice teacher identity, as she wanted to give back and be a deaf role model for deaf students. She did not believe that hearing teachers could give deaf students the type of understanding that they needed to succeed—give them their "deafhood." She saw teaching as a chance to give back and play a role in the deaf community.

There were a few PSTs in the cohort—outside of the ASL program—who were fluent in ASL, so Joelle and Leila, the other deaf student, befriended them and they formed tight bonds from the beginning of the program. Joelle drew boundaries between herself and her classmates who were outside of her close friend group. She felt her peers were not at all equipped to address the needs of deaf students, and she echoed Kara's sentiments about feeling bad for the future deaf students of her peers:

> There have been [peers] who say, "How do deaf kids read if they can't hear?" That really concerns me because then, what if they have a deaf student in their classroom? Does that mean they're going to have no expectations that child will learn to read? I just think that they don't have any experience with that because their whole life has grown up, everything's been great, they've been born into a family that speaks the same language as them, there's been other students like myself who grow up with deaf people, with deaf teachers, and there's also deaf people who go to hearing schools who have interpreters as well. But some of

> these students here will ask me these crazy questions, and then I'm like, that concerns me a little bit about the future.

Joelle felt that her peers' lack of understanding of deaf students would lead to inequitable standards and expectations in their classrooms. She also set herself outside of them by portraying many as having a good life and only experiencing family who spoke their language and who could interact with them.

Joelle noted that deaf students who are born to hearing parents and who go to hearing schools may be adversely affected by having some of her peers as teachers. Her social justice teacher identity was focused on being able to relate to deaf students and on being someone who understood them and had high expectations of them. Providing high expectations and relevant learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their backgrounds, is at the root of teaching for social justice (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a). Joelle believed that her peers would not be able to do that if they had deaf students.

Finally, Sofia was a single-subject English teacher. She identified as Latina and originally wanted to become a speech therapist. After college she found work as a long-term substitute in her hometown and really enjoyed the work. To do that work, she got a 1-year emergency credential; after that ran out, she decided to formally get her credential. She said her experience as a long-term substitute shaped her teacher identity. She felt like there was a group of people in her cohort who were unnecessarily punitive toward their students and did not value the same types of lessons about equity and inclusion. She set clear boundaries around her social justice teacher identity and how it contrasted with some of her peers. She began by saying how they would talk about to their students in a demeaning way:

> Like, they're just like, "This essay's trash." I wouldn't tell my students that.…Yeah. Or like, "Referral. You get a referral. You get a referral." I don't do that. I'm pretty sure a lot of my classmates don't do that either, so…yeah. I mean, when I was subbing, [I did similar things]. Now that I've been taking all these

> classes, it’s like, “Wow. I should’ve done this. I should’ve done that.” Like, “Maybe [I] could’ve prevented all these referrals.” I gained all this knowledge. With them, the way, you know, when they share their stories, it’s like, “That’s what I used to do when I had no knowledge of how to interact with students.”…We have been taught to kind of talk to them and see what’s going on. Like, it’s not their fault. Something’s going on.

When I asked Sofia whether she thought these individuals were rejecting what they were being taught in the TEP, she responded, “Oh, yeah. Totally ‘Cause their comments are like, ‘Oh, this is so stupid. This is a waste of time.’ They’ll be grading or they’ll be lesson planning while we’re supposed to be doing something else.”

Similar to Cate above, Sofia set boundaries between her and her peers who she felt like were not living up to the ideals of the program. She felt like they were punitive and more bent on lording their power over their students than on having compassion and learning what was going on. Sofia argued that she used to have a similar approach before she began in the program, but she had learned more socially equitable ways to address students. She felt like these peers were teaching in a way that was antithetical to how they had been learning to teach. Moreover, she outwardly said that they rejected the type of equitable teaching practices they were learning in their program.

Minoritized students, most frequently Black students, are disproportionally disciplined and excluded from classroom instruction (Gregory et al., 2010; Kennedy-Lewis & Murphy, 2016; Murphy et al., 2013). Sofia learned that talking to students and seeing why they might be misbehaving—instead of acting punitively—was a more equitable approach. Communication between students and teachers, like Sofia advocated for, could potentially lead to increased trust and better communication between minoritized students and their teachers (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008). A more caring approach to student discipline can increase cooperation and positive teacher–student relations (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008).

Sofia felt like her peers were rejecting what they were learning about teaching for social justice in favor of unnecessarily punitive measures. She set boundaries around herself and her peers, seeing them as not interested in an equitable approach to teaching—she saw them as the type of teacher she did not want to be and drew her social justice identity in contrast to them. Though this boundary setting was not shown in the quantitative data, it adds depth to the results by showing that people outside of participants' peer groups also influenced their social justice identities. The quote above also reveals that Sofia felt like the program had an impact on her teaching and her social justice identity.

### ***Strong Program Influence on Social Justice Identity, but Race is Missing***

The final question guiding this chapter examined how the program influenced the social justice identity of the participants. The program was grounded in social justice beliefs and in preparing teachers to work in ethnically and socioeconomically diverse classrooms. All teachers were placed in schools where the majority of students were from minoritized populations in low-income neighborhoods—so called "hard-to-staff schools" (Achinstein et al., 2010). Teaching for social justice was a core tenet of the program and was a central theme of many of the classes that I observed.

The quantitative findings showed a positive relationship between value consonance and social justice beliefs. In other words, the more the participants felt that their values were aligned with the program, the stronger their feelings about teaching for social justice. The qualitative findings support these findings and show that the social justice stance of the program had an impact on the social justice identities of the PSTs in the program. All participants, to varying degrees, indicated that the program had an influence on their social justice identities. For instance, when asked how much the program influenced her ability to address issues of equity in the classroom, Julia said:

> A huge degree. I feel like I've learned so much about having culturally responsive pedagogies through the program and really getting to know my kids and what they need specifically. Just emphasizing that in my teaching and building rapport. And I feel like without that I would've addressed my teaching very differently.…The social justice framework so much, it has been so eye-opening, and it has really challenged what I believe and really made me look at my own bias…and really putting that at the forefront of my teaching. Just, I learned so much about things that I thought I knew but I didn't know.…Every day I always look back and think, "What could I have done different?"

Julia felt like the program had given her valuable insights about teaching that shaped her social justice identity. In this excerpt, she noted how the program forced her to challenge herself and her biases. In fact, fundamental to teaching for social justice is challenging beliefs and stereotypes and examining how they maintain the status quo (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a). Moreover, a significant part of teaching for social justice is constantly reflecting on oneself and on one's pedagogy in an effort to make it more equitable (Athanases & Oliveira, 2008; Chubbuck & Zembylas, 2008). To Julia, working towards more socially just practice was at the heart of what it means to be a teacher. It seems that Julia felt the program had instilled a social justice identity that was weaved into her work in the classroom.

Jaime was a PST in the single-subject cohort who identified as Latino. During our interviews, he had been placed at a charter school and was teaching middle school English language arts. He was born in the United States but spent many of his school years living in both Mexico and the United States. He decided to become a teacher after a positive experience tutoring low-income students at a local school while he was an undergraduate. His love for reading and writing and his positive experience working with high school students made him decide to enter the TEP. I asked how the program had influenced his understanding of himself as a teacher:

> The program, I think it shaped me. I think it shaped the being equitable, making sure that diversity is visible in the curriculum. And, for example, I think the program has shaped me into being somebody that is actively changing and challenging the canon of literature that is taught in the classroom.…For example, I was talking to another English teacher, he teaches sixth grade, and I was thinking, and I was talking to him about starting the Greek unit. And I told him, "You know what? But I'm also going to allow them to learn myths about their own cultures because it's a diverse classroom.…For example, I'm going to teach them myths from Cambodia and Laos, Hindu, et cetera." It's more so because I look at my classroom and I don't see White kids, period. There's just no White kids in my classroom.

Jaime was openly challenging the Western Canon taught in schools and bringing stories and myths that are relevant to his students, which scholars have noted as integral to teaching for social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a). Moreover, he was valuing the stories, and funds of knowledge that his students brought from home (Gonzáles et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). He felt like the program helped him to be more aware of his students' backgrounds and to introduce a culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2011) that drew upon the knowledge that his students brought from their homes and histories (Gonzáles et al., 2005; Moll et al., 1992). Other participants in the study also believed the program had shaped their ideas about teaching for social justice and making their classrooms more equitable. These results support the quantitative findings, as participants who felt like their beliefs aligned with the program felt like they were learning from the program and felt a stronger social justice identity relative to peers who potentially felt lower levels of value consonance with the program.

It is worth noting, however, that participants felt like the program prepared them to be more equity minded, but almost all of them also agreed that the program did little to prepare them to actually address issues of race in the classroom. Specifically, they said it did not give them tools or that it was not talked about. Many TEPs have only a token class about race and racism (Chapman, 2011); few incorporate it throughout the program. In her interview at the end of the year, Janice seemed to point to this happening in this TEP as well. She described how the program prepared her to address race in the classroom:

> When I think about race, it's more of our class with [professor in the TEP], where I think she was the main person really pushing for that and having that conversation. I'm not so sure whether they really talk about it in other parts of the program. I feel like they just really gave us that one class to think about it.

Janice seemed to be saying what the literature does about discussions of race in TEPs: They are limited to a single class and do not go very deep into the topic.

James, a PST in the single-subject cohort, identified as Latino and White. He was born in the United States and lived a large part of his life in Mexico. He moved to the southwestern United States when he was 10 years old. He came to teaching later in life, after working as an accountant for the first 5 years out of college. He did not like the work and was drawn to teaching because he had teachers who validated him as a person and he wanted to do the same for his students. He was teaching high school math at the time of the interview. When I asked if the program had helped him address issues of race in his classroom, he said:

> You know.…Fear of sounding privileged, I don't think I've seen problems of race in my classroom, just because it's so diverse. I may have 80% Latino, 10% black, and then 10% Asian, or some mix of that. I don't feel like race has played a factor in our class. I'm sure, at some level, it has. I just haven't been aware of it…I don't think the program's really taught us anything about race that I feel.…Sure, they say, "Bring cultural capital in." But it's not necessarily race.

Whether actively working towards it or ignoring it, all teachers and PSTs have a relationship to issues of social justice (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). James felt like he strove for equity in his classroom, but here he said he had not had any problems with race and therefore it had not been a big issue. James seemed to lack awareness of the structural racism embedded in school systems.

Other studies have found that PSTs' and early career teachers' notions of social justice often fall short of critically understanding systemic racism and addressing it in their classrooms (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a). James felt that because his class was diverse that race was not an issue; he fell short of acknowledging and understanding systemic racism and how it might be impacting his students. Moreover, he similarly felt like the program had not explicitly addressed issues of race with him and his peers. Kara had a sharper critique of the programs lack of attention to race in the program:

> First of all, they don't really talk about race in the classroom that much. I haven't noticed it. They don't bring it up. They talk about socioeconomic, and…and autism, and ADHD, and deaf, and blind, but they don't really talk about race at all.…Probably because most professors are White. I feel like that's a thing, too. A lot of people in this class don't realize that just because you took a course and it's like, "Be nice to all students," [that it] means that you know how to handle your Black students in your class. If a Black student comes up into your class and complains about how he went to the store and he was being followed, you can't just be like, "Oh I'm so sorry, that sucks, that's not right." For me, I have to be like, "Hey, no matter what happens, make sure you stay in a public area, just in case they try to take you outside." That's completely two different thought rationales.…They don't even teach about it. They just assume equity is making sure that your instruction is different for all kids, from all economic backgrounds and all races. But it doesn't really talk about how to make sure it reaches all races.

Kara felt like the program equated equity and race, and that it gave scant explicit attention to issues of race and equity in the classroom. She noted that they are not the same and that she was upset by the lack of attention to it; she did not feel like the program was giving her the tools to talk about, think about, or adequately address race.

Whiteness is pervasive in TEPs (Brown, 2014; Sleeter, 2001). One way Whiteness seemed to manifest itself in this particular program was the lack of explicit attention to issues of race throughout coursework and the dedication of just part of one course to it (Chapman, 2011). Other issues of equity were discussed, but many participants felt that race was not talked about or that it was talked about infrequently in the program (Young, 2016). Kara seemed to have come to the program with a strong awareness of social and schooling inequities related to Black students (Brown, 2014). The absence of discussion of race was alienating to her, and she felt like issues that were important to her as a Black woman were not being adequately discussed or supported (Brown, 2014).

While almost all of the participants said that race was not explicitly talked about in the program, some of their views about race were changed by the discussion of equity in the program. Marta, who was in the single-subject cohort and identified as Latina, was teaching middle school Spanish at the time of the interviews. She said that she had always wanted to become a teacher and that she would play teacher to her younger brothers when she was little (Olsen, 2008). Her Spanish language classes were her favorite during school, and she said she derived happiness from helping her friends with their Spanish homework in college. She ultimately decided to go into teaching in college. She tested the waters as a substitute teacher, and that led her to the program. When discussing how the program had shaped her ability to address equity, she described how it made her realize that she could not be "colorblind":

> I guess more and realizing that, as a teacher, you come in with all these different—I don't want to say stereotypes, but in a way—of different students from different racial backgrounds. Even though…Because I used to say, it's like, "No, I'm colorblind. I don't see race in my kids." That's not the right attitude to bring into the classroom because we do need to realize that all students are different, come with different racial backgrounds. And we need to be open about it because sometimes that means they each have different experiences, and we need to know about their different experiences. Sometimes their racial background accounts for their different experiences.…We can't be colorblind in the classroom.

Despite almost all participants stating that race was not explicitly addressed in the program, some experienced shifts in their views about race and their teaching. The program helped Marta see that being colorblind and not seeing race was in fact denying the experiences and identities of her students. As Cochran-Smith et al. (2009a) asserted, "Teaching for social justice requires knowledge of pupils, content, and pedagogy and a commitment that all pupils and communities should have access to these" (p. 368). Marta's shift in her understanding of race shows that she understood the importance of getting to know her students and that seeing their race was integral to learning about who they are. The lack of explicit discussion of race by the TEP was a form of colorblindness in that it conflated equity with fairness for all and did not explicitly address issues of racism. This is not uncommon in K–12 classrooms, where teachers often avoid topics of race and instead believe that striving for equity is enough (Chapman, 2013).

## Discussion and Conclusion

In this mixed-methods study, I explored the roles of peer interaction and a TEP in shaping PSTs' social justice teacher identities. Quantitative results indicated that the ethno-racial composition of strong ties in the program was related to stronger social justice teacher identities. This supports prior research that showed that having more diverse close friendships is related to more positive views on diversity and policies that support equity (Bahns et al., 2015; Davies et al., 2011). The qualitative findings showed that close friendships often enhanced or shaped beliefs that PSTs brought with them to the TEP (Olsen, 2011). These findings also indicated that more heterogeneous relationships help PSTs to critically examine pedagogy, structures, and curricula—for example, a project on historic missions in the state—and work to make them more equitable. Moreover, peers in PSTs' networks influenced their social justice identities, as many study participants drew social boundaries (Binder & Abel, 2019; Lamont et al., 2015) between themselves and those peers who they felt acted or thought in ways that were anathema to their social justice teacher identities (Benson, 2003).

The quantitative results further showed that value consonance—the belief that one's values aligned with the program—was positively related to PSTs' social justice identities and beliefs. The qualitative data supported this finding and showed that participants' social justice identities were strongly shaped by what they had learned in their TEP. The qualitative findings in fact expanded on the quantitative findings by showing that the program had little influence on PSTs' views specifically about race, racism, and racial justice. Thus, a core component of their social justice identities—the ability to think about, talk about, and address race in their classroom—was absent.

Ideas of social justice and diversity are ubiquitous in TEPs (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009b; Zeichner, 2006, 2018). As discussed, it is difficult to find a TEP that does not tout its mission of social justice (Zeichner, 2006). Despite a large number of critics (Cochran-Smith et al., 2009b), social justice teacher education, if done well, can serve as a bedrock for equitable teaching practices that expand educational opportunities and fight systemic barriers (Cochran-Smith, 2010). Additionally, the benefits and pitfalls of diversity in TEPs have received the attention of numerous scholars in the past 15 years (e.g., Ball & Tyson, 2011; Brown, 2014; Chapman, 2011; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). Overall, scholarship indicates that the benefits of diversity in TEPs are manifold and increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the teacher workforce should be central to a teacher education system that wants to put well-prepared teachers in all schools for all students (Ball & Tyson, 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2004). PSTs from minoritized backgrounds not only benefit the students they will ultimately teach but also their peers, as they bring cultural experiences and knowledge to TEPs that helps teachers become more effective (Sleeter & Milner, 2011).

That said, TEPs are overwhelmingly White spaces. The more homogeneous the TEP, the more homogeneous the experiences of its PSTs (Brown, 2014; Sleeter, 2001, 2017; Sleeter & Milner, 2011). More diverse TEP classrooms could lead to more storytelling and opportunities to hear the stories of others, which is integral to fostering a social justice stance (Pak & Ravitch, 2021). Brown (2014) contended that diversifying TEP programs is a laudable goal, but it is imperative to ask who benefits from this diversity: All too often, White PSTs benefit from the experiences of their minoritized peers, but not the other way around (Brown, 2014). It is therefore incumbent on TEPs to make sure that their minoritized students are not forced to engage in the labor of educating their White peers about issues of racism and inequity.

In this study, it seemed that having a diverse group of students in the TEP allowed participants to create groups of friends with different ethno-racial backgrounds and different experiences. These relationships were integral to shaping and solidifying their social justice teacher identities. While there is a wealth of literature exploring the benefits of more diverse TEPs broadly, little research has investigated the role of diverse friendships in TEPs. This chapter adds to the literature by beginning to explore the connections between diverse relationships and a social justice teacher identity. Close friendships are more likely than weaker conections to play a meaningful role in shaping PSTs' social justice identity and attitude about teaching, as these types of relationships require a level of trust and interaction over time (Davies et al., 2011). Accordingly, future work should explore the antecedents and outcomes of diverse friendships within PSTs.

Teachers often enter the profession because of a desire to work on issues of social justice; this is often central to their identity development (Olsen, 2008). TEPs cannot completely prepare PSTs for what they will encounter in their classrooms and their schools (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Moreover, teacher identity is constantly being shaped, especially for PSTs and new teachers (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Danielewicz, 2001). As such, TEPs can and should serve as a base upon which teachers' beliefs are formed and their practices are honed (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). That said, PSTs' histories and views on social justice influence their experiences as teachers and their identity development (Olsen, 2008). In fact, scholars have argued that PSTs’ histories of diversity and social justice are often impermeable to TEP interventions designed to reshape their ideas, and TEP’s effects are ephemeral (Olsen, 2011).

For participants in this study, however, the TEP played an outsized role in shaping social justice identities—all of the participants were impacted by what they learned in the program. That said, they also felt their program was lacking robust discussion of race. It would be impossible to expect TEPs to completely prepare PSTs to address issues of race, but they must give PSTs a framework or tools to better address racism in the classroom (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). For example, Richard Milner (2007) offered a framework for reflecting on race in educational research that could be applied to teachers and classroom settings. Future work could potentially address this ostensible absence of race in TEPs through participatory action research. Researchers, teacher educators, and PSTs could work together to explore ways to address race that would help PSTs leave their programs with a strong grounding in the issues and with some steps they could take to address them in their classroom.

Overall, the results presented in this chapter support the idea that PSTs’ social justice identities are influenced through social practice and interaction with others (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). Future work should continue to explore the social side of social justice identity. As stated above, whether PSTs or teachers are aware of it or not, they all have a relationship to social justice, and it manifests in their social justice identity (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015). The manifestation of this relationship will have direct impacts in their classroom practice and on their students.

# Chapter 6

## "Clearly this is veteran knowledge.": Support networks and Teacher Identity of Preservice Teachers and First-year teachers

> *The power of the network to provide a source for learning, stabilization,*
> *and socialization into the figured world of schools cannot be overstated.*
> *(Barnatt et al., 2017, p. 1018)*

Teacher identity is central to the work of all teachers. Sachs (2005) underscored this fact, noting that teacher identity "provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be,' 'how to act,' and 'how to understand' their work" (p. 15). Merseth et al. (2008) contended that teacher identity "form[s] a foundation that influences action in the classroom" (Merseth et al., 2008, p. 91). As such, it determines how teachers teach, interact with their students, develop as teachers, and react to educational change and reform (Buchannan, 2015; Reeves, 2018). Ultimately, teachers rely on their teacher identities to navigate and evaluate their work and to form an understanding of themselves (Buchanan, 2015; Hsieh, 2015; Merseth et al., 2008).

Teacher identity has been explored across multiple disciplines, though a consistent definition remains elusive (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). Nevertheless, theories of teacher identity share common assumptions noted by multiple scholars (e.g., Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). These assumptions were well summarized by Rodgers and Scott (2008):

> (1)…identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple *contexts* which bring social, cultural, political, and historical forces to bear upon that formation; (2)…identity is formed in *relationship* with others and involves *emotions*; (3)…identity is *shifting, unstable, and multiple*; and, (4)…identity involves the construction and reconstruction of meaning through stories over time. (p. 733)

Teacher identity is therefore social, dynamic, and frequently shaped and reshaped over time. This is especially true for preservice teachers (PSTs) and early career teachers (ECTs; Bullough, 1997;

Danielewicz, 2001; Flores & Day, 2006; Nichols et al., 2017). For these individuals, teacher identity is often characterized by dissonance, as they come to terms with who they think they are as teachers, who they want to become as teachers, and how those ideas fit into the actual role and work of teaching (Hong, 2010; Richmond et al., 2011; Sydnor, 2017).

One of the central factors in shaping teacher identity among PSTs and ECTs are interactions with peers and colleagues (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Cohen, 2010a; Freedman & Appleman, 2008). As new teachers enter their school, colleagues can strengthen or erode teacher identity (Cohen, 2010a; Hong, 2010; McGriff, 2015). Through interactions with peers and colleagues, PSTs and ECTs form shared meanings that validate and/or alter their teacher identities (Cohen, 2008, 2010a; Hong, 2010). Moreover, when a new teacher is acknowledged by colleagues as competent and as someone who belongs at the school, it can strengthen their teacher identity (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; see Chapter 7). In particular, colleagues and peers who are part of a PST's or ECT's professional support network can play an outsized role in helping them to adapt and adjust to their new setting and help to develop their teacher identity (Barnett et al., 2017; Baker-Doyle, 2012; Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Hong, 2010). The values and practices of these peers and colleagues can constrain or bolster teacher identity development (Cohen, 2008; Ibarra, 1999). With this in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to explore how the professional support networks of PSTs and ECTs change over time and how these networks shape teacher identity.

Several recent studies have explored the antecedents and outcomes of support networks for ECTs and PSTs (e.g., Baker-Doyle, 2012; Bjorklund et al., 2020; Fox & Wilson, 2009, 2015; Thomas et al., 2019a). Strong support networks are related to feelings of efficacy among PSTs (Bjorklund et al., 2020) and to helping new teachers navigate and become acclimated to their new schools (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Thomas et al., 2020). Moreover, social support networks play a role in reinforcing identities and fostering feelings of belonging with a group (Lin, 1999; Song et al., 2011). Despite the growing number of studies that explore social support networks in ECTs, few—if any—have looked at how these support networks change as individuals transition from a teacher education program (TEP) and move into their own classrooms. Moreover, few have explored the links between social support networks and teacher identity.

Using a mixed-methods social network approach (Baker-Doyle, 2015; Perry et al., 2018), this chapter seeks to bridge this gap in the literature by exploring the following research questions:

*RQ1: How do support networks change as new teachers transition to their roles as teachers and through their first year of teaching?*

*RQ2: Why do PST and ECT professional support networks change over time?*

*RQ3: How do PST and ECT professional support networks contribute to teacher identity in ECTs?*

This chapter adds to the literature in two ways. First, it explores the changes to support networks as new teachers transition from their TEP to their role as teachers. And second, using an identity theory framework, it explores the role that these support networks play in fostering teacher identities during ECTs' first year in the classroom (Burke & Stets, 2009).

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### Social Network Theory

Social network theory "provides a formal and conceptual way to think about the social world" (Wasserman & Faust, 1994, p. 11). It is grounded in the idea that relationships among individuals are related to their actions, beliefs, and identities (Borgatti et al., 2018; Lin, 1999;

Perry et al., 2018). Most social science research uses an attribute-based approach that is focused on individuals; social network theory forefronts relationships between actors (Perry et al., 2018; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). This approach privileges the "web of relationships in which actors are embedded that both constrain and provide opportunities" (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010, p. 18; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The observed attributes of individuals are understood in terms of ties and social structures, and personal attributes are seen as secondary (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

There are two approaches to social network research: sociocentric and egocentric (Perry et al., 2018). *Sociocentric* approaches bound networks by defining a certain group (e.g., an organization or school) and explore the social networks within that bounded entity (Borgatti et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2018). The goal of sociocentric research is to understand a complete network. Conversely, an *egocentric* network approach explores separate networks for each participant (Perry et al., 2018). In Chapters 4 and 5, I used a sociometric approach. In this chapter, I use an egocentric approach to explore the social networks and teacher identities of study participants.

Put simply, networks consist of actors (people, organizations, companies, etc.) who are connected by relationships or *ties* to one another (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Ties can be considered weak or strong based on intimacy, tie type, or frequency of interaction embodied in the tie (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010; Perry et al., 2018). Egocentric research is focused on the networks and social environments of individuals (Borgatti et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2018).The focal actor in the network is called the *ego*, and people named by the ego are referred to as *alters* (Perry et al., 2018). A core tenet of the egocentric approach is that "each person lives in a personal community—partially of their own creation and nearly unique to them—whose composition and structure have consequences" (Perry et al., 2018, p. 25). In other words, each person forms a community consisting of networks, and those networks are important drivers of the actions, behaviors, and identities of that person (Perry et al., 2018; Pescosolido & Rubin, 2000; Stryker, 1980).

Two of the main goals of ego network research are to understand why people have the networks that they do and to understand the outcomes of ego networks (Perry et al., 2018). This chapter aims to do both by (a) examining the changes in the composition of participants' social support networks and why those changes occurred, and (b) exploring the relationship between participants' social support networks—specifically their professional support networks (Baker-Doyle, 2012)—and their teacher identities.

### Teachers' Social Support Networks

Scholarship over the past 50 years has shown that social support networks are positively and causally related to well-being, and they play an outsized role in helping people cope with difficult situations and transitions (e.g., Cobb, 1976; House et al.,1988; Lin, 1986; Perry et al., 2018; Thoits, 1995, 2011). More recent work has shown that social support is not only beneficial for coping with negative life events and stress but also an integral part of thriving and living a fulfilling life (Feeney & Collins, 2015). Thoits (1995) defined social support as a psychological resource or "fund" that people can draw upon when facing challenges or stressors (p. 65). Social support can be thought of as the content of social ties between people in a network (Lin, 1986) and is generally categorized into four behaviors: emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support (Heaney & Israel, 2011, p. 190; House, 1981):

- *Emotional support* involves the provision of empathy, love, trust, and caring.
- *Instrumental support* involves the provision of tangible aid and services that directly assist a person in need.

- *Informational support* is the provision of advice, suggestions, and information that a person can use to address problems.
- *Appraisal support* involves the provision of information that is useful for self-evaluation—in other words, constructive feedback and affirmation.

Researchers have conceptualized the number of ties in a support network as a major component of social support (Lin, 1986; House et al., 1988). In social support studies, scholars tend to evaluate the quality, content, and quantity of an actor's support ties (Smith & Christakis, 2008). Network researchers' motivation for looking at social support is to identify relational patterns and the resources that the ego gets from those resources (Perry et al., 2018). Moreover, it should be noted that both *perceived* and *actual* support embodied in a network are important for well-being (Lin, 1986).

Social networks have become increasingly relevant to research on teachers over the past 15 years (e.g., Daly, 2010; Datnow, 2012; Hopkins & Spillane, 2013; Spillane et al., 2015). More pointedly, a recent body of literature has begun to explore the outcomes and antecedents of professional support networks for ECTs. Studies have shown that support from colleagues and administration is vital for new teachers' socialization, identity formation, and ability to acclimatize to their new settings (Barnatt et al., 2017; Baker-Doyle, 2012). Indeed, support networks can shape teacher identities by reinforcing or verifying them (Burke & Stets, 2009; Cohen, 2010a; Lin, 1999; Stryker, 1980). Importantly, however, just as colleagues can strengthen ECTs' teacher identities, they can also erode them (Cohen, 2010a; Hong, 2010; McGriff, 2015). Overall, teachers view the values and practices of their network of colleagues as important constraints and resources for accomplishing their professional identities (Cohen, 2008; McGriff, 2015; Ibarra, 1999). Likewise, teacher identities can play a role in how preservice and new teachers form ties and shape their networks (Baker-Doyle, 2012; see also Chapter 4).

A professional support network is vital to professional growth and improved practice for new teachers (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017). A lack of such a network can leave a new teacher feeling isolated and frustrated (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2020). New teachers who actively seek professional support networks tend to have broad and more diverse networks, and they have an easier time navigating the school workplace and acclimating because of these networks (Baker-Doyle, 2012). Thomas et al. (2019b) found that having a larger support network (professional, emotional, and social) was positively related to higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation to teach. Additionally, they found that higher quality ties in that network were also related to higher levels of job satisfaction and motivation to teach.

New teachers can use support networks to increase opportunities to learn and to serve as a bulwark against negative experiences and challenges (Anderson, 2010; Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2020). Moreover, larger support networks can help new teachers get the resources they need to accomplish their goals and grow as educators (Anderson, 2010). A large professional support network can provide a safety net to take risks and to challenge oneself (Anderson, 2010). These networks can also create more opportunities for new teachers to contribute to their schools, which can lead to increased feelings of belonging and increased commitment (Anderson, 2010; Filstad et al., 2019; Fox & Wilson, 2009; Waller, 2020).

Tie formation in new teachers' networks is often related to accessibility, proximity, and perceived expertise of their peers (Spillane et al., 2015, 2017; Thomas et al., 2020). Similarly, feelings of trust, organizational routines, and school culture can play a role (Horn et al., 2020; Spillane et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2020). Sometimes new teachers seek support from colleagues out of necessity or out of feelings of similarity—known as *homophily* (Thomas et al., 2020). Ties are often dropped for a lack of necessity and lack of accessibility (Thomas et al., 2020). This study builds on prior literature by examining how support networks change as new teachers finish their TEP and navigate their first year in the classroom, as well as how alters in those networks influence their teacher identities.

### Teacher Identity

Teacher identity serves as the lodestar of teachers' work and how they understand themselves. A clear understanding of one's teacher identity can be a source of resilience, improve practice, and increase feelings of commitment and efficacy; it can also serve as a bulwark against the vulnerability, stress, and anxiety inherent in the job (Cohen, 2008; Kelchtermans, 1996, 2009). Scholars agree that having awareness and intentionality about developing a teacher identity gives new teachers a strong foundation upon which to build their pedagogy and practice (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Flores & Day, 2006; Johnson et al., 2010). As such, the work of helping PSTs build a strong foundation to develop their teacher identities starts in the TEP (Bullough, 1997; Danielewicz, 2001).

PSTs often enter their programs with romantic views of teaching informed by their careers as students (Brtizman, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). These visions are often at odds with the intellectual and progressive work of teaching presented to them in their programs (Galman, 2009; Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009; Olsen, 2008). Moreover, classes in TEPs are frequently the first time that many PSTs have confronted issues of privilege and power and the complexities of those realities (Galman, 2009; Olsen, 2008). Similarly, new teachers often enter their first year with a sense of *unrealistic optimism*—namely, overly ambitions expectations for what they will be able to do and who they will be (Weinstein, 1988). That unrealistic optimism is frequently tempered by *reality shock* when they enter the classroom and find out that they may not be able to be the teachers they expected to be (Veenman, 1984). The collision of unrealistic optimism and reality shock can create dissonance for first-year teachers, leading many to leave the profession (Barnatt et al., 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Hong, 2010).

Clearly, PSTs' and ECTs' teacher identities are in states of extreme flux, and these educators frequently experience identity dissonance and psychological discomfort. Their teacher identities are constantly being negotiated through interactions with others (Cohen, 2010a; McGriff, 2015; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013); often, these "others" are their fellow teachers. As such, having a strong and nurturing support network can help them overcome this dissonance and conflict, grow as teachers, and foster a strong positive teacher identity in their new schools (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017; Nichols et al., 2017; Sexton, 2008). The evidence shows that social support networks can play an important role in helping new teachers transition from the TEP to the classroom and to support them in fostering their teacher identities (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2020). In this chapter, I explore how these networks interact with and facilitate the development of teacher identity through the lens of identity theory.

## Identity Theory

Identity scholars like Peter Burke (1991) have defined identity as,

> *...a set of 'meanings'* applied to the self in a social role or situation defining what it means to be who one is (Burke & Tully, 1977). This set of meanings serves as a standard or reference for who one is. (p. 837)

In this chapter, I define *teacher identity* as the set of meanings teachers ascribe to themselves personally, socially, professionally, and politically that helps them define what it means to be a teacher (Burke & Stets, 2009; Mockler, 2011).

The foundation of identity theory lies in structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980), which contends that identities are mostly based in social structures and cultural meanings (Burke, 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). Nevertheless, identity theory does not deny the agency of actors within these structures (Tsushima & Burke, 1999). More pointedly, social behavior based in identities is not totally determined by social structures; it is also negotiated and contested through social exchanges that shape interactions between people (Stryker, 1980). In short, social structures and social interactions between actors in these structures shape identity. Social networks create the social spaces and social structures where people interact and form their identities (Pescosolido & Rubin, 2000; Stryker, 1980). To explore this relationship, I collected ego network data from nine PSTs and ECTs at three timepoints. I then interviewed these participants to explore how and why their networks changed and how the people in those networks facilitated their teacher identity development.

## Methods

### Qualitative Data Collection and Sample

This chapter draws on surveys and semi-structured interviews from a larger 2-year study tracking teacher identity development from credential to the classroom. The broader study was designed to survey, interview, and observe participants as they completed their TEP and moved through their first year in the classroom. For this piece of that study, I started with 16 participants in two PST cohorts—eight multiple-subject and eight single-subject candidates—who were selected based on survey responses and classroom observations during the first month of their TEP.

I conducted three interviews with the group of 16 participants over the course of the first year. Specifically, Interviews 1, 2, and 3 took place in October 2018, February 2019, and May 2019, respectively. However, seven of the 16 did not get teaching jobs at schools after they finished the TEP—by choice or by circumstance—so they were dropped from the study after the first three interviews. I interviewed and surveyed the remaining nine participants over the summer (Interview 4), in October 2019 (Interview 5) and in May 2020 (Interview 6), during their first year of teaching. All interviews lasted between 50 and 90 minutes; all were transcribed verbatim. The final interview was conducted via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to Interviews 3, 5, and 6, all participants completed an ego networks survey (described in detail below) to measure their professional support networks. As I discuss in greater detail later in this section, I used a sequential mixed-methods approach to analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Specifically, I analyzed the ego network data from all three time points prior to Interview 6 and then used part of the final interview to discuss the people in each participant's professional support network, why changes in their network occurred, and how the people in their network influenced their understanding of themselves as teachers. Additionally, using a connected mixed-methods approach, the quantitative data informed the qualitative data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

Table 6.1 shows the pseudonyms given to the participants, their self-identified ethno-racial identities, and the grade and/or subject they taught in their first year in the classroom. The final nine participants included three elementary school teachers, two middle school teachers, and four high school teachers. Tina originally started the TEP as a multiple-subject PST but

**Table 6.1**
*Participants*

| Name | Ethno-Racial Identification | Grade or Subject |
|---|---|---|
| Cate | Middle Eastern | 5th Grade |
| Janice | Asian | 4th/5th Grade Split |
| Tara | Latina | Kindergarten |
| Tina | White | Middle School English |
| Marta | Latina | Middle School World Language |
| Jaime | Latino | High School ELA |
| Logan | Black and Asian | High School World Language |
| James | Latino and White | High School Math |
| Diana | White | High School Math |

*Note.* All names are pseudonyms.

completed her multiple- and single-subject credential and ultimately decided to teach middle school. Three participants identified as Latino, one as Middle Eastern, one as Asian, and two as White. Two identified with more than one racial ethnic group, with one identifying as Black and Asian and the other identifying as Latino and White.

## Ego Network Data Collection

One week prior to Interviews 3, 5, and 6, I sent participants ego network surveys to complete. From this point on, I refer to Interview 3 (May 2019) and the related ego network data collection as T1, Interview 5 (October 2019) and the related ego network data collection as T2, and Interview 6 (May 2020) and the related ego network data collection as T3.

In each ego network survey, participants were given a *name generator* (Perry et al., 2018) where they were asked the following question: *"In the last 5 to 6 months, who have you turned to for support—emotional, pedagogical, or otherwise? This could be anyone in your life—family, friends, colleagues, etc. List as many people as you can think of, up to 20 people."* (See Appendix for C for the full survey.) Limiting the time frame to the prior 5 to 6 months enabled me to capture changes over time and lessened the burden on participants (Perry et al., 2018).

I limited the number of alters to 20 because of the constraints of the survey software. Placing this type of limitation can pose problems, as it can artificially limit participants' network sizes (Perry et al., 2018). However, only three participants (one at each timepoint) named 20 alters over the course of the three surveys. When I asked if they felt like they were constrained by the limit on the number of people they could name, they said they were not.

After the name generator, participants were asked a series of *name interpreters* (Perry et al., 2018) about the alters they had listed. Specifically, they were asked to describe their relationship to each alter (e.g., family, friend/non-work related, friend/colleague, administrator, etc.). They were also asked about the length of time they had known the alter and the alter's gender and ethno-racial identity. Finally, participants were asked about the type(s) of support they had received from the alter (i.e., emotional, instrumental, informational, appraisal). I included a description of each type of support in the survey.

To measure the strength of ties with their alters, participants were asked to rate how close they felt to the alter on a scale ranging from 1 (*not at all close*) to 7 (*as close as anyone in my life*). They were also asked how often they sought support for teaching from each alter, with response options ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*daily or almost daily*). Finally, to get a sense of the structure of their overall network, they were asked to name alters in their network who interacted with each other. Using the quantitative ego network data, I focused on the types of relationships in the network (i.e., program-related, school-related, and outside support), the changes in the network, and the strength of ties.

### Ego Network Analysis

I conducted a churn analysis (Halgin & Borgatti, 2012; Sasovova et al., 2010) and a descriptive analysis of participants' ego networks over time. For all ego network analyses, I used

UCINET network software (Borgatti et al., 2002). For this chapter, I was interested in the professional support network within the larger social support network. The professional support network for each participant was determined by two factors. First, I defined professional support ties as anyone in the support network who also had a connection to the TEP (program-related)—including peers, professors, cooperating teachers, and so on—and, starting at T2, anyone who had a connection to the school where the participant worked (school-related). All others (family, friends, etc.) were considered outside support. Second, to judge the accuracy of this categorization, I examined how frequently the participant sought each alter out for teaching support. With three exceptions, participants rated all people outside of the program and the school "*never*" on this question, indicating that they rarely, if ever, sought support related to their teaching practice from people outside of their professional networks. In short, all alters who were program-related and school-related were considered part of their professional support network.

### ***Support Network Size and Churn***

I examined the network size (total number of alters) that each participant had and how this changed over the three time points. I also conducted a churn analysis (Borgatti et al., 2018; Halgin & Borgatti, 2012; Sasovova et al., 2010), which looks at the number of new ties, kept ties, and lost ties from one time point to the next. More specifically, I examined the *stability ratio* (Borgatti et al., 2018; Halgin & Borgatti, 2012; Sasovova et al., 2010) for each participant from T1 to T2, from T2 to T3, and from T1 to T3.

The stability ratio is the number of kept ties from one time point to the next divided by the size of the network at the first time point. In other words, it is, for example, the ratio of alters who were in the network at both T1 and T2 to the total number of alters in T1. It is measured on a scale from 0 to 1. A score of 1 indicates that the individual kept all ties from T1 to T2; a score of 0 indicates that they did not keep any ties from T1 to T2. For example, if an actor had six ties at T1 and kept three of those ties at T2, they would have a stability ratio of .5, indicating that they kept half of their ties from the first to the second time point.

### *Network Composition*

I examined network composition at each time point by looking at the percentage of each participant's support network that was made up of program-related and school-related alters (i.e., the professional support network) relative to outside support. I delineated between program-related alters and school-related alters to track how their professional support networks changed from the end of the TEP through the end of the first year in the classroom.

### *Quality of Ties in the Professional Network*

Lastly, I examined the average quality/strength of ties in professional networks over time by looking at the average level of closeness reported by each participant regarding the alters in their professional support network. After exploring these results, I turned to the qualitative data to understand how alters in the professional support network impacted participants' teacher identities.

## Qualitative Analysis

As noted above, I used a connected mixed-methods approach to analyze the qualitative data. I first analyzed the ego network data and then explored the qualitative data in light of the findings from the ego networks. To do so, I uploaded the final (T3) interviews into NVIVO software and used a two-cycle coding process (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016). Guided by the quantitative results in the first coding cycle, I read each participant's T3 interview and coded any passages related to the people in their professional support network. I focused specifically on their responses to questions about their networks.

After one round of coding, I ran queries in NVIVO to extract coded excerpts. In the second cycle of coding, I reviewed the data to find overarching patterns and create a smaller number of codes that captured broader patterns and themes in the data (Miles et al., 2014). In the second cycle of coding, I took a inductive approach to search for emerging themes (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2016).

## Findings

### Quantitative Results

#### *RQ1: How do support networks change as new teachers transition to their roles as teachers and through their first year of teaching?*

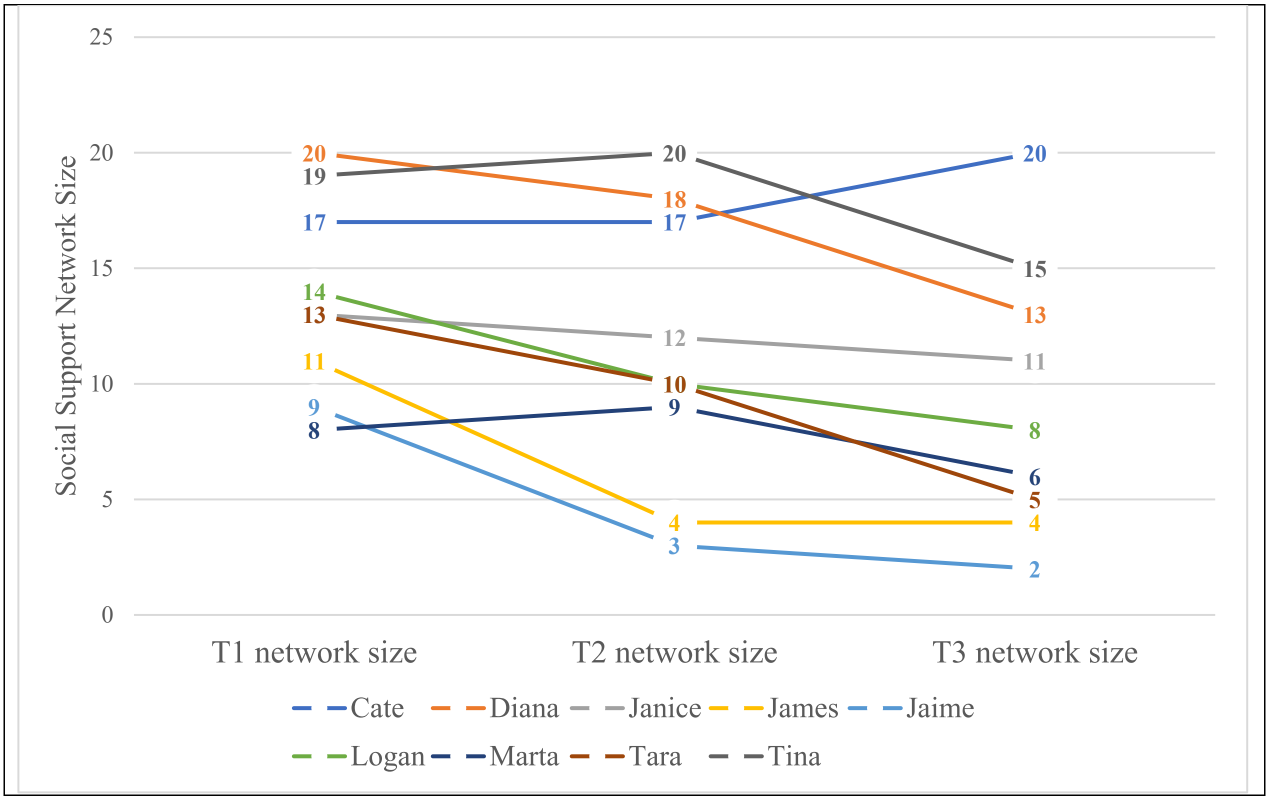

**Figure 6.1** *Support Network Size Change for Each Participant Over Time*

Figure 6.1 shows that the average support network size for each participant shrank from T1 to T3 for all participants except one. Cate, the exception, changed schools mid-year and she kept her school-related ties from her first school and added new ties at her second school. For all others, the pattern was clear: Support networks shrank, from an average of 13.8 people at T1, to an average of 11.6 at T2, to an average of 9.2 by T3 (see Table 6.2).

As shown in Table 6.2, the networks ranged in size from a high of 20 alters to a low of two alters across the three time periods. That said, the networks also became more stable over time. From T1 to T2, participants had an average stability ratio of .395, meaning that they kept about 40% of their alters from T1 to T2. From T2 to T3, the average stability ratio increased to .606, indicating that from T2 to T3 they kept roughly 61% of their support ties. From T1 to T3 the average stability ratio was .323, indicating that they maintained about 32% of their support ties over the course of the year.

Figure 6.2 shows how the composition of participants' support networks changed over time. For most, the percentage of alters in the support network outside their professional support network remained stable over the three time points. Jaime was the one exception, as he did not have any outside support after T1. Overall, the percentage of support from program-related alters dropped from T1 to T3. Three participants (Janice, Tina, and Tara) named one program-related alter at T3, and Logan named two. Interestingly, Janice and Tina listed the same program-related

**Table 6.2**
*Ego Network Size and Stability Ratio for Each Participant Over Time*

| | Network Size | | | Stability Ratio | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Name | T1 | T2 | T3 | T1–T2 | T2–T3 | T1–T3 |
| Cate | 17 | 17 | 20 | .471 | .588 | .412 |
| Diana | 20 | 18 | 13 | .450 | .667 | .400 |
| Janice | 13 | 12 | 11 | .538 | .917 | .538 |
| James | 11 | 4 | 4 | .182 | .750 | .364 |
| Jaime | 9 | 3 | 2 | .111 | .667 | .111 |
| Logan | 14 | 10 | 8 | .571 | .400 | .286 |
| Marta | 8 | 9 | 6 | .375 | .444 | .250 |
| Tara | 13 | 10 | 5 | .385 | .400 | .231 |
| Tina | 19 | 20 | 15 | .474 | .650 | .316 |
| Average | 13.8 | 11.6 | 9.2 | .395 | .606 | .323 |

peer, and Tara named no program-related alters at T2 and at T3 named the program chair, whose advice she sought after resigning from her school (see Chapter 7 and 8 for more discussion).

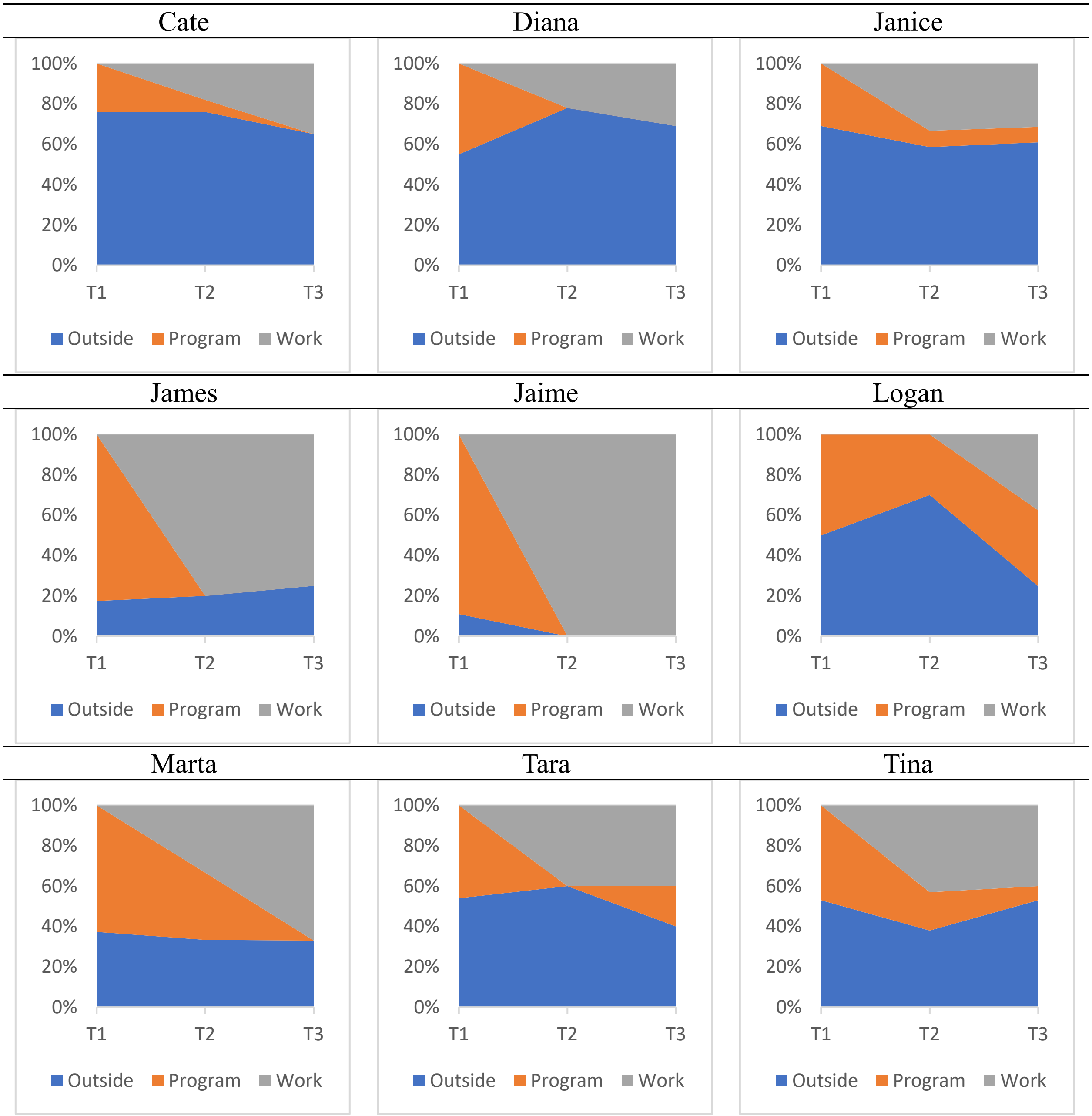

**Figure 6.2** *Support Network Composition Change for Each Participant Over Time*

Lastly, Figure 6.3 shows the average closeness (tie strength) that participants reported for their professional support networks. Average closeness dropped for all except one participant (Cate) from T1 to T2, when they transitioned from their program to their schools. Then, for all participants except Cate and Tara, average tie strength increased from T2 to T3. Again, Cate changed schools midway through the year (discussed more below), and Tara resigned her position in early March 2020 due to a toxic work environment (discussed in Chapters 7 and 8). All other participants stayed at a single school for the duration of the academic year. Next I examine qualitative findings to help explain these results.

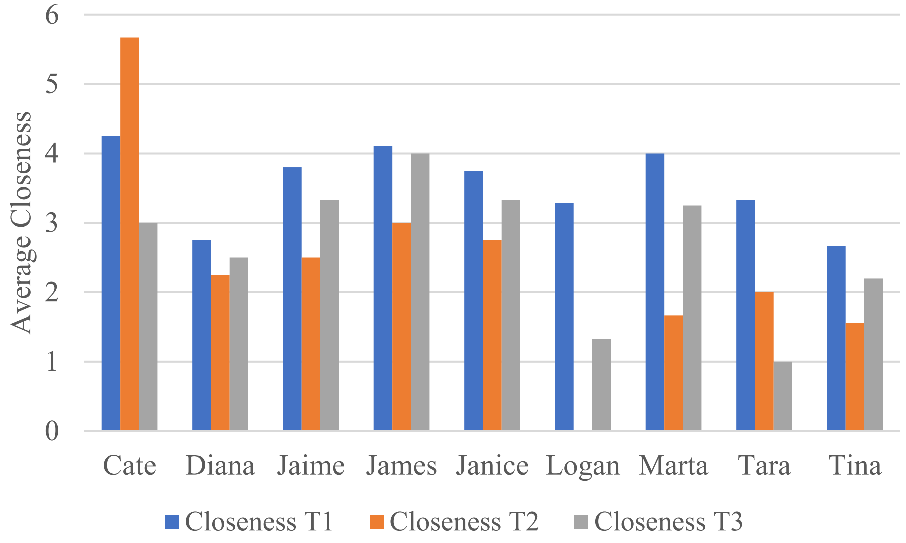

**Figure 6.3** *Average Closeness in the Professional Network for Each Participant Over*

## Qualitative Findings

### *RQ2: Why do PST and ECT professional support networks change over time?*

**Lost Ties: Network Intentionality and Lack of Accessibility.** As noted in the ego network findings, on average, participants' support networks became smaller over time. In the interviews, I asked participants why they dropped some alters. One reason they gave was that they did not feel like the person was beneficial for their practice and they no longer felt like they needed their support. This was one of the main reasons the participants gave when describing why they dropped their program-related ties. Logan, a high school world language teacher, described it as follows:

> The biggest thing is we're kind of out of our [program] cohort now, and before I was talking a lot to… But now, in terms of teaching, then I hardly talk to them anymore. They're still my friends, but I don't really need them for guidance and teaching anymore or grading things or anything. I can do a lot of the grading and everything kind of on my own. Well, I just think I was looking at who I talked to now and, yeah, it's a lot smaller. But most of the conversations that I have now in terms of teaching, it's at work, rather than— I know in November…I might have focused more on talking to people in my cohort, whereas now I was like, "Oh yeah, it's kind of falling out."

The decision to drop some people from his network showed Logan's sense of *network intentionality*, which is the extent to which an individual consciously goes about curating their network by connecting with or disconnecting from others for support (Moolenaar et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2020). Thomas et al. (2020), for example, found that new teachers' network intentionality plays a role in who they do and do not seek out for support.

In this case, Logan felt like the support he received from his program-related peers was no longer relevant to his practice and so he dropped some, but not all, from his support network. He noted that this had changed since November, when he still interacted with more people from his cohort; by the end of his first year in the classroom he was turning to people at his school for more support. Interestingly, Logan did not name anyone at his school site for his support network, but by T3 his school-related alters made up 20% of his support network. (I discuss this growth later in the chapter.) Cate, a fifth-grade teacher, offered a similar reason for dropping program-related alters:

> Yeah, we…I mean, most of the people from that program… We just… I think we were so close because we saw each other every single day. And when that kind of went away, I think being new teachers in this field, it's just a lot.…When I'm in a funky situation, I don't like to waste my time. I'm very efficient with trying to find the correct answer, and so I wouldn't necessarily go to someone who's also a novice to help me…because that's not helpful to me.

Cate noted the strong connection she had to her program-related peers, but as soon as she was out in the field, she showed high levels of network intentionality by seeking out the people necessary to support her in that context (Moolenaar et al., 2014).

As teachers enter their new schools, the members of their TEP cohort may not have sufficient knowledge to support their development (Freedman & Appleman, 2008). Cate implied that her program-related peers were also harder to connect with because they were not a part of her everyday life anymore; as a result, they were no longer easy for her to seek out for support. Studies of school networks have found that proximity and accessibility are integral to forming and strengthening ties (e.g., Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Spillane et al., 2017; Reagans, 2011; Thomas et al., 2020).

The "funky situation" Cate described is the fact that she started the academic year in a part-time position and in December moved to a full-time position at another school in the same district. She was very fond of the teachers at her first school but did not feel like her new school or its teachers were aligned with her values. That said, Cate's mid-year move accounted for her increased support network at T3 because she continued to seek support from alters at her first school while also seeking support from colleagues at her new school. As such, by T3 her network had grown in ways that were different from other participants.

Marta, a high school world language teacher, said that she dropped one work-related alter from her network because that person—whom she described as a school-appointed mentor-teacher—moved schools and was no longer in a role that offered Marta support. As the alter's professional role changed, so did her role in Marta's support network:

> So, she would go from classroom to classroom checking in on teachers. Sometimes she would come into my classroom and observe me.…I don't know if she got fired or she got transferred.…She moved from being my mentor-teacher to teaching at the other school. She still told me that I can text her and we could still

> meet up if I needed any help. But since she wasn't in the school there to come and observe me, it was a bit different.

Not all of the professional support networks were created by choice: Some were part of organizational routines or particular roles that people had in the school. Past research has shown that formal roles in the school—and shifts in those roles—are often influential in tie formation and tie dissolution (Spillane & Hopkins, 2013; Spillane et al., 2015; Thomas et al., 2020). When a work-related alter in a leadership position leaves that position, it increases the likelihood of the tie dissolving (Liou & Bjorklund, 2021). In Marta's case, the person in her network not only lost her leadership position but also left the school altogether. Both of those things had an impact on Marta dropping her from her support network.

Overall, participants' networks became smaller over time, seemingly in part due to network intentionality and lack of accessibility. They dropped alters who they felt could not give the support they needed or who were no longer easily accessible. That said, as I discuss next, increased opportunities for interaction and network intentionality led to new ties in their networks.

**New Ties: Propinquity, Opportunity, and Homophily.** Past scholarship has unequivocally shown that school and program organizational routines and proximity (propinquity) play a role in tie formation (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Spillane et al., 2015, 2017; Reagans, 2011; Small & Adler, 2019). This was the case for these participants as well, as they described why they added new alters over time.

Logan taught four periods at one high school and one final period at another high school in the same district. As such, he initially found it difficult to form relationships at either site. Eventually, he bonded with colleagues and felt an increased sense of belonging at the school where he taught four periods (see Chapter 7). To this point, he did not name any school-related alters in his support network at T2, but named four at T3. One of them was his induction coach, and the other three were in the world language department. They all had a professional learning community (PLC) in common (homophily), and their classrooms were close to each other (propinquity). He explained why he added these school-related peers to his support network at T3:

> Yeah. So are they're in my PLC, they teach in Mesa Nueva High School. And then Mika is the Japanese teacher, and then Julia is the Spanish teacher. Whenever I just meet up with them, Julia, she's right next door to me, but I came into her class a couple times just to observe her.…Then I also just talked to her during the day, just like, "How are you? What's going on? And how's your class?" I definitely compared my own class to her class. She's teaching Spanish 1. And just seeing, like, what they can do and seeing if my students can do the same thing with Chinese.

Being a part of the same PLC creates propinquity and gives teachers the opportunity to interact in meaningful ways with their colleagues and to learn about them, which can foster tie formation (Coburn et al., 2010; Horn et al., 2020; Liou & Bjorklund, 2021). Moreover, in learning about their peers, teachers can see what expertise they have to offer, and that can lead them to seek support (Coburn et al., 2010; Liou & Bjorklund, 2021). For Logan, interacting in the PLC and having a classroom that was close to his world language peers allowed him to learn about them and what they were doing with their students. It also seems that Julia's openness in allowing him to come into her classroom played a role in him seeking her out for support.

Having a peer who is nearby can also foster a space for supportive relationships. Tina, a middle school English teacher, described why she added her colleague Anita to her support network at T3:

> Anita is also a first-year teacher at Arroyo Middle School. She teaches math, and we met each other at the orientation. And our classrooms are close together. And she has a Keurig, so I would go over there and make coffee and we would get to [chat about students in common]. And she went surfing with me a couple times at the start of the year. But as the year went on, we would have lunch together every

> Friday, and we got to know each other as friends.…We have a lot in common as far as people go.

Tina bonded with this teacher because their classrooms were close together and they shared students. This eventually became a friendship, as they spent more time together in each other's classrooms over coffee and lunch. In addition, homophily—their perceived similarities—also played a role in Tina seeking support from Anita (McPherson et al., 2001; Spillane et al., 2017). They were both first-year teachers and they shared students. This sense of similarity made Tina see Anita as someone she could go to for support and lean on. While homophily played a role forming the tie between Tina and Anita, it also strengthened it as they got to know each other.

**Kept Ties: Identity Verification, Openness, and Homophily.** As noted in the ego network results, there was an increased stability in participants' support networks from T2 to T3—on average, participants kept about 61% of their ties between those time points (see Table 6.2). Moreover, despite a drop in average closeness in their professional support networks from T1 to T2, for many of the participants several professional support ties that they kept from T2 to T3 grew stronger over the course of the year (see Figure 6.3).

It seems to be common sense that when participants begin working at a new school they will not feel as close to their colleagues as they did with program-related support peers with whom they had spent countless days over the past academic year. Moreover, they were adjusting to the shock of a new role (Sydnor, 2017; Wiener, 1988). The qualitative data show several reasons why participants' ties grew stronger over time. I asked participants if they believed their relationships with the peers they kept in their professional networks had gotten stronger over time, and all said yes. I then asked what conditions or factors they believed allowed those relationships to grow stronger. One clear theme was that they felt these peers verified their teacher identities.

As noted above, I define teacher identity as the meanings teachers ascribe to themselves in their work (Burke & Stets, 2009). Identity verification occurs when people believe that others see them the way they see themselves (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009; Grindal & Trettevik, 2019). More pointedly, when people believe others see them the way they believe themselves to be, their identities are verified. People seek identity verification through interactions with others, and that identity verification strengthens social bonds and trust (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009; Stets et al., 2018). Participants noted that kept ties frequently verified their identities, and that made them feel stronger connections to them.

Cate had a very strong teacher identity. Her prior experience working with Child Protective Services and in early childhood education with autistic children and their families made her feel like she had assets to offer and that she was a very competent teacher. When she believed her peers saw her that way, that strengthened her relationship with them:

> I think once they…realize that I'm actually a competent teacher and I know what I'm doing, and in staff meetings.…I'm young and I know I'm young. But in staff meetings, I would volunteer to do things. I'd volunteer to read things, or I'd be the one to raise my hand and explain a thought process for a certain aspect of teaching. And I think once— The more they heard what I had to say and that it was competent and accurate…I think then they started seeing me as kind of equal.

Cate felt like she grew closer to the professional support peers in her network when they saw her how she saw herself—as a competent teacher and an equal. Other studies have shown that when people feel like their identity is verified, they will also feel increased support and feel valued (Stets et al., 2018). These moments of verification serve to strengthen or reinforce teacher identity (Bradford & Braaten, 2018; Cohen, 2010a). This seemed to be the case for Cate: When her teacher identity was verified by her peers, their bonds grew stronger (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009; Stets et al., 2018).

While several participants felt their relationships grew stronger from identity verification, others felt that their relationships grew stronger from openness and vocal support from their peers. Specifically, their peers were open and vulnerable with them, and that facilitated stronger relationships. Diana, a high school math teacher, described how her relationship with a colleague grew stronger:

> She's just been very supportive and welcoming. And, yeah, she opened up to me about a loss that she had in her family, and then I was like, "I've had that too." And she's the only one who I've said that to at my entire school.…I think her being vulnerable in some of those instances shows that she's interested in having a friendship, or at least having more of a personal working relationship. So she kind of opened that door.…She's also going like, "Hey, if you ever want me to come observe your class, let me know. Or if you want me to come cover your class so you can go observe a different teacher. That's a thing, like, let me know." So she wants to really provide support in that sense. She's also stayed during my prep period with me to help me.

This colleague was open with Diana about a personal matter, and Diana reciprocated that openness. Being vulnerable and open to others is often a first step in fostering trusting relationships, and the trust grows stronger when that vulnerability is honored and reciprocated (Tschannen-Moran, 2014).

In this instance, when the colleague was open and vulnerable, Diana felt like that strengthened their relationship and allowed her to reciprocate the vulnerability and to feel like she could rely on her colleague for trust. Moreover, this colleague offered open and clear support and went out of her way to give Diana guidance and to help her. Feeling an increased connection and strong support from colleagues can increase feelings of belonging and strengthen social bonds (Dávila & García, 2012; Waller, 2020). Several participants expressed similar sentiments, saying that openness and open offers of support increased the strength of their relationships.

Lastly, participants noted that feelings of homophily—perceived similarity—with their work-related colleagues strengthened bonds. Jaime described the strengthening of his relationship with one of his colleagues. He noted that they shared similar ethnic backgrounds and upbringings. This teacher taught the same subject that Jaime did, but in different grades. Jaime described why he felt like their relationship had strengthened over the course of the year:

> I think mainly we just share very similar attitudes. We share very similar attitudes towards education, towards culture, towards the field. That we mesh very well. It's very easy for us to have a conversation. Yeah. It's very easy for us to disagree on things and continue the conversation.

Similarities tend not only to facilitate tie formation (McPherson et al., 2001) but also to strengthen ties (Reagans, 2011). The more people spend time with each other and the more they are able to learn about similarities, the more likely they are to identify with each other and seek each other for support (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Small, 2017). Many participants noted that their relationships got stronger over time because of their perceived similarities.

In summary, participants in this sample lost ties because of network intentionality—not seeking support from those they felt could not help them—and a lack of accessibility to alters (Moolenaar et al., 2014; Spillane & Hopkins, 2013; Thomas et al., 2020). They formed new ties because of propinquity, opportunity, and homophily—seeking out those they believed could fulfill their needs (Liou & Bjorklund, 2021; Moolenaar et al., 2014; Spillane et al., 2015, 2017; Small & Adler, 2019). Finally, their kept ties grew stronger due to identity verification, openness, and homophily (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; McPherson et al., 2001; Small, 2017). In the next section I expand on findings from the ego network analysis and explore how these professional support ties contributed to participants' teacher identities.

### ***RQ3: How do PST and ECT professional support networks contribute to teacher identity in ECTs?***

Teacher identity formation, and identity formation in general, is an inherently social endeavor (Beijaard et al., 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009; Wenger, 1998). As noted above, teachers are always negotiating their identities through interactions with others at their school sites (Cohen, 2010a; McGriff, 2015; Schultz & Ravitch, 2013). Moreover, scholars have noted a shift in beliefs and teacher identity during teachers' transitions from TEPs to their own classrooms (Flores & Day, 2006; Hamman, Coward et al., 2013; Hong, 2010; Sydnor, 2017). As people transition to new environments, they often tailor their identities to fit their new situations (Hong & Green, 2011; Ibarra, 1999). As such, the first year of teaching is often a process of reimagining and reshaping teacher identity—for better or worse (Flores & Day, 2006). New teachers may look to their colleagues to give them models of the type of teacher they could be (Hamman, Coward et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999). Peers in new school settings provide templates for new possible identities that help new teachers see what is and is not possible (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999). Moreover, teachers view the values and practices of their network of colleagues as important constraints and/or resources for accomplishing their teacher identities (Cohen, 2008; McGriff, 2015).

Grounded in this understanding of teacher identity, in the final interview I asked participants how the individuals in their professional networks influenced their understanding of themselves as teachers and which of their traits or values they would like to emulate in their own practice. I used these questions to explore the meanings that participants ascribed to teaching and to see how peers in their professional support networks were supporting or creating these meanings. Three dominant themes arose from these conversations: (a) using others as identity boundaries; (b) creating engaging and student-led classrooms; and (c) having mastery and balance in their practice.

**Colleagues as Identity Boundaries.** Identity is often paradoxical: It is what makes people the same as well as what makes them different; we understand ourselves in relation to others (Benson, 2003; Lawler, 2014; Mockler, 2011). In the work of identity formation, it is just as important to know who we are and what we will do as it is to know who we are *not*, and what we will *not* do (Benson, 2003). As such, to signal identity, people set symbolic boundaries between themselves and others whom they judge to be not like them (Benson, 2003; Binder & Abel, 2019; Lamont et al., 2015; Lamont & Molnár, 2002).

Participants in the current study used some peers in their professional support network as identity boundaries to make clear the type of teacher they did not want to be. In many cases, participants named these peers in their support networks because they were part of the same department or grade-level team and they had experiences that were helpful in participants' day-to-day work—for example, understanding the timing of different parts of a unit or how they approached a specific math problem. For example, when asked if there was anything in her peers' practice that she wanted to emulate, Cate said:

> I think their experience is important, and them understanding the grade level, I'd say. So they have more resources than I have, but the way they teach, I just… I can't agree with it.…But it's just like they have this talk-down mentality, like this authoritative approach, talking to these kids like you're their parent or their bootcamp coach or something.…Lizbeth would make comments like, "If you don't start running, you're going to get an F, and you're going to fail P.E.!"…I just can't. I'm just not like that. And they're like, "Oh, you're so shy and meek. You'll learn." And it's like, "No, I won't, because that's not who I am, and that's not what I believe in."

Cate needed to go to her peers in her grade team for support—their experience and the resources they had were important to her. But she also set clear boundaries between them and herself in order to define herself by what she would not do as a teacher (Benson, 2003).

Specifically, Cate felt like her peers were too harsh and authoritarian with their students. Additionally, they told Cate that she would eventually become like them by telling her, "You'll learn." This made Cate put up stronger boundaries. She believed that being a teacher means being open, nurturing, and respectful toward your students. She saw her peers in her support network as talking down to students and not being as caring or respectful as she wanted to be as a teacher. At her first school, Cate felt differently about her peers—she felt like they shared her values and ideals about teaching; later, she struggled to feel like her second school's values matched her own (see Chapter 7). Other participants encountered similar situations and drew similar boundaries about who they were and were not as teachers. That said, as I discuss next, participants also had peers in their support network whom they wanted to emulate and whom they saw as models for the teachers they wanted to be.

**Engaging and Student-Led Classrooms.** Several participants noted that they wanted to emulate their colleagues' ability to have engaging, student-led classrooms. Many participants described an effective teacher as one who did not just lecture at the students but led them in a way that would allow them to learn on their own—the so-called "guide on the side" as opposed to the "sage on the stage." For example, Diana described an effective teacher is someone who

> …makes [the content] accessible to [students], is engaging, and encourage[s] them along the way and provides opportunities for them to mess up, and to talk about it, and to have fun with it, and to get their hands dirty, to work together to find solutions, and then to feel good about what they did coming out of there.

Diana described wanting to be a teacher who let the students guide the lesson, letting them work on math problems with each other while she went from group to group and helped them. She wanted her classroom to be a place where students were encouraged to take risks and make mistakes on their paths to learning. She believed that for students to learn they needed to struggle with math problems, to run up against problems and work together to solve them with the support and guidance of the teacher.

A lot of these ideas about teaching math were shaped and reinforced by her colleagues in her support network. She felt these colleagues embodied this type of teaching. Talking about her math colleagues in her support network, Diana said:

> Yeah, so something that they're all really, really, really good about is group work and student-led, and featuring student work and minimizing the lecture and challenging them to keep figuring it out, withholding help a little bit. Even to help them kind of work through their frustrations.…So they're more on that side of the balance. And there are definitely some of those values that I do want to be better about.…I want to, like, emulate more their student-driven, group-work driven, struggle-driven learning that they do.

Diana believed that math classrooms should be places where students work together and struggle together to learn how to do the problems with the support of their peers and their teacher. This vision of a teacher and the meaning that she ascribed to her role was largely influenced by the teachers in her support network. They influenced her understanding of what it means to be a teacher and showed her a possible teacher identity that she could aspire to (Hamman, Coward et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999). This vision for teaching math permeated the math department at her site and it reinforced the beliefs about teaching that she held.

Other participants echoed similar sentiments about peers in their support networks. They all viewed the role of a teacher as one who facilitates and gives students space to work together and learn together. Coinciding with that aspect of teacher identity, participants were also influenced by what they perceived as the mastery of content and pedagogy that their peers showed in the classroom. I discuss this theme next.

**Mastery and Balance.** Lastly, almost all participants felt that the colleagues in their support networks had a level of "mastery" and "balance" in the classroom. They believed that teachers should have mastery of content and pedagogy that enables them to think on their feet and make their classroom run smoothly and improve their students. Additionally, they believed teachers should have a balance between being nice—so that their students like them—and being strict enough that they are also respected by their students.

Jaime referenced mastery when he was asked what he wanted to emulate about his peers in his support network:

> I would say definitely mastery. Mastery, from both and specifically from Dr. Fitzpatrick. Dr. Fitzpatrick definitely shows that he has an extreme grasp of everything happening in the classroom. And that's very… I envy that, I covet after that. That really is what I want to emulate in my own classroom, in my own teaching.…[His routines] are, it has very, very structured, complex.…Clearly this is veteran knowledge of what happens in the classroom, of how kids think and how students process instruction.

Like many of his peers, Jaime seemed to recognize that his ability to have mastery was limited by his lack of experience. He said that Dr. Fitzpatrick clearly had "veteran knowledge," implying that the more time he spent in the classroom the more he could reach his ideal of what a teacher is supposed to be. Jaime envisioned a good teacher as someone with a high level of organization and routine in the classroom. He saw Dr. Fitzpatrick as someone he wanted to become, a teacher who was the ideal of what a teacher should be—with mastery over the content and the complexities of teaching.

While several participants sought a feeling of mastery, others described wanting to emulate the balance between being an authority and being caring with their students that their peers demonstrated. Marta described one teacher in her support network like this:

> With Mia, she is very, I could see, like, her being very strong. She can be kind of strict in a way, but the kids know that she's also very caring, so it's like she has that really good balance. So I think it would be very nice, very good if I would be able to have that same balance as well, so that students won't think that they can run all over me, but also know that I could be there for them.

New teachers want to be respected by their students for their decisions in the classroom, but they also want to be viewed as caring and fun (Dugas, 2016; Hildenbrand & Arndt, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013). Several studies have found that playing the role of authority figure and asserting hierarchical power structures as a student-teacher and as a new teacher can be a source of dissonance (Nichols et al., 2017; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Vetter et al., 2013).

Like other new teachers and PSTs, Marta believed that being a teacher means striking this balance between demonstrating authority and being fun and caring. She and other participants saw this identity in the other teachers in their support networks. As stated above, teachers in their support networks give them a template of possible teacher identities that they wanted to embody (Ibarra, 1999). Their colleagues showed them different possibilities of the teachers that they could be (Hamman, Coward et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999).

## Implications and Conclusion

This chapter explored how and why participants' professional support networks changed over time. The data were collected as a part of a larger study that lasted 2 years and explored teacher identity and social networks of teachers as they moved through their TEPs and into their first year in the classroom. Here I explored the social support networks of nine teachers as they finished their TEP and transitioned into their own classrooms to complete their first year of teaching. I used an ego network approach (Perry et al., 2018) to assess their ego networks at three time points: at the end of their TEP (T1), at the start of their first year of teaching (T2), and at the end of their first year of teaching (T3). Additionally, I drew on interview data gathered at the end of their first year of teaching (T3)—after they completed their ego network survey—to probe and explore the reasons that their networks changed over time and to explore the influence that peers in their professional support networks had on their teacher identities.

I defined professional support networks as peers who were affiliated with either the TEP (program-related) or their schools (school-related). All others in the network were considered outside support. I used a connected mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) to the analysis by allowing the information from the quantitative data to shape analysis of the qualitative data. In the remainder of this concluding section, I summarize the findings and discuss some implications of the results.

While several studies have explored new teachers' support networks (e.g., Baker-Doyle, 2012; Thomas et al., 2020), few have explored how they change as they transition from the TEP to the classroom. In the current study, on average, the size of participants' overall support networks decreased over time. One of the main reasons for this decrease was the loss of ties to alters connected with the TEP. The majority of participants no longer named program-related peers in their support networks by T3. The loss of these ties may also account for the decreased network stability between T1 and T2 relative to the time between T2 and T3, when their support networks were more stable. It should be noted, however, that these findings are based on a small sample and are therefore not generalizable.

It would behoove TEPs that want to foster support networks amongst their graduates to explore mechanisms to make ties more resistant to the shift into the classroom. Freedman and Appleman (2008) found that strongly connected cohorts can provide support systems for graduates once the enter the field. As such, it may be beneficial for TEPs to examine how students stay connected and support each other after they go into the field. Moreover, given that stable support systems can be beneficial for new teachers (Barnatt et al., 2017; Freedman & Appleman, 2008), TEPs may want to explore how to bolster ties between graduates. Specifically, future research should explore the antecedents and outcomes of ECTs seeking out social support from TEP peers as they transition into their first teaching year. Moreover, future research should take a mixed-methods social network approach to understanding these relationships, as this will place the focus on relationships rather than individuals and provide a deeper understanding of the content of ties between people (Baker-Doyle, 2015; Froelich et al., 2021; Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

The closeness that participants felt with alters in their professional networks increased from T2 to T3. In keeping with earlier studies, this increase was often related to identity verification (Burke & Stets, 2009), openness (Kardos & Johnson, 2007), and homophily (McPherson et al., 2001). These findings also support the idea that schools can strengthen teachers' professional support networks by offering organizational opportunities for new teachers to get support from and learn about other teachers. Facilitating opportunities for new teachers to experience identity verification amongst their peers can foster increased trust and social bonds (Burke & Stets, 1990, 2009; Stets et al. 2018). Moreover, openness and outgoing support from veteran teachers can facilitate trust, which can lead to increased retention of new teachers (Hopkins et al., 2019). Organizational routines have been found to be central to tie formation (Spillane et al., 2017) and increasing tie strength (Reagans, 2011) in schools. Schools should create more organizational routines that facilitate open support from veteran teachers and give new teachers a chance to find commonalities with their peers in order to create feelings of homophily and strengthen ties in support networks (McPherson et al., 2001; Reagans, 2011).

Finally, I explored how participants' professional support networks contributed to their teacher identity formation. Prior literature has noted that new teachers often use their veteran colleagues as models or templates of the teachers that they wish to become (Cohen, 2008; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999). Moreover, colleagues are integral to teachers' identity formation and can strengthen or erode teacher identity (Cohen, 2010a; Hong, 2010; McGriff, 2015). Cate and other participants saw some of their peers in their support network in stark contrast to the teachers they wanted to become, and they created boundaries as a way of affirming their teacher identities. Others saw peers in their support networks as models of the teachers they wanted to be—teachers who had engaging and student-driven classrooms or who had mastery of content and pedagogy while maintaining a balance of care and authority.

This study seems to support past research that has shown the important role that professional support networks play in teacher identity development (Baker-Dolye, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017; Cohen, 2008; Hong, 2010). Talking about teacher identity with colleagues, implicitly and explicitly, is central to the guidance of practice (Cohen, 2010a). TEPs and schools should do more to explicitly explore teacher identity development in new teachers and to understand how they can utilize professional support networks to strengthen and build that identity. For example, to explore teacher identities TEPs could give PSTs structured ways to reflect on and engage with their teacher identities. To build networks, schools could offer new teachers sustained formal opportunities to allow them to purposefully expand their network within the school.

Teaching is an inherently stressful and emotionally demanding profession (Day & Gu, 2014; Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996; Johnson et al., 2005). Teachers work tirelessly, and few outside the profession realize how hard the work is (Bullough, 2008)—in fact, many even hold the belief that teaching is easy (Labaree, 2000). For new teachers, this can be especially true, as they are not only learning to do the work of teaching but also trying to come to an understanding of who they are as teachers—they are developing their teacher identities (Freedman & Appleman, 2008). This phase of learning to teach is often fraught with difficulties and identity dissonance (Hong, 2010; Nichols et al., 2017; Richmond et al., 2011; Sydnor, 2017).

Social support networks play a critical role in helping teachers cope, learn, and develop their identities during this time (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017). As the epigraph that started the chapter contends, the power of new teachers' networks for learning, socialization, and stability in their new roles cannot be overstated (Barnatt et al., 2017). As such, more work can and should be done by TEPs and schools to ensure the stability, growth, and strengthening of new teachers' social supports as they make the transition into the classroom and through their first years of teaching.

# Chapter 7

## “I Kind of Have That Place to Sit.”: New Teacher Identity Verification Through Experiences of Belonging

> *One sure way to stir people up is to tell them that they are not what they think they are. (Swann, 1983, p. 33)*

The first year of teaching has been characterized as a time of survival and struggle (e.g., Day & Gu, 2010; Huberman, 1989; Sydnor, 2017). Moreover, it is often a time when new teachers’ professional identities—typically informed by their past experiences as students—are challenged and reshaped by the realities of their new context and of having classrooms of their own (Flores & Day, 2006; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Teacher identities are dynamic and, for new teachers, frequently in a state of flux as they reconcile their understandings of who they are as teachers with the realities in their new schools and in their classrooms.

This chapter explores the interplay between teacher identity verification (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009) in new teachers and their experiences of belonging at their new schools. In this context, *identity* refers to a set of meanings through which people define who they are when they engage in a particular societal role (role identity), find membership in a particular group (social identity), or claim particular characteristics (person identity) that make them unique (Burke & Stets, 2009). These meanings are the responses that individuals have when they think about themselves in various identities, and they drive behavior when that identity is salient (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Serpe, 2013).

Teacher identity is a cornerstone of teaching. It “provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of ‘how to be,’ ‘how to act,’ and ‘how to understand’ their work” (Sachs, 2005, p. 15). Moreover, it is the foundation of action and practice in the classroom: Teachers rely on it to navigate and evaluate their work and new situations as they arise

(Buchanan, 2015; Hsieh, 2015; Merseth et al., 2008). Teacher identity determines how teachers teach, interact with their students, develop as teachers, and react to educational change and reform (Buchannan, 2015; Reeves, 2018). A strong teacher identity can make the work of teaching more meaningful, motivate teachers to overcome difficulties, and foster resilience (Beijaard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Reeves; 2018; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). This resilience can be especially useful in the first year of teaching, as there is often dissonance between the way new teachers understand themselves as teachers and the realities they face in the classroom and in their school context (Flores & Day, 2006; Sydnor, 2017). One way to mitigate identity dissonance is through identity verification (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009).

*Identity verification* occurs when people believe that others see them the way they see themselves (Burke & Stets, 1999; 2009; Grindal & Trettevik, 2019). People seek identity verification through experiences and people who verify and validate who they believe themselves to be (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 2009; Swann, 2005; Turner, 2002). In situations where an identity is not verified (*identity nonverification*), individuals may suffer psychological stress and attempt to remedy the situation by altering their perceptions of the situation through their own behavior (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stets & Burke, 2014b). Continual identity nonverification can reduce social bonds and increase feelings of uncertainty and doubt (Stets et al., 2018).

Conversely, repeated identity verification between people increases feelings of trust, belonging, and commitment (Burke & Stets, 1999; Stets et al., 2018). In short, identity verification increases social bonds between people (Burke & Stets, 1999; Stets et al., 2018). For example, when a teacher feels their teacher identity is verified by a colleague, they will feel a stronger sense of trust and a stronger social bond with that colleague. Moreover, they will feel a stronger group orientation and connection to their colleagues, fostering feelings of belonging to a group. In this chapter, I define *sense of belonging* as feeling connected to or fitting in with a group or organization and as feeling valued and important to the group (Hagerty et al., 1992). That relationship is reciprocal, as feeling a stronger sense of belonging to a group can foster feelings of identity verification (Burke & Stets, 1999).

Fostering a sense of belonging in a new job setting is vital to identity formation (Blåka & Filstad, 2007; Filstad et al., 2019) and is central to learning and growing in that role (Filstad et al., 2019). When people feel like they belong in their workplace, they also feel more self-efficacy and psychological safety (Waller, 2020). In educational settings, new teachers' feelings of belonging affect how well they adjust to their new settings (Barnatt et al., 2017). More precisely, the dissonance of being a first-year teacher can be mitigated by a sense of belonging at one's school or district (Barnatt et al., 2017; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Hong, 2010). If first-year teachers feel a sense of ideological fit at their school, there will be less dissonance, they will feel more supported, and the transition into their new role will be easier (Barnatt et al., 2017; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013).

Despite its importance, there is a dearth of literature that explores how people experience sense of belonging in the workplace (Filstad et al., 2019). Few studies have explored sense of belonging in teachers (e.g., Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2019), and even fewer have focused on sense of belonging in new teachers. Thus, using a connected mixed-methods research approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), this chapter seeks to expand the literature on sense of belonging and identity theory. The work was guided by the following research questions:

*RQ1: How do first-year teachers' feelings of identity verification change over the course of the year?*

*RQ2: How do first-year teachers experience feelings of belonging in their new schools?*

*RQ3: What is the relationship between experiences of sense of belonging and identity verification in first-year teachers?*

This chapter adds to the literature in three distinct ways: First, it is one of few papers to explore teacher identity through the lens of identity theory. Despite the fact that teacher identity is often referenced in the literature as an example of a role identity (e.g., Burke & Stets, 2009, 2015; Stets & Serpe, 2013; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000), only recently have scholars begun to explore it through an identity theory lens (e.g., Tsang & Jiang, 2018; van der Want et al., 2015, 2018a, 2018b). Second, few studies have explored how new teachers experience belonging at their school sites, which is a primary focus of this study. And third, Burke and Stets (2009) averred that one way to move identity theory forward is to explore processes that it shares with other theories and frameworks. In this chapter I bridge two literatures—identity theory and sense of belonging—to explore the relationship between identity verification and experiences of belonging.

## Literature Review

### Teacher Identity

Teacher identity is fundamental to a teacher's work (Buchanan, 2015; Hsieh, 2015; Merseth et al., 2008), as it "form[s] a foundation that influences action in the classroom" (Merseth et al., 2008, p. 91). It has a strong influence on the way teachers relate to their students, teach, learn, and react to challenges in the classroom (Buchannan, 2015; Reeves, 2018). In short, teachers' work is grounded in their teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Hsieh, 2015).

The first year of teaching is often extremely challenging, as new teachers learn to navigate their new roles—especially because their experiences in their classrooms may not align with their teacher identities (Cook, 2009; Barnatt et al., 2017; Sydnor, 2017). First-year teachers' identities are still largely influenced by their experiences as students (Barnatt et al., 2017; Cook, 2009; Hong, 2010). Novice teachers often enter their new settings with expectations about their teaching, their colleagues, and their students—all of which are wrapped up in their former experiences (Cook, 2009; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). In the first year of teaching, teacher identities are malleable, and the meanings new teachers ascribe to their profession when they enter their own classrooms are often challenged and altered (Day & Gu, 2010; Flores & Day, 2006; Hong, 2012). To examine how new teachers' teacher identities are shaped by their first year in the classroom, the current study explores how they experience identity verification and sense of belonging, which I discuss next.

### Identity Theory and Identity Verification

As noted above, I use an identity theory lens to define teacher identity as the meanings teachers ascribe to themselves in their work (Burke & Stets, 2009). Identity theory is rooted in structural symbolic interactionism (Stryker, 1980). This framework suggests that identities are grounded in and defined by social structures, cultural meanings, and expectations of roles, groups, and individual characteristics (Burke, 2008; Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). Identity theory does not deny that actors within these structures have agency (Tsushima & Burke, 1999). Rather, behavior is not wholly determined by social structures but is also negotiated through exchanges between people that shape and form their interactions (Stryker, 1980).

Identities serve in part to create expectations for relationships and interactions between people (Burke & Stets, 2009; Stryker, 1980). Individuals who take part in these interactions occupy certain positions and engage in named patterns of behavior based on the meanings they ascribe to each situation (Burke & Stets, 2009; Grindal & Trettevik, 2019). Additionally, identities help people define who they are and give meaning and purpose to their actions and their lives (Burke & Stets, 2009; Thoits, 2012). Identities are dynamic and inherently social (Burke & Stets, 2009); they emerge as people define themselves and act in ways that they believe represent who they are and as they receive cues or feedback from the environment around them (Burke & Stets, 2009; Grindal & Trettevik, 2019).

Identity theory scholars posit that people generally seek verification of their identities—known as *identity verification* (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009; Stets et al., 2018). Individuals seek out people and environments that validate or verify their visions of themselves (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 2009). When an individual believes that others view them as they see themselves, that person's identity is verified (Grindal & Trettevik, 2019; Stets et al., 2018). For example, a teacher will seek to verify their professional identity through interactions with students or colleagues. If feedback from these interactions verifies their identity, they will continue their behavior in the interaction; if they do not receive verification (*identity nonverification*), they may feel psychological discomfort and alter their behavior until their perceptions of the situation match their teacher identity (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009; Swann, 2005). It is easy to imagine a scenario where a first-year teacher whose teacher identity—e.g., the "cool teacher"—is not congruent with how they perceive their students' actions toward them or the realities of their school site. As a result, they may face psychological stress and attempt to align their perceptions with their identities (e.g., Hsieh, 2015; Merseth et al. 2008).

A central tenet of identity theory is that people look to form and maintain social situations and relationships that verify their identity (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009). This is due in large part to the host of psychological benefits derived from identity verification. It can foster a sense of trust between parties (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009) that leads to a sense of unity and togetherness with those who verify their identity (Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009; Grindal & Trettevik, 2019), as well as a commitment to those individuals (Burke & Stets, 1999; Grindal & Trettevik, 2019). In short, it can strengthen social bonds between people and groups of people and facilitate feelings of solidarity (Burke & Stets, 1999; Stets et al., 2018). As it does so, it can reduce stress, anxiety, and uncertainty about environments and people (Burke & Stets, 1999; Grindal & Trettevik, 2019; Guibernau, 2013). Likewise, repeated identity verification is related to increased positive emotions and enhanced feelings of self-esteem (Stets & Burke, 2014; Stets et al., 2018), as well as to a sense of continuity and coherence (Stets et al., 2018).

The drive for verification might motivate an individual to alter their identity to match surroundings (Grindal & Trettevik, 2019). Increased identity verification and the outcomes associated with it—trust, commitment, and positive emotions—may motivate a person to change identity meanings to align with those whom they are close to (Grindal & Trettevik, 2019). This point is especially salient for first-year teachers, as their identities are nascent and may be more malleable than the identities of veteran teachers.

A new teacher who is seeking identity verification may alter their identity to fit the school where they work—either via identity verification processes or through the realities of the work (Flores & Day, 2006). Moreover, identity verification can be a source of positivity and strength for new teachers during a turbulent time. If new teachers feel their identity is verified by their colleagues, they will also feel supported and valued (Stets et al., 2018). As I discuss next, this may be related to new teachers' sense of belonging.

## Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging is a foundational part of what makes us human (Allen et al., 2021; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Slavich, 2020). It is a fundamental human need and one of the strongest drivers of human behavior (Allen, 2020; Allen et al., 2021; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Leary & Allen, 2011; Slavich, 2020). Belonging is fundamental to "who we are and what we are…[it is] part of what constitutes our identity, whether we are explicitly aware of it or not" (Miller, 2003, p. 217). Moreover, having a sense of belonging to a group contributes greatly to individuals' well-being, sense of purpose, and meaning in life (Allen, 2020; Haslam et al., 2009; Lambert et al., 2013). A sense of belonging provides people with a place where they feel like they matter (Guibernau, 2013). Miller (2003) suggested that by referencing the notion of belonging,

> …we are also expressing a sense of accord with the various physical and social contexts in which our lives are lived out. Belonging is to be in accordance with who we are in ourselves as well as who we are in-the-world. (p. 220)

A sense of belonging reduces uncertainty and offers a sense of security and safety about one's place in the world (Allen et al., 2021). Belonging is a process—it is dynamic and constantly negotiated between people and groups (Allen, 2020; May, 2011; Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2020). In short, belonging is integral to identity and being human; feeling a sense of belonging yields a host of benefits for life and well-being. Belonging also yields myriad benefits in the workplace.

There is a small but growing literature that explores the antecedents and outcomes of sense of belonging in the workplace (Filstad et al., 2019). We know that it is grounded in relations and social interaction (Blåka & Filstad, 2007; Waller, 2020), and it is facilitated by trust in others and having an understanding of the workplace culture (Belle et al., 2015; McClure & Brown, 2008; Waller, 2020). Belonging comes from doing work and learning with others, and from negotiating new identities with others (Filstad et al., 2019). When a person feels connected to and supported by their colleagues, they feel an increased sense of belonging (Dávila & Gárcia, 2012; Waller, 2020). Contributing to the workplace and/or to colleagues in the workplace in a unique way is also strongly linked to feeling a sense of belonging (Brewer, 1991; McClure & Brown, 2008; Vignoles et al., 2002; Waller, 2020). People want to feel supported and similar to others, but they also want to be unique and be recognized for particular contributions to the group (Brewer, 1991; McClure & Brown, 2008; Vignoles et al., 2002). Similarly, feeling competent and efficacious can foster feelings of belonging at work (Filstad et al., 2019; McClure & Brown, 2008).

Having a sense of belonging at work yields a host of positive outcomes (Waller, 2002). People who feel a sense of belonging at work generally feel valued, feel like their work matters, and have higher levels of engagement in that work (McClure & Brown, 2008; Waller, 2020). They also tend to feel like they are making a meaningful contribution, find more purpose in their work, and feel more confident in their roles (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; Waller 2020). Moreover, people who feel valued are more likely to trust their colleagues and communicate openly and honestly with them (Waller, 2020). And sense of belonging has potential benefits for the organization at large (Dávila & Gárcia, 2012), as those who belong tend to have more positive interactions with colleagues and a stronger commitment to their work (Dávila & Gárcia, 2012; Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009). Notably, competence has a reciprocal relationship with belonging—it increases feelings of belonging, and belonging increases feelings of competence

(Filstad et al., 2019; Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009). Lastly, feeling a sense of belonging at work can make work feel more meaningful (Schnell et al., 2019).

While there is a burgeoning body of literature exploring belonging in the workplace, less is known about belonging for teachers specifically. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2019) found that teachers who are supported by their colleagues and administration feel an increased sense of belonging. In an earlier study, they also found that teacher sense of belonging to their school was related to increased commitment and reduced burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). Both of these studies showed that increased feelings of value fit increased teachers' sense of belonging, engagement in their work, and feelings of collective efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2019). Finally, for new teachers, social support from colleagues can foster belonging and confidence (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002).

Teacher sense of belonging matters because it is positively related to student sense of belonging (Allen, 2020; Roffey, 2012). When teachers feel like they belong and are appreciated, they are more likely to interact positively with their students and go to greater lengths to support them; as such, teacher well-being is related to student well-being (Roffey, 2012). Moreover, sense of belonging can act as a buffer for new teachers, helping them cope with difficulties and challenges (Allen, 2020; Gu & Day, 2007). Despite these clear benefits, sense of belonging among teachers and other school staff has been understudied (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). More pointedly, very little research has explored sense of belonging in new teachers. This chapter bridges that gap by exploring experiences of belonging among first-year teachers.

## Conceptual Framework

Becoming a new teacher is a process of identity construction (Danielewicz, 2001), and identity verification and sense of belonging are both integral to this process (Allen, 2020; Bettez, 2010; Guibernau, 2013; Wenger, 1998). May (2011) noted:

> Belonging is…not a given or something that we accomplish once and for all. Because the world and the people in it, including ourselves, are constantly undergoing change, belonging is something we have to keep achieving through an active process. (p. 373)

The same is true of teacher identity, especially for new teachers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Both belonging and identity are socially negotiated (Allen, 2020; Akkerman & Meijer 2011; Filstad et al., 2019; Rodgers & Scott, 2008).

As such, this chapter explores identity verification and belonging as two interrelated processes that play a role in teacher identity construction. Belonging provides a foundation for identity formation (Filstad et al., 2019; Guibernau, 2013), as identity is fostered through belonging in a community and in reference to those in that community (Blåka & Filstad, 2007). Likewise, group membership and sense of belonging require identity verification within the group (Guibernau, 2013) because it confirms who people are (Burke & Stets, 1999). Put another way, identity verification increases commitment and feelings of belonging or “we-ness” to a group (Burke & Stets, 1999; Stets et al., 2018).

Burke and Stets (1999) noted a reciprocal relationship between identity verification and experiences of group orientation, which is indicative of a feeling of belonging to the group—specifically, group orientation/belonging and trust can enhance identity verification, and identity verification enhances trust and group orientation/belonging. These social bonds and feelings of trust are both integral to fostering a sense of belonging (Filstad et al., 2019; Stets et al., 2018; Waller, 2020). Additionally, new teachers’ experiences of belonging and identity verification both impact their teacher identity; in turn, their teacher identity impacts how they experience belonging and identity verification.

When people perceive similarity in identity meanings with others, this can foster identity verification (Grindal & Trettevik, 2019). In other words, if teachers at a school feel that the meanings they ascribe to being a teacher are similar to the meanings ascribed by those around them, their identity verification increases. These shared values and meanings are integral to feeling a sense of belonging to the group of colleagues. Figure 7.1 shows the proposed relationship between belonging, identity verification, and identity. It shows that they are dynamic

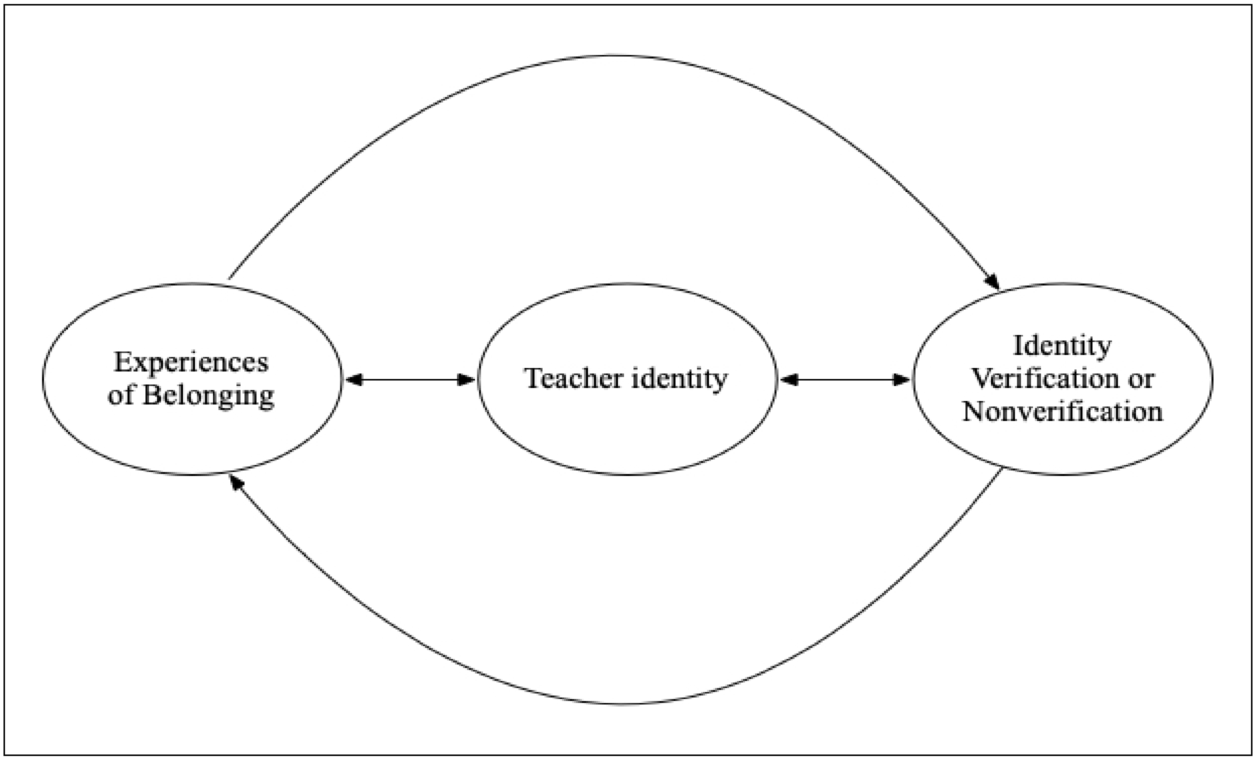

**Figure 7.1** *Conceptual Framework*

and constantly negotiated between individuals and their community (Allen, 2020; Burke & Stets, 2009). The process is ongoing and it shapes teacher identity, and in turn teacher identity impacts

and constantly negotiated between individuals and their community (Allen, 2020; Burke & Stets,

2009). The process is ongoing and it shapes teacher identity, and in turn teacher identity impacts Teachers' experiences of belonging and feelings of identity verification.

## Methods

This paper draws on interviews and surveys conducted over 2 years as part of a larger study tracking teacher identity development from credential to the classroom. The study was designed to survey, interview, and observe these teachers as they completed their teacher education program (TEP) and moved through their first year in the classroom. I used a concurrent mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) to collect my data—quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time. I analyzed data for this chapter using a connected mixed-methods approach, where quantitative data informed the qualitative data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The methods and sample for each part of the study are detailed below.

### Sample and Overview of Data Collection

I started with 16 PSTs in two cohorts—eight multiple-subject and eight single-subject candidates—who were selected based on survey responses and classroom observations (See Chapter 3 for more description) during the first month of their TEP. I conducted three interviews with each of the 16 participants over the course of the first year. Seven of the 16 did not get teaching jobs after they finished the program—by choice and by circumstance—so they were dropped from the study after the first three interviews. I interviewed and surveyed the remaining nine participants over the summer and then again in the fall (October 2019) and spring (May 2020) of their first year of teaching. All interviews lasted between 50 and 90 minutes and were transcribed verbatim. The May 2020 interviews were done via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants also completed surveys in the fall and spring of their TEP and the fall and spring of their first year of teaching.

In the final two interviews (in October 2019 and May 2020), participants were asked about their feelings of belonging at their new schools (discussed more below). This chapter primarily describes findings from these interviews. Table 7.1 shows the pseudonyms given to participants, their self-identified ethno-racial identities, and the grades or subjects they taught in their first year of teaching.

**Table 7.1**
*Participants*

| Name | Ethno-Racial Identification | Grade or Subject |
|---|---|---|
| Cate | Middle Eastern | 5th grade |
| Janice | Asian | 4/5th Grade Split |
| Tara | Latina | Kindergarten |
| Tina | White | Middle school English |
| Marta | Latina | Middle School World Language |
| Jaime | Latino | High School ELA |
| Logan | Black and Asian | High school World Language |
| James | Latino and White | High School Math |
| Diana | White | High School Math |

Note: All names are pseudonyms.

The final nine participants included three elementary school teachers, two middle school teachers, and four high school teachers. Tina originally started the TEP as a multiple-subject PST but completed her multiple- and single-subject credential and ultimately decided to teach middle school. Three participants identified as Latino, one as Middle Eastern, one as Asian, and two as White. Two identified with more than one racial ethnic group—one identified as Black and Asian, and the other identified as Latino and White.

## Measuring Identity Verification

In this study I used a method common for measuring identity verification (Burke & Tully, 1977; Stets & Burke, 2014; Stets et al., 2018). As noted above, identity verification is a person's perception that others view them in the same way that they view themselves. As such, I took the difference between how participants viewed themselves as teachers and how they believed others (students and colleagues) viewed them (Stets et al., 2018).

I created a scale in the first year of the study by asking all of the original 16 participants in their second interview to write down all phrases or words that came to mind to complete the sentence "*As a teacher I am….*" After they completed that list, I asked them to write all phrases or words that came to mind when I asked "*As a teacher I am not….*" I had them read each list aloud and clarify what they had written so I was clear on what they meant. Based on these lists, I created a 16-item bipolar scale of the phrases or adjectives they most often used to describe themselves as teachers (see Appendix A for the complete scale). Examples of bipolar items include *Unfair–Fair*, *Impatient–Patient*, *Teacher-Centered–Student-Centered*, and *Passive–Assertive*.

To capture participants' evaluation of themselves, at three points during the study they were given the prompt "*As a teacher I am…*" and asked to rate themselves on each of the 16 items. To measure their perceptions of how others viewed them, they were asked to complete the scale with two additional prompts: "*As a teacher, my students think I am…*" and "*As a teacher my colleagues and peers think I am….*" After participants took the survey, the items were put on a seven-point scale ranging from -3 to 3. Each scale was averaged to produce a score between these values. I took the difference between how participants viewed themselves and their perceptions of how their students viewed them as well as the difference between how they viewed themselves and their perceptions of how their colleagues and peers viewed them.

Identity theory scholars posit that any discrepancy (positive or negative) between how a person perceives themself and their perceptions of how others view them is considered identity nonverification and can have a negative psychological impact (Burke, 1991; Burke & Stets, 1999, 2009). As such, I adjusted the scale so that the final scores ranged from zero to -3, with a score of zero indicating that the participant believes others see her exactly as she sees herself (identity verification) and a score of -3 indicating a total lack of congruence between how she perceives herself and her perception of how others view her (identity nonverification). Though this scale is unique and was created to measure teacher identity, several other studies have used similar methods to measure identity verification (Burke & Tully, 1977; Stets & Burke, 2014; Stets et al., 2018).

To validate the scale, I tested it with a focus group of 24 educators enrolled in an Ed.D. program. They took the survey, and then I conducted a cognitive interview with them as a group (Fowler, 2014). We went through each item and discussed how they interpreted it. Their understanding largely aligned with the intent of the survey. I then was able to pilot the scale with a group of 63 preservice teachers in spring 2019. The scale proved reliable ($\alpha = .85$).

Study participants were asked to respond to these survey items at three time points: at the end of their teacher education program (May 2019), in the fall of their first year of teaching (October 2019), and at the end of their first year of teaching (May 2020). In this chapter I focus on their responses from October 2019 and May 2020, as they capture their first year of teaching. Three scenarios arose from these data over the course of the year: (a) identity verification declined with respect to both students and colleagues (Scenario 1); (b) identity verification improved with respect to students, but declined with respect to colleagues (Scenario 2); and (c) identity verification with respect to students and colleagues improved (Scenario 3). These three scenarios provide the framework for the discussion of findings below.

## Interviews and Experiences of Belonging

While the interviews across both years of the broader study covered a wide range of topics related to teacher identity, this chapter focuses on segments of the final two interviews (Hamman, Cowared, et al., 2013), which were conducted in October 2019 and May 2020 of participants' first year of teaching. My interview prompts were guided by Hagerty et al.'s (1992) definition of belonging. Specifically, they defined sense of belonging as (a) fitting in or a feeling of congruence with a group or organization, and (b) a feeling of being valued and important to the group. As such, in both interviews I asked participants the following questions:

- *Do you feel like you fit in at this school?*
    - *Why/why not?*
    - *Can you describe one or two experiences from this year that made you feel like you fit here? (Ask to the contrary if they say no.)*
- *Do you feel like you are valued by your colleagues?*
    - *Why/why not?*
    - *Can you describe one or two experiences from this year that made you feel valued? (Ask to the contrary if they say no.)*
- *On a scale of 1–10, how would you rate your sense of belonging at the school?*
    - *Explain.*
- *What do you believe to be factors involved in fostering or inhibiting your sense of belonging?*

After extracting excerpts related to belonging from each interview, I created a memo for each participant to explore patterns in each identity verification scenario (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This chapter describes the stories of three participants—one for each of the three scenarios. Their experiences were common across the participants and illustrate the connections between feelings of belonging and identity verification.

### Validity

In an effort to validate my analysis of participants via their interviews, I conducted a participant check following two interviews—one during their preservice year and one during the final interview in May 2020 (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Specifically, based on prior interviews and interactions with the participants, I created short narratives (memos) that described them as teachers and described their feelings about belonging at their school sites. Following each of these two interviews, I read the participant their memo and gave them a copy to review. The participants all agreed that my analyses captured them well.

## Results and Findings

In this section I first describe overall patterns in participants' identity verification during their first year of teaching. I then explore experiences of belonging over the course of the year for the three participants who fit into the three identity verification scenarios.

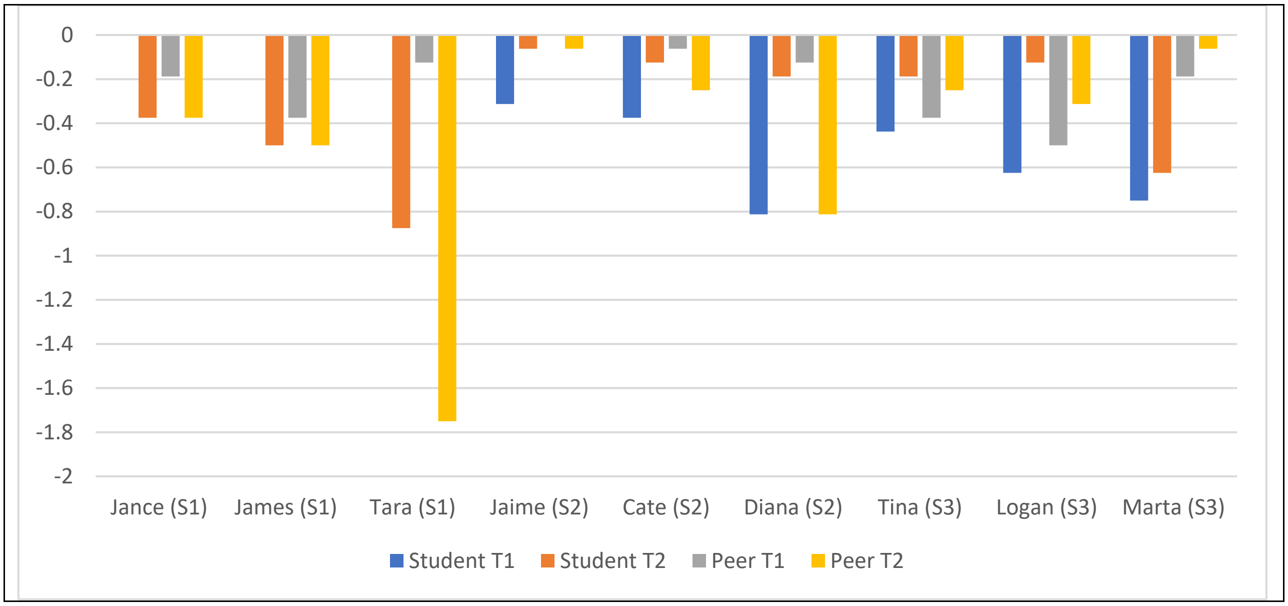

**Figure 7.2** *Identity Verification at T1 and T2*

## Patterns of Identity Verification

Figure 7.2 illustrates the changes in identity verification from colleagues from October (T1) to May (T2) of their first year in the classroom. As noted earlier, a score of zero indicates a congruence of participants' self-perception and the perception of how others view them. A lower score (i.e., a longer bar in the graph) indicates a discrepancy in how they perceive themselves and how they believe others view them.

Tara reported the lowest levels of identity verification over the course of the year, followed by Diana and Marta. By the spring, Marta and Jaime reported the highest levels of identity verification from colleagues, while Jaime, Logan, and Cate reported the highest levels of identity verification from students. Diana had the highest increase in identity verification with her students from October to May, and Jaime had the largest increase in identity verification with his colleagues. Tara had the largest decrease in identity verification with both groups.

As described earlier, three scenarios emerged amongst the participants' identity verification over time. Scenario 1 was a decline in identity verification with respect to both students and colleagues (Janice, James, Tara). Scenario 2 involved increased identity verification from students and a decline in identity verification with respect to colleagues (Jaime, Cate, Diana). And Scenario 3 involved improved identity verification regarding students and colleagues (Tina, Logan, Marta). In the sections that follow, I look at experiences of belonging to shed some light on the reasons for these changes and to explore how identity verification was fulfilled via experiences of belonging. I discuss one participant from each scenario—each had experiences common to other participants in the scenario.

## Experiences of Belonging

### *Scenario 1: Decreased identity verification from students and colleagues (Janice)*

Janice identified as female and Asian American. She started her career teaching a fourth-grade/fifth-grade split classroom in a large elementary school in a large urban school district in the western United States. She was born and raised in the same city, so she felt at home with the population and with the community. When I asked her if she felt like she fit in at the beginning of the school year, she said that since she was new, she felt like she needed time to fit in more. She noted, however, that she was not the only new teacher at the school, and she had been able to find community with some of the other new teachers. She felt like she had an instant connection with one of the teachers at the school and got on well with her other first-year colleagues, which helped her to feel like she fit. She did not necessarily feel a sense of cohesion with the rest of the teachers, however; there seemed to be a general lack of community at the school, which she said was different from her student teaching placement.

In October, Janice described an experience that made her feel a sense of belonging at the school—a staff meeting where she was able to contribute an idea. She was able to share one of her assessments, which she described as a strong suit for her as a teacher, and she got positive feedback from her colleagues:

> And so, when everyone had to share, I shared that I had my students show me five fingers—five is "I really understand this"; one is "I don't understand this at all"; three is "I kind of understand it"—as a form of self-assessment. Because I think, for me, one of my strengths is assessment, whether it be formative or summative assessments. I design my own assessments, and I have students self-assess. And so I shared that. And afterwards, one of the Spanish bilingual teachers came up to me and was like, "Oh, that was a really good idea in the meeting. I really appreciated you sharing that. That was really helpful. I'm trying to implement that in my classroom, too."

Being able to contribute to the group is crucial for feeling a sense of belonging (Filstad et al., 2019; Waller, 2020). Moreover, Janice felt like her colleagues valued her contribution and her insight, which has been shown to contribute to feelings of belonging and increase feelings of efficacy in the workplace (McClure & Brown, 2008; Waller, 2020). Finally, she noted that she felt like assessments were a strength for her. In this meeting, she was able to share a formative assessment with colleagues and they valued her for that—thus verifying her teacher identity (Stets et al., 2018). This experience of belonging served as identity verification for Janice, as her colleague gave her praise for a skill Janice believed was a strength.

Janice shared another experience when one of her colleagues assured her that her confusion over a new school policy was warranted. She described the same colleague liking one of her ideas and saying that she would use that idea in her next unit. She said that she felt like there was camaraderie in the school:

> And another thing is, the second event, is when I was talking to Kimberly, I think I was kind of confused about something. I was like, "What is this process? What do we do? Am I just not getting it?" And it was just like, "Don't worry. No one knows right now." And it's the fact that it's okay to not know what's going on. Because I don't want to say [it's] the norm, but it's a pretty common thing, where teachers are like, "What's going on?"

Being told by a colleague that her experiences of doubt were shared by others at the school gave Janice the sense that she fit in. Feeling a shared sense of confusion about the new policy helped reduce her feelings of anxiety. It is also important to note the role of Janice's colleague Kimberly (a veteran teacher who also taught a combination class in a classroom across the hall) for helping her feel like she belonged. Kimberly's assertion that the confusion was widespread not only validated Janice's feelings but also created a space for vulnerability. Showing vulnerability can foster trust, which can increase feelings of belonging (Filstad et al., 2019) and facilitate identity verification (Burke & Stets, 1999).

Janice noted that she did not necessarily feel a sense of belonging with the larger school community, but Kimberly supported Janice, and having at least one veteran person at the school made her feel valued and supported. Moreover, it gave her a model for the type of teacher she could become. In workplace settings, people look to others with more experience in the community to shape their identity, to see what is possible, and to become who they want to be (Blåka & Filstad, 2007; Ibarra, 1999). Janice also described another time when Kimberly voiced approval of a new assessment that Janice developed. Janice described the feeling that resulted when they were all trying new things together:

> Sometimes, I'm like, "Hey, Kimberly. I did this. This is the assessment I made. I'm implementing it in my classroom this week. Let me know if you're interested." I just gave her a copy, and she said, "Oh, this is really helpful. I haven't even gotten to this unit yet." So, it feels like we are kind of just all— Even though we're not completely aligned in everything, there's a sense of camaraderie and kind of just, "Oh, we're all just struggling here. We're all trying new things." Different things like that.

She felt supported and heard by her colleague. Moreover, she had a shared sense of confusion with a new policy, which gave her a feeling of camaraderie with her colleagues and helped her feel like she belonged (Mahar et al., 2013).

Janice also felt supported by her fellow first-year teachers in the school. She mentioned a time when she told a first-year colleague that she'd had a difficult morning in her class. Later in the afternoon, that colleague, Vivian, came to her class to check on her and see how she was doing. Janice said this support made her feel valued by her colleagues:

> Later, Vivian came over and was just like, "Hey, I just wanted to check in with you. How are you doing?" And we just talked. That was one thing that was really nice. Especially as first-year teachers, we're kind of just— We're seeking support, and we also offer that same support with other first-year teachers as compared to feeling like, "Oh, we're really in need of a support, and maybe we're just new, and that's why we don't know how to handle situations." But she was also offering that up to me in a very natural way. So, I think that was really nice.

Similar to Kimberly, Vivian normalized Janice's struggles and concerns. This gave Janice a sense that what she was going through was normal and that she was going through it with a group of colleagues who supported her.

By May, Janice was a little more hesitant when asked if she fit in at the school, and this seems to mirror her decline in identity verification. Over the course of the year she learned that there were several teachers at the school who did not share similar values to her regarding teaching. This made her feel a sense of distance from the larger school community and made her waver a bit when she was asked if she felt like she fit in. Additionally, the fact that she was still new made her feel like she did not completely fit—but she had Kimberly to lean on, and that allayed those feelings. When asked if she felt like she fit in at the school, she replied:

> Yes and no. Maybe because I'm still new, so I don't feel completely like this is my school. And also a lot of the— Since the teaching practices are just varied. Not everyone teaches in the same, they don't all have the same or similar mindset. Right now, I'm really glad I have Kimberly. But if I was at a different grade level, I could totally feel like I'm out of place. But right now I feel like I am where I'm supposed to be with my grade level, with the people I'm working with. So it's a kind of a yes or no.

Given time over the year to observe other teachers, Janice's sense of fitting in seemed to wane a bit as she realized that many did not share her values. This may have accounted for her lower sense of identity verification from her colleagues. Realizing that other teachers did not value the same things she did may have made Janice feel like they did not see her as she had originally thought.

When asked to describe a time when she felt like she fit, Janice mentioned her times with Kimberly. Specifically, she said that she felt like in Kimberly she had a colleague who shared her values about teaching and validated her as a teacher:

> Well, a lot of it is just when I'm talking with Kimberly. Maybe that's the main time because I have someone who shares my ideas and, or we have like the similar outlook on teaching, and so that makes me feel, "Oh this is where I'm supposed to be." We're teaching in a way that is like-minded, and so that really helps.

Veteran teachers can give new teachers a sense of who they can be and offer them a path to belonging in the school (Blåka & Filstad, 2007). Moreover, Janice indicated that she trusts Kimberly, which could make her feel like she belongs.

When asked if she felt valued by her colleagues, Janice was hesitant and uncertain. She said her hesitancy came from the fact that many teachers in the school did not know who she was or how she taught. She noted that she did not feel the same level of respect from her colleagues: "It's hard for me to say that Angela respects me in the same way Kimberly respects me." It seems that Janice had solidified her relationship with Kimberly and her other-first year colleagues, but realized that the rest of the school did not share her values; she did not necessarily feel like she was valued by her colleagues in the same way. All of this may explain part of her decline in identity verification with respect to her colleagues. That said, it should be noted that despite the decrease in identity verification, Janice still felt a sense of belonging to the school and felt like it was a place that she was happy to continue her career.

Identity dissonance and identity nonverification are part of identity construction for new teachers (Hong, 2010; Sydnor, 2017). Over the course of the year, Janice developed bonds with Kimberly and her first-year colleagues that served as a buffer from self-doubt and any negative feelings that could have arisen from identity non-verification. Within her relationship with Kimberly and her first-year colleagues, Janice found constellations of belonging (Gerharz, 2014; Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2020) within the school where she felt valued. That gave her a space to facilitate her teacher identity.

Janice's identity verification with her students decreased over the course of the year as well. When I asked Janice if she felt some level of discrepancy between how she wanted to be seen an how her students saw her she said:

> I want [my students] to see me as, I think, caring, I think that's something I really hope for them to see that I generally care about them. It's just very hard for me to ever say that my students feel like I care for them because, I don't know that... I guess maybe that's not a word I hear often, people describing me as, super caring... I don't know how to show it in a way...it's hard for me to identify, what is a caring teacher supposed to look like.

Janice viewed herself as a no-nonsense teacher—fair, but firm with a dry sense of humor. That said, in several interviews she mentioned that she wanted to be seen as caring and learn to be more outwardly caring. But it seems that in May of her first year she was struggling with that and did not feel like her students saw her as the teacher she wanted to be. This could account for her decrease in identity verification with her students and while Janice. She also said that this lack of identity verification made her feel a certain sense of uncertainty about her place at the school and a level of uncertainty about her teacher identity (Burke & Stets, 2009).

### *Scenario 2: Decreased identity verification from colleagues, increased verification from students (Diana)*

Diana identified as White and female. She taught high school math to freshmen, juniors, and seniors at a small public school in an urban fringe area. Over time her identity verification related to her students improved, but it declined regarding her colleagues. During our interview in the fall, Diana struggled to feel like she belonged at her school. She felt like she did not connect with her colleagues on a friendship level, but she felt like the school's overall message and values were aligned with her own. When asked if she felt like she fit in at the school, she gave a guarded "yeah"; she said that the people she worked with were not necessarily people she would "hang out with outside of work," but she felt like she fit in professionally:

> But in terms of professional life, yeah I do think so. I don't know if they see that yet, because I feel like I haven't really come into my own yet.…I think that as I do gain more confidence and more ideas and more contributions that— Yeah. I think as I develop more that I'll start to feel more like one of the team. Because they're just so much more experienced and have so much more expert knowledge. In that sense I feel like there's a distance.

Diana seemed to indicate that just learning the way things are done at her school did not allow her to be her authentic self. Moreover, her belief that with more experience teaching she would feel like she fit in was common amongst participants. Many felt that just being a new teacher inhibited their sense of belonging and they felt like they would develop a sense of belonging as they learned and grew into their role (Belle et al., 2015).

Diana also often equated making contributions to fitting in. In particular, it seemed like much of her feeling of belonging came from being able to make contributions to the larger group (Vignoles et al., 2002; Waller, 2020). She also described one experience where she felt like she did not fit, when one of the teachers at the school had a big birthday party and posted photos on Instagram. Diana admitted that she was not certain that, had it been her party, she would have invited this woman, but the fact that it seemed like a large group of the faculty were invited made her feel left out:

> But I saw on Instagram that apparently one of the 11th-grade science teachers, she had a big birthday bash. It was maybe her 30th or something. So I saw Lidia and Amy and Elise, and other people all had these pictures that they posted. And that's really cool and wonderful that they're all friends and close. And I was like, "Was this a big invite? Like an all-teachers thing? Or is it just her buds?"…But I was thinking, if this is schoolwide…apparently, I'm not yet as entwined in that community. I was just thinking I could sit around and wait for people to make friends with me, or I can take some initiative, build some friendships.

Fostering informal friendships has been shown to foster a sense of belonging in workplace settings (Blåka & Filstad, 2007). At several points during interviews over the course of the study, Diana mentioned that she was shy and that maybe if she were more outgoing she would connect more with the other teachers. Some scholars have posited that newcomers to the workplace who are shyer and do not take advantage of opportunities to learn and grow and to form relationships will struggle to find a sense of belonging (Allen et al., 2021; Schnell et al., 2019).

Diana said that she “did not feel like she was friends” with other teachers in the school and felt like she had not “connected really on a human level.” She said she really didn’t know her colleagues outside of the work context, noting that she felt she needed to offer more professionally before she could open the door to more relationships with her colleagues:

> With the exception of some conversations after work or during lunch, some of them I’ve gotten to know a little bit about their lives outside of work. I think the more I have those conversations, the more we’ll be— maybe I’ll feel like we have a friendship. Or the more that I can support them more reciprocally in a professional context, then I also feel like that would be good too—that I could develop more relationships with them. But as of now, they probably don’t see me as offering very much.

She said not being invited to the party really made her feel like she was not part of the community, but said that was “understandable. I’ve only been there a few months. I was kind of like, ‘Oh.’ I realize there are these strong connections with teachers, and I don’t have those yet.”

During interviews she often minimized the fact that she had not fostered friendships with her colleagues, but she also struggled to balance the notion of professionally fitting in but not feeling personal connections with her colleagues. Part of this struggle was grounded in the fact that she was a first-year teacher who was being evaluated by school leadership. The constant evaluation made her feel less valued by her colleagues. She said this made it difficult for her to add to the group:

> I feel like I’m under evaluation, like I’m trying out for this job still….I don’t know, I feel like maybe this is all in my head, but I feel like they’re waiting to see how good of a teacher I am, I don’t know, how much I learn, how much I can contribute. I don’t know. If I don’t continue to improve and help reciprocate things and contribute, then maybe they’re going to be like, “Whatever. She’s pretty replaceable.”

The sense of competition and the idea that she needed to prove herself lowered Diana’s sense of belonging (McClure & Brown, 2008). When asked to describe an experience that typified her feelings of being valued at the school, she described the fact that it was difficult for her as a new teacher to contribute. When she tried to contribute, she felt like she was shut down—not necessarily in a mean way, but in a way that made her feel like an outsider:

> I think it's kind of hard to contribute my ideas because they're pretty set with the curriculum and the way they go about it. I once brought up some ideas of ways that we could try a collaborative learning after we had this little [professional development] thing on collaborative learning. And they were kind of like, "Okay we already have a lot of goals for this year that we're trying out, and that's kind of too much. We could consider that next year."… I suppose that was a little bit validating, but not validating enough.…I don't necessarily have any reason to feel like I'm particularly valued.

The combination of lack of personal relationships with her colleagues, a feeling of not being able to contribute, and feeling like she was constantly being observed left Diana feeling like she did not totally belong at her school. Moreover, just the idea of being a new teacher left her feeling like she was on the outside. That said, she liked the school and wanted to belong. She felt positive about her future and felt like, given time, she would be able to feel a sense of belonging:

> But in terms of where I want to be, yes. I would like to belong in this school. And I would like to be able to be a better contributor to the community of kids and teachers that I'm in. I think there's potential for that after some experience.…I know my math values are and the schools are, I feel like I fit in better there than elsewhere—certainly better than my last site. And it's a place that I want to develop and grow. Am I there yet? No.

By May, Diana had a much more positive view of her sense of belonging at the school. When asked if she felt like she fit, she emphatically said "yes." She noted that she still did not feel personally close with many of her colleagues, but she was more involved in the school community and that made her feel like she fit. She noted:

> Yes. Yes. I think the school is a really good fit for me. I don't know if the other teachers know that I feel that way yet or sense that.…And I've started a couple of clubs, so I'm involved in that sense.…I really like the way that the school does things, and I'm on board. And I even want to push it more in those directions of, especially math, weaving it more toward the project-based learning and the interdisciplinary stuff. And getting a little more creative. There I want to contribute in that sense.

She also noted that she was part of a new restorative justice youth court that was going to start the following year. She felt like this type of club at school matched her values and made her feel like part of the community. Diana felt increased feelings of belonging through taking part in extracurricular activities—clubs, afterschool events, and so on; this was a common theme amongst all participants. These clubs gave her a way to participate in the community outside of her classroom and outside of her colleagues. Moreover, it showed that she was invested in the students and that her values were congruent with the clubs and what they were trying to accomplish (Filstad et al., 2019; Roffey, 2012).

When asked in the spring if she felt valued, she was a bit more upbeat and felt like some of her colleagues were starting to see the work she did and, as a result, they valued her. Noting that many of her colleagues did not know what she was doing in her classroom, she said; "I think for them to value me, they have to know what I'm doing." That said, she noted that some people were giving her feedback that people in the school were noticing what she was doing, and the feedback was positive. Moreover, her students were telling her that they enjoyed her class and that she was doing well.

Similar to the first interview, however, she sometimes felt like her colleagues were dismissive of her ideas.

> I guess where I haven't felt valued is when I've tried to propose projects or other ways of assessment. [I] just kind of was dismissed a little bit. But that wasn't really personal.…They were like, "Let's just pick on one challenge at a time."…Because I think that's a strength that I have that I can contribute, is like, kind of creativity in that regard, and just designing the protocol and everything.

Diana felt that one of her strengths was in designing projects. The fact that her math colleagues were not necessarily interested could account for some of the decline in her identity verification amongst her colleagues. By not accepting her ideas about projects, her colleagues were not verifying her identity as a teacher who is good at creating projects (Burke & Stets, 2009).

Nevertheless, Diana was excited about what she was doing in her classroom, and her students were enjoying her teaching. She described an experience where a colleague noticed her doing good work and told her so, which made her feel valued:

> My seniors were doing a house-buying project, and, like, financial planning and saving up, and investing and interest, to try all of these different things and the variables and stuff.…But then there's a different teacher, math teacher, who is walking by, and she looked in the windows, and then she was like, "Whoa." And then she came in, and she's like, "When you guys learn this, can you teach us?" But she was excited to see that, "Oh, there are these kids that were learning valuable math."…That was kind of a risk they were taking [giving me the junior/senior class], because that class has no support, nobody else teaching it, no pacing guide.

As she noted, Diana was the only teacher in her school teaching her junior/senior math class. This was difficult because she did not have much support or guidance on the curriculum—she created much of it from scratch. The fact that she thrived in that class and that her students enjoyed the content made her feel competent and efficacious (McClure & Brown, 2008; Waller, 2020). Additionally, the fact that other teachers noticed what was going on in the class made her feel valued (McClure & Brown, 2008). She felt like her identity as a creative teacher was validated by her students and by a colleague passing her room and acknowledging her.

The combination of creating an engaging classroom and increased engagement in clubs and other extracurricular activities could also account for the increase in identity verification with her students. Towards the end of the interview Diana said:

> From my perspective, I think I really belong there.…I really, really, really love this school, and there's a lot of really, really cool things that it's doing. And it's pointing in the right direction, I think. So there is a sense of progress, and I want to be on that train. So I really like it. I'm excited for more opportunities, to be more engaged, and to contribute more value to the school.…But yeah, I really like the school.

The lack of belonging that Diana felt amongst her colleagues seemed to be overcome by her excitement about the direction of the school. She felt like the mission of the school matched her beliefs about teaching and like it was the type of school she wanted to be a part of. Additionally, her desire to belong to the school and her belief that eventually she would be able to contribute more made her optimistic about her future there. She liked the direction of the school and felt confident that all of the things that made her feel a lack of sense of belonging would be overcome with time and experience. She knew that over time she would be able to become part of the community in the way that she wanted. Despite the decrease in identity verification amongst her colleagues, Diana remained positive about her prospects and her general sense of belonging at the high school.

### ***Scenario 3: Increased identity verification from students and colleagues (Logan)***

Logan identified as male and as Black and Chinese. He came to teaching later in life and was the oldest teacher in his TEP cohort, graduating at the age of 31. Logan lived abroad for several years after college and that is where he became fluent in Chinese. His first assignment was in a rural/suburban district, teaching Chinese language at the high school level. His time was split between two schools in the same district: He taught four periods at one school and then one period at the other school.

Logan felt like his age was a factor in his initial struggle to find a sense of belonging at his school sites. He said there were not really people his age to associate with, and he mentioned that he did not have much in common with other teachers. That said, he seemed to improve feelings of belonging by the end of the year, as he made more friends and found a group of teachers with whom he got on.

When asked in the fall if he felt like he belonged (specifically at the school where he taught four periods), Logan, like many study participants, was on the fence, replying “yes and no.” He said that he was happy in his situation but felt like he did not fit in socially with his colleagues, even those in their first year of teaching, as they were either younger than him or the same age but at a different life phase (e.g., with kids and a family). Moreover, he noted the difficulty in finding a place amongst a group of teachers who had already established relationships with each other:

> One [of the other new teachers] is around my age, but he has a kid. And then the other one, she's about 55 maybe. Yeah, so there's like a big range between.…And that's like the average age of the other teachers in my department. So yeah, it's kind of hard to feel like you fit in if you're the only one without kids or not married. So I feel like that. Or even in terms of hanging out after school, everyone pretty much just wants to hang out with their family or go home or pick up their kids from soccer practice or whatever.

He went on to describe an instance when he was invited to go out with colleagues on a Friday night but struggled to feel like he fit in with them. He was happy to have been invited, but he did not feel like he was "one of them" because they all seemed to be a cohesive group and talked about things happening in the district that he did not have a reference for:

> She's the one who invited me out on Friday night, like we get some pizza and beer and stuff like that. But there is one person my age, but she's been teaching for about 10 years. She's been teaching ever since after college. And then everyone else was around at least 45 or older. And then they were mostly just talking about things in the district and things like that. So I didn't really feel like I fit in because I was completely new, and then we have completely different experiences.

Not only did Logan mention his age as a factor, but also that he did not have the same knowledge of the district to engage in conversations with his colleagues. Despite being the oldest in his TEP, he was one of the youngest teachers at his site. He felt like other teachers his age were already well established in their practice and that made it hard for him to fit with them. The combination of feeling young in both age and experience made him feel like he did not fit:

> Yeah, I feel really young in my site. Even for the other teachers that might be in their 30s as well, but they are a lot more mature, I mean, in terms of just teaching or being in the district for a long time, in terms of their family or in terms of their own personal life.

Logan also mentioned that he did not really feel like he clicked with his new teacher peers and, due to the size of the school (2,000 students and 80 teachers), he rarely interacted with them. He seemed to feel like his age and his general interests did not align with those of his colleagues, and this made him feel like he did not fit in well. When asked if he felt valued, he said yes, but mainly because he was the only person who could teach Chinese and that they would not have a Chinese department if it were not for him. At the same time, this made Logan feel like he did *not* belong, as there were no other Chinese language teachers at the school.

Logan felt like his age, his interests, and his understanding of the school and the way it worked did not align with his colleagues. Having similar characteristics as colleagues (e.g., being in the same life stage) can increase feelings of belonging in the workplace. Logan did not feel this way, which minimized his feelings of belonging with his colleagues. That said, belonging is a process of learning about your colleagues, learning how the system works, and learning how you fit into the system (Belle et al., 2015; McClure & Brown, 2008). Early on in his new career, Logan had yet to connect to his colleagues.

Logan's feelings of belonging were bolstered, however, by positive relationships with his students. During his student-teaching, he had a difficult placement, and the students did not treat him well. He felt like his new school was a pleasant change, and this made him feel like he belonged. He described an in-class activity that made him feel like his students valued him:

> They just have 45 seconds to write something kind about a person, then they pass it to the next person. So it's like we're in a big circle, then we just take 45 seconds to write something. So I joined in the circle too, and then I wrote something about each student. And then, at the very end, you get your card back, and then you see what everyone wrote. And then I was glad to see everyone was saying really nice positive things about me, saying like, oh, I'm their favorite teacher or they really like my class.…So I think the students [are] the reason why I feel the most valued, because I feel comfortable in the classroom and I feel like I can just talk comfortably with them.

As noted above, this was a big change from his student-teaching/internship year where he was not treated well by students or staff. He noted that he felt a lot happier this year. Feeling valued by his students and like he was contributing to their learning helped Logan foster feelings of belonging and verified his identity as a teacher who is well liked by his students. During multiple interviews, Logan mentioned the importance of being liked by his students as a core part of his teacher identity.

Like Danelle, Logan also mentioned that doing adjunct duty—supervising extracurricular activities—helped foster a sense of belonging, as it made him feel like a part of the community:

> So I went to a volleyball game, and then it was cool that I was just able to see.…Well, one of my students, she wasn't playing, but she was just kind of sitting next to me. And then just seeing her root on all the other students who were playing volleyball and everything like that. And then you get to see them outside of school, and you get to see what they do and something that they're really passionate about. So that actually really helped.…A lot of my students are involved in so many sports.…I would definitely want to show them that I care, that I'm invested.

Despite the fact that Logan struggled to find a sense of belonging amongst his colleagues at the beginning of the year, the relationships with his students helped him to feel like he was valued and that he belonged at his school site. Seeing his students outside of the classroom enhanced that relationship, as he felt like he was showing his support for them; in turn, they were more positive about him.

Part of fostering a sense of belonging is feeling a reciprocal commitment (Guibernau, 2013). Through spending time with his students outside of the classroom, Logan showed his students that he cared about them, and he felt like they reciprocated that care. Moreover, echoing findings from previous studies (Filstad et al., 2019; Roffey, 2012), adjunct duty gave him another way to participate and show he was invested in the community and to engage others. And, as Blåka and Filstad (2007) found, engagement in the informal community of the school was important for him to feel like he belonged. Additionally, these relationships continued to verify his teacher identity as a teacher who is well liked by his students.

Logan's feelings about belonging seemed to have increased by the spring of his first year of teaching. When I asked him in May if he felt like he fit in, he said that he did; he told me that he would be moving to the school site where he taught one class during the year for a full-time position in the fall. He was happy to be rehired and felt like he had found a home at this school. He still did not feel close to any other teachers at the school, but he felt like there was a place for him. He thought his colleagues valued him and wanted him there. In particular, he felt like he was welcomed by the world languages department and felt like one of them—as he put it, he now has a place to sit during staff meetings:

> Where I fit in. I think once I got to know the teachers, and whenever we have, like, our staff meetings, then I just sit with the Spanish teachers, together with language teachers.…Whenever we have meetings, I would just say like, I kind of have that place to sit, whereas at the beginning, I didn't know anybody still. I was like, "Where do I sit?"

Logan felt like he was part of the school community, and that ostensibly increased his feelings of belonging from the beginning of the year. Moreover, this could be part of the explanation for his improvement in identity verification from the fall: He felt seen, welcomed, and accepted by his colleagues. He mentioned that he felt more supported by his world languages colleague who was in the same professional learning community (PLC). They let him come and observe their classrooms to see the kinds of things they were doing, and Logan felt like that improved his sense of belonging at the school:

> They're in my PLC.…Mika is the Japanese teacher, and then Juana is the Spanish teacher. Whenever I just meet up with them, Natalia, she's right next door to me, but I came into her class a couple times just to observe her. She's only a second-year teacher. She teaches Spanish, and then she teaches only in Spanish. So she only does just [curriculum], just completely Spanish. I wanted to see how that works. And then I also just talked to her during the day, just like, "How are you? What's going on? And how's your class?"….We share a lot of what we're doing

> in class, and then just, what are different things that we can do. So yeah, [our relationships have] definitely gotten stronger.

Support from colleagues is an integral part of fostering belonging in the workplace (Dávila & Gárcia, 2012; Filstad et al., 2019; Waller, 2020). Sharing spaces, learning together, and doing the work together all foster feelings of belonging (Filstad et al., 2019; McClure & Brown, 2008). Moreover, working with these colleagues in the PLC helped Logan feel like he was valued and belonged at the school. He felt supported by them and was able to see what they did in their classrooms. Their openness with their classrooms and willingness to share ideas helped Logan feel like he belonged. He was able to learn from them and felt they valued what he was doing when they shared their activities and strategies. Belonging is a process of learning how the school works and what is expected of you as a teacher (Belle et al., 2015). Over time, Logan found a better understanding of the school and the culture. He felt like he could contribute and discovered that he worked well with his colleagues.

Additionally, the growth of these relationships over the course of the year helped Logan connect to the school and feel a sense of belonging (McClure & Brown, 2008). These improved relationships could account for his increase in identity verification. He felt like he was seen by his colleagues and felt valued by them. He also felt like he made a unique contribution to the school as the only Chinese language teacher; that made him feel needed, as they could not have the Chinese language program without him:

> Well, I think I have a skill a lot of people don't, so I think that's why I feel valued.…The skill is the language, speaking Chinese. I think I also have an interesting background as well, living in a different country and everything like that.…So as soon as I walked in, I said, "Oh, hey, I am Logan. I'm the new Mandarin teacher." Like, "Oh, they found a Mandarin teacher. Okay." I think they were having troubles trying to fill in that spot. I think that's when I felt valued. Was that, yeah, I'm kind of a hard person to find.

An ability to contribute something unique to the group or workplace can foster feelings of belonging. People have a desire to fit in to a group, but they also have a desire to contribute something unique to that group or to the workplace (Brewer, 1991; Vignoles et al., 2002; Waller, 2020). Over the course of the year, Logan improved his feelings of belonging through interactions with both staff and students. He learned more about what it meant to become a part of the school community and was welcomed and supported by others (Filstad et al., 2019; McClure & Brown, 2008). Moreover, he felt like he contributed something unique to the school, and that helped him feel like he was a valued member of the community (Brewer, 1991).

## Discussion

This chapter explored how identity verification changed for new teachers over the course of their first year of teaching. I found three scenarios regarding change in identity verification over the course of the year: (a) identity verification regarding teachers and colleagues both decreased; (b) identity verification with students increased and identity verification with colleagues decreased; and (c) identity verification with students and colleagues both increased. Three participants fit each of these scenarios, and the preceding discussion examined the experiences of belonging over the course of the year for one participant within each of the identity verification scenarios.

Each of the stories was similar to the stories of other participants, and together they encompassed all of the themes related to feelings of belonging expressed by participants. They also exemplify the similar patterns within each identity verification scenario. Across the experiences of belonging, five themes were common to all participants: ambivalence about belonging, value consonance/dissonance, contribution and recognition, supportive colleagues, and community participation outside the classroom. I discuss each in turn.

## Ambivalence About Belonging

All participants at some point during the data collection process indicated that they felt like they did and did not belong or fit in. Many mentioned how being a new teacher made them feel like they did not fit in or like they were not valued by their colleagues. Diana felt like she could not contribute or was not able to participate in the community of teachers in part because she was new and had a lot to learn. Logan noted that, despite being invited to socialize with his colleagues, he did not totally feel like he fit in because he did not know all of the district policies and people being discussed.

Being a novice and being new to the school meant that many of these teachers felt like they were on the periphery of their communities. This finding aligns with Wenger's (1998) notion of peripheral participation in the community of practice. Newcomers to the community work outside, on the periphery, and are slowly brought into the community of practice as they learn about the work. Part of belonging in the workplace is learning how the organization or school works and what is expected of newcomers (Belle et al., 2015; McClure & Brown, 2008).

Over time, study participants generally felt a stronger sense of belonging to their schools, but this was harder for those who were shy and struggled to engage socially with the group. Diana noted that her difficulties belonging with her colleagues were in part due to her being not as outgoing as she could be. Research has found that newcomers who are passive with their relations to their colleagues and do not ask questions or seek out opportunities often struggle to learn, belong, and foster their identities in that setting (Blåka & Filstad, 2007). This ambivalence to belonging was a source of struggle for many participants and could have resulted in increased feelings of identity nonverification.

### Value Consonance/Dissonance

Many of the participants suggested that feelings of value consonance with their colleagues increased feelings of belonging, while feelings of value dissonance decreased feelings of belonging. Janice learned over the course of the year that there were several colleagues who did not share her values with respect to teaching and learning, and this made her feel a little less of a connection to the wider community. Conversely, Diana's feelings that her school's mission and ideals matched her own vision of teaching helped her overcome negative feelings associated with not gelling with her colleagues.

A shared sense of values is a crucial component of feeling a sense of belonging to a group or workplace (Guibernau, 2013; Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; Mahar et al., 2013). Past research has shown that value consonance is related to teachers' sense of belonging (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2019). People make claims of belonging to a group based on shared understandings, values, and feelings of similarity (May, 2011). Moreover, feeling a shared set of values regarding what is important in education and what it means to be a teacher can foster identity verification (Grindal & Trettevik, 2019), as it can help teachers feel like they belong at their school as well as verify and shape their identities.

### Contribution and Recognition

Contributing to the workplace is a crucial component of feeling a sense of belonging (McClure & Brown, 2008; Vignoles et al., 2002; Waller, 2020). When asked about feeling valued or not, every participant brought up the contributions they were able to make. Many reported feeling an inability to contribute to the work of the school, grade team, or department, which hampered feelings of belonging and of identity verification. Part of this came from being new, but participants also described times when their ideas were not accepted by their colleagues. When participants did feel like they were able to contribute, it validated them and increased their feelings of belonging, especially when they felt recognized for it.

"Doing the work" and feeling recognized for it fosters a sense of belonging in the workplace (McClure & Brown, 2008); it can increase teachers' feelings of investment in the school, which can also foster feelings of belonging (Roffey, 2012). Social recognition for teachers can allay feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002). Janice, for example, felt like her colleagues appreciated her contributions around assessment. This not only verified her teacher identity but also made her feel like she was a valued member of the community. Diana's experience with a teacher walking by her room and taking an interest in the activity she was doing gave her an emotional boost because she felt recognized for her work. For many participants, recognition also came from students. When they felt like their students were engaged and appreciated their work, these first-year teachers felt like they belonged.

Contribution and recognition in the workplace are also central to increasing feelings of efficacy and competence, which have a reciprocal relationship with belonging—belonging emerges through feelings of competence (Allen et al., 2021; Filstad et al., 2019) and feelings of belonging facilitate competence and efficacy (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; Waller, 2020). This was true for study participants, who felt validated when their contributions were recognized, and this mitigated negative sentiments at times when they did not feel like they belonged.

### Supportive Others

Another central facet of participants' experiences of belonging was feeling supported by their colleagues. Research shows that support from colleagues facilitates trust and feelings of belonging (Dávila & Gárcia, 2012; Filstad et al., 2019; Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; Schnell et al., 2019). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2019) found that support from colleagues and administration can bolster feelings of belonging in teachers. For the current study participants, even having one or two colleagues to lean on helped mitigate other feelings that hindered belonging. For example, Janice knew she had Kimberly to lean on, and Kimberley's support eased Janice's anxieties and feelings of confusion while making her feel valued. Supportive relationships like this foster belonging and can create a space for authentic conversation about work and help individuals feel understood (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009; Waller, 2020).

Additionally, Janice's support from her first-year colleagues and from Kimberly lend credence to the idea that "belonging is always multiple" (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2020, p. 122). Within the school, Janice (like other participants) found constellations of belonging (Gerharz, 2014; Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2020)—multiple groups where she felt supported and like she belonged—and this bolstered her resolve. Even when she felt a decreased sense of belonging upon realizing the value differences between her and many of her colleagues, membership in her constellations of belonging bolstered her feelings of fit and value in the school. Janice felt a sense of solidarity with Kimberly and with other first-year teachers, and there was a reciprocal commitment between Janice and these colleagues—they valued her, and she valued them—and this facilitated feelings of belonging (Guibernau, 2013).

For Logan, increased support from colleagues over the course of the year allowed him to feel a greater sense of belonging: It gave him "a place to sit," both literally during staff meetings and also figuratively in the school community. His constellation of belonging in his PLC and with his fellow world languages teachers augmented his sense of belonging and made him feel valued as a member of the school community. This could have facilitated his increased identity verification over the course of the year, as identity verification often comes in the form of support from others (Stets et al., 2018). For new teachers, collegial social support fosters belonging and confidence (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002)

### Community Participation Outside the Classroom

Lastly, community participation outside of the classroom played a role in participants' feelings of belonging. This was especially true for participants who taught in middle and high school settings. Social relationships are at the core of sense of belonging in groups (Waller, 2020). Moreover, in the workplace, interacting in informal (i.e., non-classroom) settings can help foster a sense of belonging (Allen et al., 2021; Blåka & Filstad, 2007). Belonging at work is linked to sharing spaces in a community, learning through participation, and negotiating identity/new identities via relationships with others (Filstad et al., 2019).

Taking part in clubs and other groups on campus helped Diana to feel a stronger sense of belonging to the school. Community participation with students mitigated negative feelings associated with struggling to belong with her colleagues. Community participation outside of the classroom allowed Logan to show students that he cared and that he was invested in them, and this increased his feelings of belonging. Both Diana and Logan struggled to connect on a personal level with their colleagues the way Janice did, and it seems that participation in the school community outside the classroom helped allay the negative feelings associated with not doing so.

## Conclusions and Implications

Becoming a teacher is a process of identity formation and belonging (Danielewicz, 2001). This process is often fraught with difficulty as teachers work to reconcile who they believe themselves to be with the realities of teaching (Flores & Day, 2006; Hong, 2010; Sydnor, 2017). The teacher identities of new teachers are not always stable; they can be destabilized in negative work environments but strengthen and grow in positive work environments (Flores & Day, 2006; Sydnor, 2017). New workplaces deconstruct and reconstruct teacher identities (Flores & Day, 2006). This identity dissonance is one of the root causes of the high number of new teachers leaving the profession in the first 5 years of teaching (Hong, 2010; Ingersoll et al., 2018).

Many of the struggles that new teachers face in constructing their teacher identities can be attributed to the fact that they often do not think that others view them in the way the want to be viewed (Barnatt et al., 2017; Cook, 2009; Sydnor, 2017; Veenman, 1984). As such, despite the dearth of research on the topic, sense of belonging for new teachers offers a way to cushion the ups and downs of their first year. It offers feelings of safety and security and mitigates feelings of anxiety and uncertainty (Allen, 2020; Allen et al., 2021; Guibernau, 2013).

Many participants who expressed ambivalence about belonging at their school sites felt that with time they would belong as they got more experience and grew into themselves. This seems to indicate that they believed they would work their teacher identities to fit the school, but also that the school would incorporate some of their identities into the larger collective (Wenger, 1998). The teachers expressed a desire to belong at their schools; they were not only working to make their identities fit, but they also felt optimistic that in the future, with more experience, their colleagues would accept them as they are and as their teacher identities shifted. These sentiments also seem to support the notion of belonging as a future-oriented process of becoming (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2020).

Given the benefits of sense of belonging for new teachers, this work offers implications for school leadership and future research. School leadership can improve the process of belonging for new teachers. It is important for school leaders to understand and be vocal about belonging in the workplace and to notice signs of not belonging for new teachers (Waller, 2020).

School leadership may want to examine what Pfaff-Czarnecka (2020) called *regimes of belonging*—"institutionalised patterns insisting upon investments of time and resources, loyalty and commitments—the 'prices' people have to pay for belonging together, and when these 'prices' are not paid, most collectives can resort to sanctions, such as exclusion or ostracism" (p. 119). While not speaking about school or work contexts, Pfaff-Czarnecka's (2020) notion of regimes of belonging holds purchase for school leaders to examine what it means to belong at a school site.

Exploring regimes of belonging, opens the door to explore a host of questions: What does it take for new teachers to be "one of us" or to belong at a school site? What constellations of belonging exist within the school and what opportunities for inclusion or exclusion do they create for new teachers? What are the rules and norms that govern belonging at this school? As Antonsich (2010) asked, what are the power dynamics of belonging at this school? How can school leadership help new teachers maintain a sense of autonomy as they navigate the regimes of belonging at the school? How can they help minoritized teachers feel supported and like they belong? The answers to these questions may hold answers to fostering more inclusive work spaces.

Lastly, part of facilitating belonging is finding opportunities to belong (Allen et al., 2021). As school leaders examine their regimes of belonging, they can look for opportunities to create belonging for new teachers. They can create opportunities for new teachers to feel supported by colleagues and to help establish positive relations between new and experienced teachers (Dávila & Gárcia, 2012; Kardos & Johnson, 2010). Moreover, based on the results described above, it is important to find opportunities for new teachers to contribute something to their departments or grade teams and to facilitate community participation in informal school settings.

Past research has shown the positive impacts of sense of belonging and identity verification to overall well-being as well as its importance in the workplace for both identity construction and growth in that profession. This study adds to the research by beginning to explore the process of identity verification and sense of belonging and how they interact with teacher identity. Identity nonverification and other forms of identity dissonance are common for new teachers. Fostering a sense of belonging in new teachers—making them feel valued and that they fit in their schools—offers a buffer against these difficulties. Future research should focus on the antecedents and outcomes of new teacher belonging. Moreover, school leadership can offer new teachers opportunities for belonging that mitigate many of the difficulties of learning to teach and give new teachers a foundation where they can construct their teacher identities.

# Chapter 8

## The Teacher Me I Want to Be: A Longitudinal Study of Teacher Possible Selves from Credential to Classroom

> *Possible selves derive from representations of the self in the past and they include representations of the self in the future. They are different and separable from the current or now selves, yet are intimately connected to them. (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954)*

Periods of transition are often characterized by feelings of uncertainty and self-doubt (Dasgupta, 2011), but they are also often integral to identity development. Entering a new environment generally means that individuals will have to modify or rework their existing meaning structures and identities to fit the new situation (Hong & Greene, 2011; Ibarra 1999). This can be especially true for preservice teachers (PSTs) as they transition from their teacher education programs (TEPs) to the classroom (Pillen et al., 2013; Sydnor, 2017). New teachers often face dissonance related to their teacher identities as they make this transition (Hong, 2010).

Identity dissonance can be thought of as feelings of discontinuity, discomfort, and anxiety when new teachers' understandings of themselves are challenged or disrupted by circumstances, information, or systems that run counter to their teacher identities. Hong (2010) found that many PSTs and early career teachers leave the profession as a result of this dissonance and the discomfort it causes them. However, if new teachers are in a supportive and nurturing communities when they face dissonance and conflict, and if they are given the space to address the feelings, they can ultimately grow as teachers (Sexton, 2008; Nichols et al., 2017).

The purpose of this chapter is to explore teacher identity development and the related dissonance during this shift—from TEP to classroom, from student-teacher to teacher. In this context, I define teacher identity as a set of meanings through which individuals define who they are when they engage in their role as teachers (Burke & Stets, 2009). Previous work on identity and teacher identity has found that it is dynamic and multifaceted, frequently being shaped and reshaped, and characterized by struggle (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Gee, 2000; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). The transition from a TEP to the classroom provides an especially poignant moment in teacher identity development, as PSTs leave the ostensible safety of their training programs and of teaching in the relative security of someone else's classroom to enter the world as teachers (Schultz & Ravitch, 2013).

To explore this transition and teacher identity, I interviewed nine new teachers at three timepoints as they transitioned from their TEP to the classroom. I used a lens informed by possible selves theory (Markus & Nurius, 1986), which allows for the exploration of identities in process (Hamman et al., 2010). Specifically, I asked participants a series of questions about the types of teachers they wanted to be (hoped-for and expected selves) and the types of teachers they hoped to avoid becoming (feared selves). Possible selves theory is particularly useful for exploring teacher identity in preservice and first-year teachers because it allows researchers to explore how new teachers see themselves in the future and how they understand themselves in the current moment (Hamman et al., 2010; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). Possible selves—visions of what people want to be or are afraid to become (Markus & Nurius, 1986)—are derived from understandings of oneself in the past and the future as well as from social interactions and comparisons with other people (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Possible selves provide incentives, frames, and guidance for future goals as well as a way for people to interpret and evaluate their current situations (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Additionally, possible selves are integral to identity construction (Ibarra, 1999).

To date, few studies have explored teacher identity through the lens of possible selves theory (Hamman et al., 2010; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). Thus, this chapter aims to build on existing literature by exploring three research questions:

> *RQ1: How do new teachers describe their possible teacher selves as they transition from their TEP to the classroom?*
>
> *RQ2: How, if at all, do teacher possible selves change during the transition from a TEP to the classroom?*
>
> *RQ3: To what or whom do new teachers attribute their success or failure in achieving their possible selves?*

This chapter builds on and adds to the existing literature in two ways. First, few studies have used possible selves to look at teacher identity over time. Thus, I explore new teachers' hoped-for, expected, and feared selves at three timepoints to better understand the changes or lack of changes that occur during this time. Second, this chapter explores the factors that teachers believe help or hinder them in achieving their possible selves. Some studies of teacher identity have looked at the steps new teachers believe they need to take to achieve their hoped-for selves or to avoid their feared selves (e.g., Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013); few, if any, have explored teachers' beliefs of success or failure in attaining their possible selves and to what or whom they attribute the outcomes. This study gives insight into the mechanisms that teachers believe help them become the teachers they wanted to be.

## Literature and Theoretical Framework

### Teacher Identity in Transition

Teacher identity "provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be,' 'how to act,' and 'how to understand' their work" (Sachs, 2005, p. 15). It "form[s] a foundation that influences action in the classroom" (Merseth et al., 2008, p. 91) and can play an outsized role in how teachers teach, interact with their students, develop as teachers, and react to educational change and reform (Buchannan, 2015; Reeves, 2018). More pointedly, the totality of teachers' work is grounded in their teacher identity—it is foundation for their work (Beijaard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Hsieh, 2015). Given the importance of teacher identity, it is paramount that the process of teacher identity development begin in TEPs, so that when PSTs transition to their school sites and start their careers, they do so with a strong sense of teacher identity.

The transition from being a student in a PST to being an in-service teacher is often replete with challenges to teacher identity (Pillen et al., 2013; Sydnor, 2017). As noted above, times of transition or change often result in identity dissonance, including feelings of discontinuity, discomfort, and anxiety. For teachers, identities may be challenged or disrupted by information or circumstances that contradict their teacher identities (Hong, 2010). In particular, the real experience of having one's own classroom may not be congruent with the expectation of one's identity, and this may cause dissonance or psychological discomfort (Cook, 2009; Barnatt et al., 2017; Dotger & Smith, 2009; Dugas, 2016; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Sydnor, 2017).

First-year teachers enter their new settings with expectations about their pedagogy, their colleagues, and their students—all of which are factored into their teacher identities (Cook, 2009; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). Moreover, their identities are still largely influenced by their experiences as students (Barnatt et al., 2017; Cook, 2009; Hong, 2010). As such, first-year teachers frequently "must code-switch from the language of *student* to the language of *teacher*, and this transition can produce feelings of self-doubt and instability" (Dotger & Smith, 2009, p. 162). The principal site of struggle for first-year teachers is understanding themselves

(Featherstone, 1993). A mixture of *unrealistic optimism* and *reality shock* when moving to a new classroom can create dissonance, leading many to leave the profession (Barnatt et al., 2017; Hong, 2010; Veenman, 1984; Weinstein, 1988). Entering teaching with a stronger, more positive teacher identity can help first-year teachers to palliate dissonance, as they will be better able to address it and learn from it (Barnatt et al., 2017; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013).

### Possible Selves Theory

Drawing from possible selves theory allowed me to explore teacher identity in transition (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). People hold beliefs about themselves that are not “well anchored in social reality”; these are beliefs about their potential, their goals, their hopes, and fears—in other words, beliefs about their possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955). Teacher identity formation is not only about how teachers understand themselves in the present, but also about whom and what they want to become in the future—their possible teacher selves (Beijaard et al., 2004; Hamman et al., 2010). Additionally, these beliefs about their futures and who they want to be provide valuable insights into their teacher identities (Hamman et al., 2010).

Possible selves are visions of what people want to be or are afraid to become (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2012). They are derived from understandings of oneself in the past and the future as well as from social interactions and comparisons with other people (Hong & Greene, 2011; Ibarra, 1999; Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Feared selves are the selves that people want to avoid becoming in the future. A feared self is not necessarily bad. For example, the feared teacher self of being boring does not indicate that a teacher is boring; instead it may be a factor that motivates that teacher not to be boring (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Strahan & Wilson, 2006). Sometimes, hoped-for or expected selves are set in contrast to feared selves. For example, a teacher might expect to innovate and fear being complacent—this is referred to as *balance* (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Having balance between hoped-for/expected selves and feared selves has been shown to increase the likelihood of becoming the former and avoiding the latter (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

Possible selves matter because they provide incentives, frames, and guidance for future goals. Moreover, they provide a way for people to interpret and evaluate their current situations (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Strahan & Wilson, 2006). Possible selves motivate action and help determine what tasks people are willing to engage in, persist in, or quit (Cross & Markus, 1991; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2012; Strahan & Wilson, 2006). They are the "cognitive bridges" between the present and future that guide individuals from their current selves to the selves they are going to become; as such, they are frequently integral to the decisions that people make in their current contexts (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 961).

In line with possible selves theory, Kelchtermans (2009) contended that, for teachers, "[i]nterpretations, thoughts and actions in the present are influenced by experiences from the past and expectations for the future" (p. 260). Possible selves provide meaning for specific behaviors and actions, and people evaluate those actions based on their visions of their future selves (Ibarra, 1999; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2012). Moreover, possible selves can serve as motivation for change and growth (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2012; Strahan & Wilson, 2006).

This theory has been used in a host of different arenas (e.g., Cross & Markus, 1991; Oyserman et al., 2006), but only recently to understand teacher identity development among PSTs and first-year teachers (Hamman et al., 2010; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Hong & Greene, 2011; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). As discussed above, becoming a teacher is a process of identity formation—it is the process by which people define themselves as teachers and by which others start to view them as teachers (Danielewicz, 2001; Farnsworth, 2010). As noted, when new teachers move from a TEP to the classroom, the transition can be difficult and cause identity dissonance.

PSTs transitioning into their first year of teaching may jettison ideas about their teacher identity and their future possible teacher selves and adopt new ones. Indeed, part of identity development for PSTs and first-year teachers is exploring and testing different possible selves and identities to see which fit both their understanding of their teacher identity and their context (Ibarra, 1999; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Possible selves create a path for PSTs and first-year teachers to become the teachers they want to be (Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Oyserman et al., 2006). As such, exploring possible selves among PSTs and first-year teachers offers a valuable window into the process of teacher identity formation (Dunkel, 2000; Hamman et al., 2010; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999). It provides a way to conceptualize processes of change in practice and identity (Hamman et al., 2010).

Using possible selves theory, Hamman et al. (2010) found distinct differences between the possible selves of PSTs and first-year teachers: PST possible selves were more likely to focus on tasks, like classroom management, while first-year teacher future selves were more likely to be concerned with issues of professional quality. In another study, Hamman and colleagues (2013) suggested that the way PSTs think about their future selves impacts how they learn to teach. Additionally, they found that cooperating teachers had an outsized role in how PSTs saw their possible teacher selves—both positive and negative. During their TEPs, some PSTs' possible selves remained stable, while others saw shifts in their understanding of their possible selves (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013).

Other studies have found that PSTs' and first-year teachers' past experiences as students and student-teachers impacted their possible selves (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Hong & Greene, 2011; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Miller and Shifflet (2016) found that PSTs' future selves were influenced by their past teachers and their experiences as students. Memories of past teachers—positive and negative—seemed to influence PSTs' sense of their possible teacher selves; moreover, they can have a larger influence on teacher identity than TEPs (Hong & Greene, 2011; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). The current study seeks to add to this past literature by exploring the hoped-for, expected, and feared teacher selves of nine participants as they transitioned from their TEP to their classrooms and found their way through their first year of teaching.

## Methods

### Study and Participants

This chapter draws on interviews conducted over the course of 2 years as part of a larger study tracking teacher identity development from credential to the classroom. Sixteen PSTs were selected to participate (eight single-subject and eight multiple-subject) from two teacher cohorts in a large public university TEP. Over 2 years, from the beginning of their TEP through their first year of teaching, participants completed six interviews. Based on initial surveys and early classroom observations, PSTs were selected to be interviewed based on their position in social networks within the cohort.

The first three interviews took place in the fall, winter, and spring of the 2018–2019 academic year; the fourth interview took place the following summer, as PSTs transitioned into their classrooms; the final two interviews were conducted in the fall and spring of participants' first year in the classroom (in the 2019–2020 academic year). All interviews were transcribed verbatim. Ultimately, seven of the original 16 participants did not begin teaching in the fall of 2019 and therefore did not participate in the final two interviews. Only the nine teachers who completed all six interviews are included in this chapter. Participants were asked about their possible teacher selves in interviews that took place at the end of their TEP (in the spring), and in the final two interviews, in the fall and spring of their first year of teaching.

**Table 8.1**

*Participants*

| Name | Ethno-Racial Identification | Grade or Subject |
|---|---|---|
| Cate | Middle Eastern | Fifth grade |
| Janice | Asian | Fourth-/fifth-grade split |
| Tara | Latina | Kindergarten |
| Tina | White | Middle school English |
| Marta | Latina | Middle school world languages |
| Jaime | Latino | High school English language arts |
| Logan | Black and Asian | High school world languages |
| James | Latino and White | High school math |
| Diana | White | High school math |

*Note.* All names are pseudonyms.

Table 8.1 shows the pseudonyms given to participants, their self-identified ethno-racial identities, and the grades or subjects they taught. Participants included three elementary school teachers, two middle school teachers, and four high school teachers. Katie originally started the TEP as a multiple-subject PST but completed her multiple- and single-subject credential and ultimately decided to teach middle school. Three participants identified as Latino, one as Middle Eastern, one as Asian, and two as White. Two identified with more than one racial ethnic group: One identified as Black and Asian, while another identified as Latino and White.

### Data Collection

While the interviews across both years covered a wide range of topics related to teacher identity, this chapter focuses on segments of the interviews in which participants were asked about their possible teacher selves (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). In these three interviews—

which took place at the end of their TEP and in the fall and spring of their first year of teaching—participants were asked to describe their hoped-for, expected, and feared teacher selves 1 year from the interview (Oyserman et al., 2006; Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

In each interview, I gave a brief description of possible selves theory and explained the notions of hoped-for, expected, and feared possible selves. I differentiated between hoped-for and expected selves using a slightly modified version of the possible selves protocol described by Oyserman and Markus (1990). Specifically, I modified the protocol to speak to participants' possible teacher selves:

> *Many people have in mind some things that they want to be in the future, regardless of how likely it is that they will actually be that way or do those things. These are the kinds of selves that you would hope to be like. Expected selves are selves that we believe are we are likely to become, and feared selves are selves we want to avoid becoming. That said,*
>
> - *What possible teacher self do you hope to be a year from now?*
> - *What possible teacher self do you expect to be a year from now?*
> - *What possible teacher self do you fear becoming a year from now?*

In the final interview, at the end of their first year of teaching, I shared participants responses from the interview that took place at the end of the TEP (as it had been a full year since that interview). I asked them if they felt like they had met their expectations from the prior year and what allowed them to meet their expectations or what hindered them from becoming the teacher they wanted to become.

### Data Analysis and Validity

After extracting excerpts related to possible selves from each interview, all data were loaded into NVIVO software for coding and analysis. I conducted two rounds of coding. I began with a process of open coding, where I holistically coded data from each participant over the course of the interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Miles et al., 2014). These open codes were created inductively based on emergent themes in the data (Miles et al., 2014). After one round of coding, I ran queries in NVIVO to extract coded excerpts. I then reviewed my data to find overarching patterns and to create a smaller number of codes that captured broader patterns and themes in my data (Miles et al., 2014). After coding, I examined the frequency of each code. In the discussion of findings below, I include the most frequently occurring codes.

In an effort to validate my analysis—not just of teachers' possible selves, but of them as teachers—I conducted a participant check at two points: following the interview at the end of the TEP and following the interview at the end of their first year of teaching (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Based on prior interviews and interactions with the participants, I created short narratives (memos) that described them as teachers and their teacher identities, as well as analysis of their possible selves. I read each participant their memo and gave them a copy to review. At both time points, the participants all agreed that my analysis captured them well.

## Findings

The study participants brought up many of the same themes at different times during the interview process, and there were no linear patterns of change over time for any of them (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). Two main themes arose from discussions of hoped-for teacher selves: stability (content and confidence) and student relations. Three main themes arose from the expected teacher selves prompts: stability (routine and organization), community and belonging, and professional growth/innovation. Finally, there were two main themes related to feared teacher selves: burnout and becoming an ineffective "file cabinet teacher."

In the sections below I define each of these possible teacher selves in more detail and provide examples of each possible teacher self. I then explore what mechanisms the participants believed helped them or hindered them in achieving their possible selves. I conclude by examining my research questions and discussing implications of this research.

## Hoped-For Teacher Selves

Hoped-for possible selves may not be attainable but are the ideal future self that a person wants to become (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). They are often more abstract and may seem to be less attainable than expected selves (Hamman et al., 2010). Two main themes arose from participants' answers about their hoped-for selves. The first was the search for stability. Participants all mentioned at some point feeling stressed and overwhelmed by the day-to-day grind of teaching. Moreover, they all felt like they were not able to fully be the teachers they had envisioned themselves to be. Thus, they described their hoped-for teacher selves as having a stable and strong foundation in the classroom to create the type of learning environment they truly wanted. The second theme revolved around teachers hoping to have strong relationships with all of their students. They believed this would help them create a learning environment where all students felt valued and cared for. I describe each of these themes in greater detail below.

### *Stability: Content and Confidence*

When asked what teacher selves they hoped to be a year from now, many study participants described having more content knowledge, experience, and confidence, which would mitigate feelings of stress and being overwhelmed. In essence, their hoped-for teacher selves were more stable and had less stress in their lives and in their classrooms. All nine participants in at least one of their interviews described a hoped-for teacher self who was more confident and could more readily address day-to-day challenges in the classroom. Across all interviews, I coded this 24 times.

Participants said that their hoped-for teacher selves would have more “tools” and a stronger foundation to address new challenges as they arose, so that they would feel less stress related to the day-to-day work of being a PST or first-year teacher. Moreover, they described the difficulties with addressing the new challenges that arose in the classroom. Diana was a high school math teacher who was an intern during her TEP, which meant she had two classes that she taught unsupervised as the teacher of record despite not yet earning her credential. She described a very stressful and draining experience in her placement teaching Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II, even breaking down in tears when discussing it. When asked about her hoped-for possible self at the end of her TEP, she said:

> I hope that I feel energized going to work and that I feel like I have enough under my belt that I can take on new challenges, rather than just being overwhelmed and tired.…I would like to be in a place where I feel like I have enough of a foundation built that I can take on new challenges or teach a project-based learning course, potentially. But I’m not at the place right now where I can do that because I don’t have enough of a grapple [sic] on the content.

Diana felt overwhelmed by the challenges she faced. She hoped she would gain foundational knowledge of the content to help her take on the challenges and feel more energized. As with other participants, she believed that stability and confidence to handle new challenges would come from having more content knowledge and more tools in her toolbelt to address issues as they arose in the classroom.

Many participants noted feeling stressed or feeling overwhelmed and hoped that in the next year they would find some stability in the classroom and mental stability. Moreover, many of them felt they would find stability via confidence and experience. They hoped this would allow them to be the teachers they truly wanted to be, and that their confidence would give them characteristics of teachers they valued. Marta—a middle school world language teacher—exemplified this sentiment. She acknowledged that in a year she would still not achieve complete mastery, but she hoped to be there. At the end of her TEP, when she was asked about her hoped-for teacher self a year from now, she said:

> I guess…more put together. I mean, I know I still won't know exactly what I'm doing, but at least have more of a clear idea of what to do, both in what I'm teaching and [in] dealing with behavior with students. Because I feel like right now…I still second guess myself as to what to do or what consequences to give or anything like that. So hopefully, by a year from now, I will hopefully already know what to do and think, like, faster about it when something happens.

This sentiment appeared more frequently when study participants were interviewed during their first year of teaching than when they were finishing up their TEP. At the end of their TEP, four participants mentioned a desire to feel less stress and more stability; during the first year of teaching, all nine participants described this sentiment when asked about their hoped-for selves. This makes sense: With the exception of two participants, all were working at new sites during this first year in the classroom. The fact that they had transitioned from their TEP into their teaching roles increased meant they had greater responsibility and dissonance.

As teachers transition to a new social context, they are negotiating their teacher identities and reimagining their possible selves (Hong & Greene, 2011; Ibarra, 1999; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006). Schultz and Ravitch (2013) posited that the transition from a TEP and the relative comfort of student-teaching into one's own classroom can be especially challenging with respect to teacher identity development. As such, it could be that, as teachers entered their new classrooms, they were more acutely aware of feelings of discomfort, dissonance, and instability. This could be why their hoped-for teacher selves were centered around finding stability and gaining confidence in their practice.

At the start of her first year of teaching, Diana noted this sentiment—specifically, that once she had the stability she was looking for and once she had more confidence in the classroom, she could "just get to the teaching." She continued:

> That's where I'm really excited to grow. Like, how do I do standard deviation? I haven't done this in 8 years. I've got to figure this out. And I can learn it in 5 minutes, but how do I present it in a way that helps kids think about it?…I'm excited to get to just more familiarity with the content so that I think I'll feel much more comfortable with myself and much more comfortable teaching, and much more comfortable and knowing when I can step back and when I should insert myself.…I think feeling more relaxed and like myself will come with confidence, which will come with experience.…It'll come.

Diana did not feel like she could really be herself until she was able to find the stability and confidence that comes with experience. With a stronger grip on the content, she imagined she would be a better teacher who was more aligned with who she wanted to be. She was hopeful this would happen and saw a future where it was possible; that motivated her to continue to learn and grow to achieve her hoped-for self (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Strahan & Wilson, 2006).

A few participants mentioned other teachers at their schools whom they wanted to emulate. Scholars have pointed out the significant role of mentors or peers in modeling possible selves, especially in new settings (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999). Peers and mentors can provide templates for new possibilities and new possible selves (Ibarra, 1999). When asked about his hoped-for teacher self at the start of his first year of teaching, James—a high school math teacher—mentioned one of his mentor teachers, Dina:

> Next year, Dina, probably that's what I'm hoping to be. Shooting for the sky, like, just being really well organized, well spoken, having those clear boundaries. But still being engaging to the students and still being approachable. So, that's how Dina is. She's, like, very well organized, very well spoken, and very, not so much direct, but she expects quality work from students. And maybe sometimes I don't give my expectations, I don't provide my expectations well enough.

James pointed out how Dina was organized and well put together, with clear boundaries and expectations for students. The characteristics and stability that Dina demonstrated created a learning environment that James wanted to emulate in his practice.

Common to all of these excerpts is the notion that there is a level of stability and confidence that the participants will reach, and this will allow them to be the teachers they really want to be. At one point or another, all seemed to concede that the lack of stability, via content knowledge and confidence, made it difficult or impossible for them to be the teachers they hoped to become. Most envisioned future classrooms that were fun and places where students *wanted* to be versus where they *had* to be (Dugas, 2016).

### *Student Relationships*

The second most common theme amongst participants' hoped-for selves revolved around student relationships. Seven of the nine participants mentioned a hoped-for teacher self who had positive student relationships and who created learning environments were students felt valued. Moreover, they described hoped-for teacher selves who felt like they knew their students well and could incorporate that knowledge into their teaching. I coded this theme 18 times altogether, in roughly equal numbers across the time points.

At the end of her TEP, Tina felt like strong student relationships were the most important thing to her hoped-for teacher self. She believed that her ability to convey the content and foster student academic achievement would come from building strong relationships with her students:

> Hoped-for teacher self—like, everything's going great, I get along with all my students, I have developed a strong relationship with them.…Where I'm sitting at right now, I'm like, "Yeah, that'll come."…I think that priorities, student relationships then student academic outcomes. And I feel confident in my ability to do the student relationships.

For Tina—a middle school ELA teacher—a large part of her teacher identity was rooted in relationships with students (Hamman et al., 2010). She felt like the relationships she wanted with them would come over time and eventually she would attain them. Thus, like Diana, Tina felt a sense of confidence that she would attain her hoped-for self. She evaluated her present teacher self "where I am sitting right now" by understanding where she wanted to be (Ibarra, 1999; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2012), and she felt like it was attainable.

Cate started her first year in the classroom as a part-time teacher in an elementary school. In December of that year, she was offered, and took, a full-time position at a different school within the district as a fifth-grade teacher. At the end of her TEP, she said that she hoped to be a teacher around whom students felt comfortable, with whom students could "be real," and whom students did not fear. She wanted her students to feel like she was a resource for them and that they could always come to her. She contrasted her hoped-for teacher self against a description of other teachers she had seen who were sarcastic and intimidating:

> I guess I hope to be a teacher who has an open-door policy where students can come in and out of my classroom and feel comfortable doing so. I don't want kids to tiptoe around me. I want them to know that I can be real, and we can talk about things. We can talk about your mistakes, we can talk about what you need, I can direct you. I'm basically a resource for you. And to not be scared to use the resource. Because sometimes kids are scared or intimidated by teachers because that's how [other teachers] portray themselves. But I don't want to be that teacher.

Research has shown that past experiences influence possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Strahan & Wilson, 2006). More pointedly, studies on preservice and new teachers have found that they tend to base their possible selves on past experiences with teachers and educational settings (Hong & Greene, 2011; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Cate used her experiences and understandings of other teachers to know what type of teacher she wanted to be and what type of teacher she wanted to avoid becoming (Hong & Greene, 2011; Miller & Shifflet, 2016).

At several points during the interviews, participants used experiences with teachers or in their student-teaching placements that served as a model for their possible selves or as a counternarrative to the teachers they wanted to become. Logan—a high school world language teacher—had a difficult time at his student-teaching placement. He attributed part of it to not really knowing his students or the community they came from. At the end of his TEP, his hoped-for teacher self was someone who knew his students and their community:

> I didn't know how the students were. Like, I didn't know anything about Riverview. I didn't know anything about how to— Well, I still don't know how to connect with my students. But yeah, I think that's one of the main things, is— I think because I'm from Las Montañas, then I know more about students from my area and I would know restaurants in the area or something. I feel like I want to be able to connect with them more on that level.

Logan believed that he would be able to better connect with his students if he was more familiar with their community and their experiences. Having positive relationships with his students was central to Logan's understanding of himself as a teacher. His lack of positive relationships with his students as a student-teacher were a catalyst for his future self and his desire to better connect with his students (Oyserman & James, 2012).

At the start of her first year of teaching, Cate further described the importance of fostering relationships with all students in her classroom to create a better learning environment. She also noted that she would need to take extra steps to foster relationships with some of her quieter students:

> I hope to have a strong relationship with every single one of my students, and for us to have a cohesive understanding of what it means to be a teacher and a student.…That we have a mutual relationship that we can grow from, and that the kids can use that to rely on to grow academically and behaviorally and in whatever they need to, emotionally, socially.

The main themes in participants' hoped-for teacher selves revolved around the desire to create their ideal learning environment. This took the form of feeling more stability via a stronger foundation of content and more experience and having strong student relationships or knowing their students well. In all cases, participants' hoped-for possible selves seemed to be expressing a teacher identity of "having it all together," to paraphrase Marta's comment. Through that, they hoped to create a learning environment that would be fun and engaging for their students—a place that their students would want to be and where all students would have a positive, mutually respectful relationship with them.

Through their hoped-for teacher selves, they seemed to indicate that they were falling short of the teachers they actually wanted to become—they were evaluating their current situations by whom they wanted to become (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2012). They all described a teacher identity they aspired to but could not grasp without a stronger foundation—something to be achieved in a more distant future. In contrast, as I discuss next, their expected teacher selves were a bit more grounded in what they believed they could achieve in the next year.

### Expected Teacher Selves

Hoped-for possible selves are what participants would like in a perfect world and may not be entirely attainable (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Expected selves, on the other hand, are thought to be more conservative estimates and more likely to be a reality in people's minds (Hamman et al., 2010). This was reflected in the three main themes of study participants' expected selves. Similar to with their hoped-for selves, participants expected some level of stability; instead of being derived from content and confidence, however, this time it came from stronger organization, routines, and expectations in their classroom. The second expectation was that they would feel like they were part of the larger school community and like they belonged. They wanted to feel like they could learn from and be supported by their colleagues, contribute to their colleagues' learning, and have closer ties to the school community—namely, the parents of their students. Finally, the third theme was that participants expected to grow professionally and continue to innovate in their practice.

### *Stability: Organization and Routine*

Eight of the participants mentioned in at least one interview that their expected teacher selves would be more organized in the classroom and have stronger routines. This code was assigned 18 times across the three interviews. James, for example, interned as a high school math teacher during his time in the TEP. Interns in the TEP forgo student-teaching with a cooperating teacher and take on two classes as the teacher of record. (Only single-subject credential PSTs were able to intern.) James had some training in the TEP the summer before he started and had served as a teaching assistant in math classes at the university, so he was not a stranger to the classroom. However, teaching was his second career. He spent 5 years as an accountant before deciding to teach.

James mentioned in all three interviews that he expected to be more organized and have stronger routines and rules in place in his classroom. At the end of the TEP, he described struggling to find stability in his classroom as an intern because he had started teaching at the school 4 weeks into the academic year due to staffing issues. He was not relaxed with his students that year and, as a result, he was unable to achieve the classroom stability that he wanted. He felt like the following year he would be able to have more organization because he would be there from the start of the year:

> Well, I expect to be more organized and have clearer expectations. Being there the first day of class of the school year will help, definitely setting the groundwork and a class set of rules that we can all abide by. Yeah, I think maybe give them a class set of rules, set expectations, and maybe a list of consequences and expectations—something like that—and really hold them accountable to it.…I let too many things slide.…Sometimes I just let them use phones, but sometimes I ease off that and they get worse.…So being consistent, for sure, work on that, and get accountable or have the students accountable.

A lack of consistency and clear ground rules led James to feel like he could not teach as well as he wanted to because he was always trying to control his students. Marta had similar feelings. She interned one class and student-taught another class in a middle school during her TEP. At the end of the TEP, when Marta was asked about her expected teacher self a year into the future, she pointed specifically to organizing papers in her classroom: “I’ll have stronger organization…in organizing my classroom a little bit better. Because right now I do have papers all over. But…that’s what I’m expecting, being a lot more organized in the classroom.”

At the start of her first year of teaching, Diana said she would find stability via better classroom management:

> One year from now? Have my behavior management mostly down, or at least have a few reliable strategies.…I’d like to better facilitate circles. I would like to feel like myself, and not feel frustrated, just in terms of behavior management and getting some respect.

She also noted that she expected to be better at facilitating discussion circles in her class. In her school, discussion circles were done once a week in classes to promote social-emotional growth; they tended to focus on a discussion topic that was of interest but was perhaps outside the scope of the class. Diana expected to be better at this practice and at classroom management. She was frustrated and felt like her frustration could be allayed if she was better able to manage her students’ behavior and got more respect from them.

At the start of James’s first year of teaching, he was still expecting to improve his classroom organization. At the end of his TEP, he grounded his organizational issues in student learning. By the start of his first teaching year, when he was asked what type of teacher self he expected to be next year, he said he would be “more organized….Just like being, simplifying the material, and I don’t know, expecting and just being well-spoken.” When asked how he would define “well spoken,” he explained:

> Because sometimes students get confused when I try to, like, with my train of thought. And then I lead to this question, and they’re like, “How’d you get there?” Like, “Why are you even asking me this?” Like, “What does this mean?”

James continued to feel like improved organization in his classroom was crucial for him to grow as a teacher and for his students to learn more. A few participants talked about being better organized as having a set of materials that they could turn to and that they knew worked. For example, at the end of her first year of teaching, Cate said, "I think I'll have more resources and maybe a more efficient way of finding them. But I'll still be, like, collecting items for my toolbox here."

Overall, participants' expected selves regarding stability seemed to center around a different set of goals than their hoped-for selves. They all centered around more concrete classroom organization and planning and managing their students better. In contrast, their hoped-for selves seemed to be centered around a more abstract sense of overall confidence and positive relationships.

### ***Community and Belonging***

Six of the nine participants mentioned that they expected to feel a sense of belonging with their colleagues and to be more enmeshed in the community where they worked—namely to have better relationships with their students' parents. This theme was coded 13 times across the interviews. More than half of the excerpts that I coded as community and belonging (*n* = 7) were from the end of the participants' TEP.

Jaime—a middle and high school English language arts (ELA) teacher—interned at a charter school that catered to both middle and high school students; he was later hired there after he completed his TEP. He described expecting to feel validated and recognized by his peers and administration. Specifically, when asked at the end of his TEP about his expected self, he said:

> I think recognized, definitely, that the work I've done is sufficient, and it's proper, and it's engaging, and it fulfills standards. [Recognized] mainly by staff.…I want to be recognized. I want it to be really explicit that [what I am doing is] working, and that it's there, and that it exists, and that the students are digesting it and it's helping them.…[I want] some degree of [being] more professionally validated, more formally validated.

Jaime almost always exuded confidence in his teaching ability, but he felt in some ways that he had to prove himself to others at the school—he looked for the approval of his community of teachers and expected that he would have that going forward.

Tara was a kindergarten teacher at a bilingual charter school. At the end of her TEP, she said she wanted to be a part of a teacher community and to contribute to that community, but she had trepidations. She explained: “I don’t know if I expect myself to fully throw myself out there the first year, because it also, and it depends on the personalities, the people there.” When asked to clarify what she meant by “throw myself out there,” she said she was referring to

> …just ideas, contributing new ideas. It all depends on my work environment and whether I feel safe enough to make suggestions. Because some people don’t necessarily take suggestions in a positive light….They take it as, “Oh, you don’t like the way that I teach.”

Tara expressed the desire to be in a safe community of teachers but was not sure that those feelings would be reciprocated by her peers. She was guarded in her desire to contribute and be a part of her community.

Diana was similarly guarded at the end of her TEP, as she had not felt supported at her site that year. She was in a situation where she consistently asked for help and support from those at the school who were in formal positions to support her but she never received it, despite support and collegiality ostensibly being part of the school’s mission. This left her confidence shaken. She expected to regain it and better advocate for herself in a new school, where she could become more settled:

> I expect that I will have more confidence that I can advocate for myself, or my department, or my program, or my students better, to make the math program at the school better, where I feel like I have some investment. The thing is, like, this particular next year, I see as another short-term position because I’m planning on the following year moving. And then from there, I want to start putting down some roots.

In this instance, a bad experience seemed to make Diana expect better for herself and motivated her to want the community that she did not have and the stability of "putting down roots" at her new school. She also wanted to extend her connections out into the broader school community:

> Maybe it'd be easier to think about in 2 years—I want to be developing more connections with the community and getting to know the families, and the parents, and what they want for the space, and see how it's changed in the past, and what direction it's going and feel like I have enough investment in this school that I'm going to speak up about it and say how we can make it better.

At the start of her first year of teaching, Diana's desire to be supported but also to contribute to her teacher community remained: "I'd like to feel confident contributing my ideas to the team that I work with, and feel like I have a more reciprocated relationship where people can come to me for things and I feel like I can contribute something and I'm of more value." She wanted to be a part of the teacher community by adding something to the department and to her colleagues.

By the end of their first year in the classroom, few teachers expressed this expected self, because many felt like they had successfully become enmeshed in their teacher communities. Tara was an exception, and I discuss her experience more in a later section. The expectation of being supported and contributing to their teacher communities in some ways contrasts with the oft-expressed idea that teaching is a solitary endeavor (Lortie, 1975). Participants expected to engage with their colleagues, to learn from them, and to contribute. Contributing to the community can engender a sense of belonging, bring more meaning to the work, and foster a stronger teacher identity (Allen, 2020; Brewer, 1991; Filstad et al., 2019). Becoming a part of this community was also a vital part in participants meeting their goals (Filstad et al., 2019), which I will describe this in detail below.

### ***Innovation and Professional Growth***

Finally, one of the most common sentiments expressed by participants was their expectation to grow as professionals and continue to innovate in their classrooms. Seven of the nine participants expressed the expectation of professional growth and innovation across the interviews, and I coded this theme a total of 21 times.

All participants expressed an expectation that they would continually grow and improve as teachers, which contrasts with their desire for stability and getting their classrooms in order. In fact, innovating and growing is what many of them felt was being diminished by their lack of stability and organization. This expected teacher self was often described in opposition to an image of teachers who were stagnant and continued to use the same materials year after year. At the end of her TEP, Cate explained:

> What do I expect? I expect myself to stay on this track of planning as much as I do and being a precrastinator [sic], because I know a lot of teachers who get trapped in a routine and just become lazy, and really aren't on top of their planning or preparing materials or resources for the students.

At the start of her first year of teaching, Diana noted that she expected to continue to grow and learn because she believed that was part of what it meant to be a teacher. She expressed an expected teacher self as a lifelong learner—noting that this was not always an easy path:

> It helps to look back and see how much I've grown. So having the confidence that will just continue, not just next year but honestly should continue for the next 40. So just get used to it, have fun with the learning aspect and not being great all the time, because there's always more to learn and be better at.…And, like, things are going to be fine no matter what. I think just taking off that layer of stress.…I think I'll be chipping away at that, but I think that's a long process that I should see a therapist about, to be honest.

Diana recognized the difficulties of learning to teach, but she expected that she would get where she wanted to be. She expected to continue to grow for decades as a teacher. To her, being a teacher meant constant growth and improvement. She felt like the learning process would eventually be fun, but since she was not where she wanted to be as a teacher, the learning was more to stay afloat and maintain stress.

As discussed earlier, new teachers' identities are shaped by struggle, as they learn to be the teachers that they imagine themselves to be (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Rodgers & Scott, 2008). The stress and the need for therapy that Diana described are part of that process. She was experiencing a level of dissonance because the teacher she would have liked to have been and the teacher she was at that moment were not the same (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Hong, 2010; Hong & Greene, 2011). That said, she was hopeful; her expected self seemed to be serving as a cognitive bridge (Markus & Nurius, 1986) to her teacher future. That is, her vision of her expected self seemed to allay some of the stress she was experiencing.

At the end of his first year of teaching, James said his expected teacher self was someone who was always innovating and not settling or being a teacher who just pulled the same material out of the file cabinet year after year. He mentioned another mentor teacher as an example of his expected future self (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999). He stated that he did not expect to be "a teacher that just works from the file." He continued:

> I saw how Stephanie taught, and she always recreated stuff from scratch, which I kind of want to do too. I think it's going to take a while for me to get to that point. I don't want to be a teacher that just gives out worksheets and expects you to do them over a thousand times.

Participants set this expected self in contrast to the type of teacher who they did not want to become—a teacher who does not innovate and who does not try to grow. To them, teachers should always be growing and innovating, but there was a belief that some other teachers do not do that, and they wanted to avoid becoming that kind of teacher. They expressed a similar sentiment in their feared teacher selves, as many of them expressed a fear of becoming a "file-cabinet teacher," which I discuss next.

## Feared Teacher Selves

As described earlier, feared selves are what people want to avoid becoming. A feared self can motivate an individual to avoid that quality—for example, a teacher may fear becoming boring, and this can motivate them to work to avoid that outcome (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Strahan & Wilson, 2006). When hoped-for or expected selves contrast with feared selves—for example, if a teacher expects to innovate and fears being complacent—this is referred to as *balance* (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Balance has been shown to increase the likelihood of becoming a hoped-for/expected self and of avoiding a feared self (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Two main themes were clear across the interviews with respect to feared teacher selves: Participants feared burning out and feared becoming "file cabinet teachers."

### ***Burnout***

Burnout is often defined by three dimensions: emotional exhaustion; detachment and cynicism about the job; and a feeling of ineffectiveness (Maslach et al., 2001). All participants expressed one or all of these dimensions as a feared self in at least one interview. I coded this 23 times across all interviews. All of the participants worried that they would burn out and stop caring about their students and that they would become impatient, bitter, and not effective as a result of these things.

At the end of the TEP, only four participants mentioned this feared teacher self. Tina, for example, noted that she feared burning out and said she felt this was possible if she was not supported by her colleagues:

> I fear being beaten down and thinking this career isn't for me.…Like, letting all those challenges that are going to happen get to me. Like the student that has a hard time, other teachers that are really sour and…poisonous in the staffroom.…Just

> having a negative view about the profession or about my students and those that I work with. That's what I fear.

The feeling that participants would lose hope or become pessimistic about their students and their work was a common theme in the interviews. The image of other teachers who were bitter and spoke negatively about their students in the staff room was also a common theme (Miller & Shifflet, 2016; Nias, 1989). These sentiments are telling about views of the profession and support the notion that the first year of teaching is one of difficulty and growth (Day & Gu, 2010; Huberman, 1989). Study participants recognized how difficult it could be, and they were not sure that they would have the support they needed to survive. They all sought strong support systems as a way to survive. (See Chapter 6 for more discussion of support systems.)

At the start of their first year in their own classrooms, all nine participants expressed a feared possible self as a teacher who hated the job and was impatient with their students. For example, Cate worried about losing her patience with her students:

> I think what I fear will happen is that I will be too—how do you say that? Too rough, or mean, I suppose. So when a kid does something that I have very little patience for it, I think that's what I fear happening.…Sometimes when it's the same kid doing the same thing every day…I don't want to be that teacher who's always harping on the same kid, and it's not helping them.…I think I fear that happening because I kind of see it happening now.

Cate was afraid that if she could not address her students' needs that it would frustrate her and she would take it out on them—that is, she was afraid she would not be the caring and open teacher she described as her hoped-for self. Thus, she expressed balance in her hoped-for and feared teacher selves (Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

Similarly, Marta expressed a fear of not liking the job because it is mentally difficult and demanding. Her feared teacher self was someone who was overwhelmed and no longer liked the work or her students. When asked about her feared teacher self, she said:

> I guess one that no longer likes the job, that no longer has patience for the kids—one that sees the kids, that they're lazy and they don't care. I think that's my worst fear: for me to not like this job anymore.…Just being so overwhelmed and so stressed that I just give up on planning or making sure that my students learn because I just want to move on and just get through the material. Sometimes I do see that happening, especially when I'm really tired.

Again, this sentiment shows balance for the participants who hoped for positive relationships with their students (Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Balance makes it more likely that they will achieve their hoped-for and expected selves (Oyserman & James, 2012; Oyserman & Markus, 1990).

This sentiment still lingered for some participants at the end of their first teaching year. Janice, a fourth-/fifth-grade teacher, described times when she felt like she was not up to the task of addressing the needs of a student. She feared that her inability to address a student's needs or to be there for that student would result in her burning out and "giving up on her students":

> I fear having, like, a lackluster attitude—kind of this, like, "whatever," like, "I give up" kind of feeling. Whether it be giving up on my students, because I definitely remember there are moments where I'm just like, "This student is too much for me, and this is what it's going to be." And I don't want that. I don't want to have that lackluster attitude towards my teaching practice or towards any of my students.…I really want to make sure I keep on being an advocate for all my students.

The fear of burning out seems to have not been the top fear of most participants by the end of their first year. Many of them were able to overcome challenges and secure employment for the following year. Tina was still worried about securing her employment when we last talked, however, and that was weighing on her when she told me, "I fear that I [will] burn out and leave the profession."

The fear of burning out during the first year of teaching aligns with literature on the life stages of teachers (Day & Gu, 2014; Huberman, 1989). Huberman (1989) noted that the first year of learning to teach is characterized by "survival"—just struggling to get by and make sense of the realities of teaching. Teachers in their early years, especially in their first year, often find themselves facing reality shock as they deal with the realities of having their own classroom and struggle to understand themselves as teachers (Day & Gu, 2014; Huberman, 1989; Veenman, 1984). The fear of burning out signals that participants' teacher identities were grounded in the belief that being a teacher means not being ground down by the difficulties and persevering. They recognized the difficulties of the profession, but they all felt like being a teacher meant not letting those difficulties take away their passion.

### *"File Cabinet Teacher"*

Most participants predicted their expected selves would continue to grow professionally and innovate in the classroom, but they also feared the opposite: stagnation. The most frequently coded theme—coded 32 times, with eight of nine participants—across all interviews was the fear of becoming a "file cabinet teacher." Diana summed up this fear in our interview at the end of her TEP:

> There's a part of me that wants to keep challenging myself.…I don't want to be like a file cabinet teacher, and I don't think I'll ever be there. Part of me wants to have a file cabinet though right now, just so I can have something as opposed to nothing. But, so I guess that's something I don't want.

I asked Diana to elaborate on what she meant by "file cabinet teacher." She explained that she meant a teacher who has "a binder of resources or a file cabinet of sources." She continued:

> There are other teachers that every year they pull out the same thing and they do the exact same thing year after year, page by page, question by question. They don't adapt it to the development of the class or the individuals in the class.

Four participants actually used the term "file cabinet teacher" to denote a teacher who was complacent and ineffective—a teacher who refused to grow and innovate and as a result was ineffective and not good at their job. Seven teachers expressed worries of becoming this feared teacher self. This seems to be in balance with the expected teacher self who will always grow and continue to expand their pedagogy.

In the passage above, Diana is aware of the tension between hoping and expecting to have a baseline level of stability via a go-to repertoire and also wanting to continually grow and reinvent her practice. At the start of his first year of teaching, James also expressed this fear, noting that he did not want to turn his math students into little "machines." He also worried about being ineffective because he was too much of a "pushover":

> I guess I'm worried about just handing out worksheets and just going through problem by problem by problem. And, just like, yeah, that's pretty much it. Just having students like little machines.…I don't know, I also worry about being a pushover.…Because sometimes, like, in the last minute out of a 20-minute class, kids just rush through it and are like, "Look, I finished," like, "I'm done." And, I'm like, "Yeah, but it's all wrong."

James feared that being complacent would also mean he was a pushover. If he was a file cabinet teacher he would not care if his students did not put in the work. Likewise, at the end of the TEP, Logan described a fear of being so complacent and uncaring that his students would hate him. He described a teacher he had in high school as an example of the teacher he did not want to become.

> I think in my first interview I told you about my physics teacher. I really didn't like that teacher.…I think the reason why, it was just because.…he didn't make what could be an interesting class interesting at all. Yeah, he didn't even get to know us. I feel like that resentment that I remember, that a lot of students had towards him.

Looking to past teachers to form opinions of possible selves is common among PSTs and ECTs (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013): I asked Logan to explain what he was afraid of, and he told me:

> I think mostly it's just being hated. Yeah, being hated. Yeah, I think ever since I was little….I was the kid that everyone kind of got along with. I think fast forwarding up to this point, then it's kind of like, I'm noticing several students don't like me. That's a different change for me. So, I don't really want to be that person that is not liked.

Many new teachers struggle to view themselves as genuine teachers who can do their jobs well (Dugas, 2016). Research has shown that a consistent theme for first-year teachers is their need to link their work as teachers to their personal identities (Dugas, 2016; Hong et al., 2017). Logan worried that if he was not interesting, or if he was not actively working to make the class better, then students would not like him. At his student-teaching placement he had a difficult time with the students and the parents. This fear of not being good enough and not being liked as a result weighed heavily on him as he moved on to his next placement, where he had a much better experience. New teachers' perceptions of the way their students view them can be more important for teacher identity development than how students actually feel about them (Dugas, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013). They often want to be seen by students as fair and well liked (Dugas, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013).

Some participants worried that they would not be able to innovate because the school would not allow them to grow on their own or would force them to use a scripted lesson. Janice feared being a mediocre teacher because she might be forced to teach in ways she thought would be ineffective. When she was offered her job, she met with the principal and the other teacher who taught the fourth-/fifth-grade combination class. The other teacher used some teaching practices that Janice philosophically disagreed with, and she was worried that she would be forced into using those practices:

> I just, I think the idea of being mediocre, just the teacher who is there to teach for the sake of having a job and just, "Okay, I'm kind of not finding joy in what I'm doing. I'm just there because I have to look over kids, and it's just something I invested a year in this program for, and I should do this just because."…I think I fear that by being pressured by people around me…[After] just having that really brief conversation, I feel like [the other teacher] may want to have the type of system that I would not agree with. It's just thinking how to do that as a first-year teacher and really uphold my own values.

Participants feared being ineffective teachers because they would be forced into curriculums that they did not deem effective. This seems to be underscored by a larger fear of not being supported by their colleagues in a way that would allow them to be who they wanted to be and to bring their own values into their classrooms. Janice was immediately concerned that she would not be able to be herself in the classroom, and that would make her a less effective teacher. This feared self was most acute among the participants who taught elementary school; no middle or high school participants noted this fear. Popular culture and media portrayals of teachers have an effect on teacher identity (Cohen, 2010b; Mockler, 2011a, 2011b). The idea of an ineffective and lazy teacher is a common trope in the media (Goldstien, 2011). The stories of "bad teachers" or mediocre teachers, who do not care about their students are anecdotal, but ubiquitous in American popular culture and media (Holmes et al., 2018; Goldstien, 2011). Moreover, these teachers may have had experiences with teachers who they do not feel cared about them or was ineffective. Scholarship shows that these images and experiences can weigh on the teacher identities of PSTs and ECTs (Lortie, 1975; Miller & Shiflett, 2016; Weiner & Torres, 2016). The fear of becoming file cabinet teachers indicates that participants feared becoming the stereotypical teacher portrayed in popular culture and to feared becoming the teachers that they did not like as students.

Despite these fears, all but one of the study participants felt like they were able meet the goals of their hoped-for and expected selves and avoid their feared teacher selves. Tara was the only participant who felt like she was not able to meet her goals or avoid her feared self, and she resigned her position in March of 2020. Below I describe the factors that participants felt enabled their success or hindered them.

### A Network of Support to Achieve My Possible Teacher Self

At the end of their first year of teaching, after participants had responded to the possible selves questions, I read them their responses from the end of their TEP program (one year prior). I asked if they felt like they had achieved their hoped-for and expected teacher selves and if they felt like they had avoided their feared teacher selves. Eight of the nine participants answered yes, and one answered no.

I asked the participants who said yes what they felt enabled them to become the possible teacher selves they wanted to become, and I asked the participant who said no what she believed hindered her progress. Eight out of the nine participants attributed their success (or lack thereof) to the support they received from colleagues at their school sites. Diana described receiving guidance and support from her colleagues that allowed her to grow:

> So I think having the curriculum and the pacing guide, and just other teachers teaching the same thing.…It's just the structure that I can go from, but having something, a foundation to go from.…And I also, I'm in a school.…I know that a lot of people are going to be supportive, so if I do want to encourage things in a more project-based direction, I know that I'll have a good amount of support too.

James said that he felt supported by his department and school administration, but he really leaned on two other math teachers who served as mentors. He felt like their presence and support allowed him to achieve his possible selves:

> Another thing that's helped that is just being around Dina and Stephanie more, because they're now inside my classroom. They've really guided me [on] how things should be. And I've really seen what an experienced teacher does, or just how classroom management should work pristinely. When they take over the class, they could not talk to the whole class for a month, and then they can come in the next day and just take over the class like they've always been there. I think it's just being around those people that really helps.

Ibarra (1999) noted the importance of mentors in transitional workspaces to help socialize newcomers to their new positions and to serve as models of possible selves. Moreover, Ibarra noted that affective bonds with people within these spaces are vital for facilitating possible selves. Both Dina and Stephanie served as models for James's possible selves; they provided him with the support to achieve his teacher possible self. These sentiments were common among all of the participants: A support network of colleagues was the most important thing to helping them achieve their goals and their possible teacher selves.

Tara was the one teacher who said that she was not able to achieve her possible teacher self; her feared teacher self came true, and she was not supported by her administration or her colleagues. She worked at a very small charter school and was one of two new teachers that year, but she resigned in March of 2020. In the beginning of the winter/spring semester, a colleague began acting negatively toward her and badmouthing her to other colleagues. This colleague refused to work with or plan with Tara, and Tara felt like other staff began to treat her in a passive aggressive manner. She went to the administration for support, and that made the negativity worse: "After I sought support [from the administration], that's when I started feeling a lot of the aggression from the staff." This negative work environment led to extreme anxiety and ultimately was the reason she left her school.

Tara noted that the lack of support from administration was one of the main barriers to achieving her possible teacher self. At the end of that year, when discussing her feared teacher self, she said she was most concerned about having to go through an experience like that again: "I guess my biggest fear of having— …It's not even my future self. It's just going through another experience like this again. I fear just having to leave the profession again." Past research shows the importance of mentors as models for possible selves (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Ibarra, 1999). Moreover, scholars have noted the importance of a supportive social environment for teacher identity development (Hong et al., 2017). However, few have noted the importance of a support network in helping people to achieve their possible selves.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The findings in this study provide insights into teacher possible selves for new teachers as they make the transition from a TEP to their own classrooms. Possible selves theory is a useful lens to investigate the identity formation process of new teachers (Hamman et al., 2010). This is especially true in a longitudinal study, as it is possible to see how and if teachers attain their hoped-for and expected selves and avoid their feared selves.

In the current study, participants' hoped-for selves were centered around aspirations to feel more confident, be more stable in their classrooms, and have positive student relationships. Their expected teacher selves seemed to gravitate toward stability around organization and classroom routine, being part of the teacher and school community, and growing and innovating as professionals. Their feared selves were grounded in concerns about burning out and becoming complacent and ineffective. Participants believed that the support networks in their schools were one of the main things that helped or hindered their progress toward their teacher selves. Below I discuss how the findings address the research questions that guided the study and, where appropriate, describe implications and ideas for future research.

## RQ1: Teachers Descriptions of Possible Teacher Selves

The first research question pertained to how new teachers describe their possible teacher selves as they transition from the TEP into the classroom. Participants indicated that they were not yet who they wanted to be, which indicates a certain level of identity dissonance. They did, however, acknowledge this dissonance and saw a way out of it in the future. That is, they saw a path to becoming the teachers they wanted to be. For many, the path was in part through a strong community and through professional growth and innovation.

Participants hoped-for selves felt a sense of confidence and stability in the classroom—they knew the content well and could think on their feet. They were adaptable and able to meet challenges without feeling overwhelmed or stressed. Participants hoped for positive relationships with their students as well. Like many new teachers, they hoped to create fun learning environments where their students trusted them and each other. They hoped for positive student relationships characterized by mutual respect.

Participants' expected selves were more grounded in the classroom and in the school community. Similar to their hoped-for teacher selves, they expected to find stability, but they expected to find it via stronger organization and classroom routines. The also expected to be part of a larger teacher community that would support them and to which they could contribute. Many participants described discomfort in feeling like they could not yet contribute to their teacher community in meaningful ways. They also expected to foster stronger ties to the larger school community via relationships with their students' parents. Lastly, they expected to constantly be innovating and growing as professionals. They often described a desire to innovate and grow in contrast to teachers who were lazy and who were complacent.

Possible selves serve as "cognitive bridges" between people's current situations and their future (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 961). The desire for stability for these teachers was a recognition of how difficult it is for new teachers to find stability, as they are just learning their craft and developing their teacher identity (Danielewicz, 2001). That said, they all believed that with time and experience they would cross the cognitive bridge to possible selves who were both more confident in the classroom and more pedagogically savvy. They all believed they would achieve their hoped-for and expected selves with time and experience, as long as their feared selves could be controlled.

Their feared selves were centered on their own mental health and the experiences of their students. Participants all feared burning out, becoming bitter and impatient with their students, and not liking their jobs. Many were worried that they would find out that they were not cut out for the job and would have to leave the profession. In balance with their desire to grow and continue to innovate (Markus & Nurius, 1986), participants feared becoming “file cabinet teachers” who were complacent and ineffective. Specifically, they feared becoming teachers who continually went to sheets from the file cabinet and who refused to grow or adapt to the needs of their students.

There is an interesting tension between the desire to establish stability and a strong foundation and wanting to always grow and improve. Participants seemed to believe that before they could grow, they needed a chance to put down their roots. Indeed, research has shown that possible selves are motivations for change and growth (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & James, 2012; Strahan & Wilson, 2006). It is therefore not surprising that the feared selves these teachers described served as motivation for their teacher identities.

For many participants, the way they described burning out and being ineffective were identity boundaries (Benson, 2003) that helped them understand who they were and actively did not want to become. For several participants, these feared selves were grounded in their experiences as students (Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Hong & Greene, 2011; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). Memories of past experiences can in fact inform feared teacher selves and be strong motivators to avoid becoming that type of teacher (Hong & Greene, 2011).

Overall, it seems that hoped-for selves sought emotional stability in the forms of confidence and positive relationships. Expected selves were grounded in technical competence that would be fostered by and give them access to a strong professional community. With this technical competence, these novice teachers felt like they would continue to grow and learn as professionals. Finally, their feared selves were based on concerns about exhaustion, failure, and being ineffective. In many ways, their hoped-for and expected selves found balance with their feared selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Achieving their hoped-for or expected selves would help them avoid their feared selves. I found this to be the case over time.

For teacher educators, explicitly exploring PSTs possible teacher selves could be a useful form of anticipatory reflection that can be helpful for teacher educators and PSTs (Conway, 2001; Hamman et al., 2010). Anticipatory reflection via possible selves can not only give teacher educators a learn about their PSTs' teacher identities, aspirations and fears, but it can also help PSTs explore and plan concrete steps to become the teachers that they want to be (Conway, 2001; Oyserman & James, 2012; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). Exploring possible selves and other types of anticipatory reflection can serve as a valuable tool to motivate PSTs and give them tangible ways to meet their goals (Conway, 2001; Hamman et al., 2010).

### RQ2: Changes to Possible Selves

The second research question asked how teachers' possible selves change as they transition from their TEP into the classroom. First-year teachers enter their new settings with expectations about how they are going to teach, what their colleagues will be like, and about their students—all of which are wrapped up in their teacher identities (Cook, 2009; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013). As discussed earlier, when they begin, their teacher identities are still largely influenced by past experiences (Barnatt et al., 2017; Cook, 2009; Hong, 2010). Moreover, the first few years of teaching have been characterized by the need to survive and by feelings of reality shock (Day & Gu, 2010; Huberman, 1989; Veenman, 1984). This seemed clear in participants' hoped-for and feared selves as they moved from the end of their TEP into their first year of teaching.

The participants' hoped-for selves yearned for stability through more content knowledge and confidence in the classroom. Participants often were bogged down by stress and felt overwhelmed by the daily rigors of being first-year teachers, and they hoped to feel more grounded and have a stronger foundation. Many expressed the idea that once they had this foundation they would be able to become the teachers they imagined themselves to be. The fact that this hoped-for self was more readily apparent by the start of the first year of teaching for many of the them is a clear indicator of the difficulties in the transitions to teaching and to building a teacher identity.

There was also a shift in what teachers feared. As participants moved into the classroom, many feared burning out—the dissonance and challenge based on the shift from the TEP to the classroom was clear. In fact, by the start of their first teaching year, all of the participants indicated a concern about burning out or becoming so tired that they would no longer care about their students or would not have patience for them. This could point to a need for TEPs to focus on the well-being of PSTs and to give them tools to address concerns about burnout. Much of the work on teacher and PST well-being is focused on stress and burnout, and there is little focus on more positive aspects of well-being (Bjorklund et al., 2021; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Researchers and teacher educators should consider focusing on positive aspects of well-being that PSTs can utilize as they transition into their professional lives.

Over time, participants seemed to show a balance in possible teacher selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986)—they hoped for stability and confidence, and they feared that if they did not find it, they would burn out because of the stress of the job. As previously discussed, balanced possible selves can increase the likelihood in achieving them (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Oyserman & Markus, 1990). As such, it is possible that the hoped-for teacher self that wanted stability and a strong foundation and the feared teacher self that was aware of the possibility of burnout led these participants to achieve their hoped-for self and avoid their feared self.

Past research has found that PSTs and first-year teachers differ in their possible selves (Conway & Clark, 2003; Hamman et al., 2010). I found this to be true to an extent: It seemed that many participants' possible selves were always present, but some were more prominent than others at different times. Past research has shown a level of stability in first-year teachers' concerns, which dramatically change as they go through their second year (Watzke, 2007). The same themes arose for my participants throughout their first year of teaching, ostensibly showing a level of stability in their possible selves over time. That said, it was clear that some possible selves were more prominent at different times during the research. Future research shoul go beyond the first year and explore at the intersection of teacher life phases (Day & Gu, 2010) and teacher possible selves to see how teacher possible selves change at different phases and how schools can leverage teacher possible selves for teachers across their career.

## RQ3: Factors in Achieving Possible Selves

Finally, the third research question asked what factors contribute to the success or failure of achieving a possible self. Prior research has shown that a supportive social environment is crucial for teacher identity development (Hong et al., 2017), and that possible selves are developed via engagement with social contexts (Hong & Greene, 2011; Oyserman & Fryberg, 2006). PSTs develop their possible selves through their past experiences in educational settings and through their social interactions in their TEP and with mentors in the field (Hamman et al., 2010; Hong & Greene, 2011; Miller & Shifflet, 2016). As teachers move to their school sites, they often must modify or rework their existing meaning structures and identities to fit their new situations (Hong & Greene, 2011; Ibarra 1999).

Participants in this study showed the importance of social context for identity development, as almost all attributed their success in achieving their possible teacher selves to their support networks. The one teacher who did not attribute part of her success to her colleagues was Cate, who changed schools mid-year when a full-time job was offered. She felt like teachers and administrators at her new school did not embody her values of teaching; she felt like she had achieved her possible teacher self, but shielded herself from them to stay true to herself.

Even when the social context does not play an active role in supporting possible teacher selves, it is still ever present in identity development. In Cate's case, the social context provided her with cues of the type of teacher she did not want to become and made her hold on more tightly to the teacher self she did want to become. Tara, on the other hand was pushed out because of social factors and was not able to achieve her teacher self. Thus, fundamental to the identity development of all participants was the social context and the social support they did or did not receive.

The importance of participants' social networks for achieving their possible selves is perhaps the most salient takeaway from this chapter. The role of new teachers' social networks in helping them adapt and adjust to their new roles cannot be understated (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017). Most of these teachers attributed their success (or their failure) to the support of their colleagues and administration. They did not describe a set of skills or pedagogical techniques that allowed them to achieve their hoped-for and expected teacher selves, but instead talked about the importance of support from their social networks. This underscores the notion that identity development is a social endeavor (Stets & Burke, 2009). Moreover, it shows that a strong support system is integral for new teachers to envision and foster their teacher identities and become the teachers they want to be. TEPs can harness these findings in two ways. First, they can extol the importance of PSTs building strong professional support networks (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017) at their schools and giving them ways to establish those networks in their schools. Second, TEPs can build strong networks amongst teachers who graduate so that PSTs have a built-in support system in their TEP that they can turn to in their first years of teaching (Freedman & Appleman, 2008). Similarly, schools should take steps to build support networks around new teachers and give them access to veteran teachers who can give them the support they need (Kardos & Johnson, 2010). This chapter shows that the power of a strong support network for PSTs and ECTs cannot be underestimated (Barnatt et al., 2017).

# Chapter 9

## Themes Across the Chapters: Boundaries, Belonging, and Optimism

> *"Close relationships [act] as an important 'social glue,' helping people to deal with the uncertainties of their changing world…"* (Goodwin, 2005, p. 615)

Teacher identity is at the heart of how teachers learn, grow, interact with others, and go about their work (Buchannan, 2015; Reeves, 2018). Sachs (2005) contended that teacher identity "provides a framework for teachers to construct their own ideas of 'how to be,' 'how to act,' and 'how to understand' their work" (Sachs, 2005, p. 15). In short, everything that teachers do is framed by their teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Buchanan, 2015; Gatimu & Reynolds, 2013; Hsieh, 2015). As Hamachek (1999) asserted, "Consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are" (p. 209).

The first years of teaching are especially important to teacher identity development (Day et al., 2006; Flores & Day, 2006; Hamman et al., 2010; 2013; Mockler, 2011b), which can be a source of struggle as new teachers reconcile their personal identities and histories with the realities of the classroom (Alsup, 2006; Britzman, 1986; Flores & Day, 2006; Miller & Shiflett, 2016; Veenman, 1984). This struggle can make the first years of teaching a project in uncertainty, dissonance, vulnerability, and self-doubt (Alsup, 2006; Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Nichols et al., 2017; Sydnor, 2017). A clear awareness of teacher identity development during this time can buoy new teachers against the turbulence of the early years (Alsup, 2006; Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Day et al., 2006, Kelchtermans, 2009). As noted in Chapter 1, an awareness of who one is as a teacher and how one is perceived by others in that role is a necessary step in becoming a good teacher (Hamachek, 1999). Intentionality and purpose in developing a teacher identity provides a strong foundation upon which a new teacher can build their pedagogy, agency, resilience, and practice (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009;

Beijaard et al., 2004; Flores & Day, 2006; Johnson et al., 2010). In short, teacher identity can both be a source of struggle and of strength.

As teacher identity is inherently social, an integral part of identity development for new teachers is the people with whom they interact in their social networks in both personal and professional contexts (Barnatt et al., 2017; Cohen, 2008, 2010a; Mockler, 2011a, 2011b). Ideally, these networks support new teachers in navigating the difficulties of teacher identity development (Barnatt et al., 2017; Baker-Doyle, 2012; Thomas et al., 2019; 2020). To understand this further, this dissertation set out to explore the identity development of PSTs and ECTs and the interactions between their social networks and teacher identity development as they transitioned from their TEP to their first years in the classroom. The dissertation was guided by two overarching questions:

*RQ1: How does teacher identity form over time as educators transition from credential to classroom?*

*RQ2: How do educators' social networks interact with the development of their teacher identity?*

Over the course of the last five chapters, using identity theory and social network theory, I have explored different facets of teacher identity development and the social networks of PSTs and ECTs. In the sections that follow, I attempt to answer these two research questions directly by describing the cross-cutting themes from these five chapters. I also identify some implications for future research. Finally, I describe how this work contributed to the overall literature on teacher identity and social networks, describe the limitations of this study, and offer some concluding thoughts.

## Themes Across the Chapters

### Participants Set Social Boundaries to Define Their Teacher Identities

As noted in previous chapters, identity is how people understand themselves in relation to others; it is what makes people the same and also what makes them different (Benson, 2003; Lawler, 2014; Mockler, 2011a). Individuals create social boundaries or distinctions to identify themselves into a group apart from others (Binder & Abel; 2019; Lamont et al., 2015). In other words, while identities are grounded in who we are and what we will do, they are also grounded in who we are *not* and what we will *not* do (Benson, 2003). The findings of the current research indicate that teacher identity is no different.

Participants formed social boundaries around their teacher identities with people who were part of their networks, people who were outside of their networks, and people in their personal histories. In Chapter 5, I described how they drew sharp contrasts between themselves (and their close friends in the TEP) and others who they believed were not as committed to social justice work. They defined themselves as having strong social justice teacher identities by psychologically distancing themselves from others they saw as either not serious about social justice or as "White saviors" who could not be the type of teacher their students needed. In some ways, it seemed easier for participants to articulate a vision of who they were *not* as teachers than who they *were* as teachers. Seeing others who they thought did not meet their ideals gave them a clear line to delineate who they were not and what they would not do as teachers, and this strengthened their own sense of teacher identity (Benson, 2003).

Finding like-minded supportive peers made it easier for them to draw social boundaries between their own group and others (Carlone et al., 2015). This was the case in Chapter 5, as participants were all able to find peers with whom they felt close and, more specifically, had shared meanings about teacher identity and a social justice teacher identity. Having a perceived sense of shared meanings in a close friendship group helped participants create a constellation of belonging (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2020) within their cohort. This helped them to build a sense of their own teacher identity and to distinguish themselves from peers who were outside of that group (Carlone et al., 2015).

In contrast, some participants drew boundaries between themselves and colleagues in their support networks. Specifically, in Chapter 6, some professional support networks included colleagues who participants did not necessarily view as good teachers. They included them in their networks for organizational reasons—for example, they taught the same grade level or subject. Participants often looked to them for instrumental or informational support (House, 1981), like help with pacing for a unit or help teaching a specific math concept. In other words, these colleagues were present in support networks due to the organization of the school, but in all likelihood would not have been sought out for support if not for organizational forces (Thomas et al., 2019).

Interestingly, participants also drew social boundaries between themselves and the teachers in their support network they admired. Being a novice teacher was a large part of participants' teacher identities, and they drew what I call *permeable social boundaries* between themselves and the peers they admired. Rather than drawing social boundaries that they would not want to cross, signifying the type of teacher they never wanted to become (Benson, 2003), the boundaries were instead a recognition of difference in experience and of admiration. They are permeable because participants wanted to cross these boundaries in the future—they wanted to be more like the teachers they sought for support. For example, a common attribute that participants wanted to emulate was balance—being authoritative *and* liked by students. Several acknowledged they were not that type of teacher yet, mainly due to a lack of experience. Nevertheless, they were optimistic that they could achieve this identity in the future.

Finally, to define themselves as teachers, participants also drew imaginary social boundaries around popular cultural images of teachers and teachers they had experienced as students. New teachers' teacher identities are largely influenced by their histories as students (Britzman, 1986; Lortie, 1975; Miller & Shifflet, 2016) and by popular cultural and media portrayals of teachers (Berliner, 2013; Cohen, 2010a; Mockler, 2011a). When describing their feared teacher selves in Chapter 8, participants seemed to draw on their histories as students or on narratives of so-called "bad teachers" (Holmes et al., 2018). For example, they described past teachers who did not try to get to know their students or did not have caring relationships with their students, and they feared becoming those teachers. Similarly, without always citing past experiences, they described "file cabinet" teachers who were burned out and stopped caring—in other words, lazy teachers who did not care about students and got by with little effort. This is a common trope in American popular culture and media (Goldstein, 2011).

While symbolic boundary making is a well-documented social phenomenon (Binder & Abel; 2019; Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Lamont et al., 2015), it was not a theme that I expected when I started this project. The evidence makes it clear, however, that all participants constructed their teacher identities in large part based in opposition to the types of teachers they did not want to become (Benson, 2003). Scholars have explored boundary work in teacher identity. For example, Janet Alsup's (2006) book looked at how PSTs form teacher identities by examining boundaries between their personal and professional identities—what she called *borderland discourse*. But few, if any scholars have explored how social boundaries that new teachers create between themselves and their peers and colleagues play a role in shaping or fostering teacher identity.

### Social Networks Facilitated Teacher Identity (and Vice Versa)

Taking a social network perspective offers innovative ways to study PSTs' and ECTs' social boundaries and their use of these boundaries in identity development. In the current research, using mixed-methods social network approaches to see who PSTs and ECTs do and do not include in their networks (and why) offered insights into how these new teachers created social boundaries that defined their teacher identities. Specifically, I found that participants' colleagues and peers in the program and in their schools played a role in facilitating PSTs' and ECTs' teacher identities (Cohen, 2008, 2010a); moreover, participants' teacher identities were related to the formation of their social networks (Baker-Doyle, 2012).

In Chapter 4, teacher identities were related to tie formation in PSTs' advice networks. However, teacher identity played a different role in the two cohorts. In the multiple-subject cohort, PSTs' social justice identities and visions of their possible teacher selves decreased the likelihood of advice seeking; in the single-subject cohort, they increased the likelihood of advice seeking. This draws attention to how identities—and actions taken due to identities—manifest differently in distinct contexts (Burke & Stets, 2009). Despite the different effects of teacher identity on tie formation in these cases, one of the main takeaways from Chapter 4 was that teacher identity played a role in how PSTs formed and interacted with their networks. As I discuss next, this was bolstered by the findings discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

In Chapter 5, PSTs with networks that included more alters with a different ethno-racial identity also tended to have stronger social justice teacher identities. The qualitative data suggest that participants entered the program with a sense of their social justice teacher identities and found friends with similar beliefs (Olsen, 2008). These close friends seemed to hone study participants' convictions about teaching for social justice. In some instances, close peers introduced participants to new ideas about teaching for social justice; in most cases, however, they bolstered and amplified the beliefs that participants had when they entered the program (Olsen, 2008). Thus, it seems that PSTs' social justice teacher identities influenced network formation, and these networks also influenced social justice identities.

In Chapter 6, network intentionality (Moolenaar et al., 2014; Thomas et al., 2020) drove tie dissolution and tie formation in participants' professional support networks. This network intentionality was in some part driven by their teacher identities (Baker-Doyle, 2012). Participants who felt confident in their teacher identities sought colleagues who could give them the support they needed and dropped ties with alters who they no longer felt could give them that support (Baker-Doyle, 2012). Additionally, interacting with colleagues in their professional support networks facilitated their teacher identities by giving them models of the types of teachers they could become (Hamman et al., 2010; Ibarra, 1999).

Cohen (2010a) suggested that, through interactions with colleagues, teachers confirm their roles and identities by making "identity bids" (p. 475)—implicit or explicit statements related to their teacher identities—as they look for colleagues to recognize these statements and validate or reinforce their identities. Through interactions with their professional support networks, the teachers in the current study also received identity verification and reinforcement (Burke & Stets, 2009). Moreover, the beliefs and ideas of the colleagues in their professional support networks both constrained and nourished their teacher identities (Cohen, 2010a; McGriff, 2015). Through these networks, they learned which teacher identities were accepted at their schools and which were not.

Lastly, in Chapter 7, colleagues in participants' professional support networks played a role in identity verification (Burke & Stets, 2009) and in creating experiences of belonging. By validating participants' understandings of themselves, colleagues in their networks fostered social bonds and feelings of belonging (Burke & Stets, 1999; Stets et al., 2018). Moreover, the support these colleagues gave to participants fostered experiences of belonging, which in turn validated their teacher identities. Taken together, Chapters 4–7 provide evidence of the significance of PSTs' and ECTs' social networks in fostering teacher identity. They also provide evidence of the role of teacher identity in facilitating network formation (Baker-Doyle, 2012).

## Fading Social Justice Identities in the Classroom

In Chapter 5, I explicitly looked at participants' social justice teacher identities. Although they did not feel prepared to discuss race in their classrooms, many did feel like they were equipped to teach for equity and social justice. Despite the expressed fervor for teaching for social justice in this chapter, however, discussions of teaching for social justice and issues of racism and equity were largely absent from participants' discussions of their teacher identities in Chapters 6–8. Discussions of how to address structural inequalities and structural racism in their classrooms were generally absent when they talked about their possible teacher selves and the teachers they wanted to emulate. Other than when I questioned them directly about issues of race and inequity, study participants rarely brought it up; it was absent from the excerpts showcased in Chapters 6–8 as well as in the interview data that were not included in these chapters.

Boylan and Woolsey (2015) posited that whether PSTs or ECTs are aware of it or not, they all have a relationship to social justice. The presence or absence of social justice, racism, and inequity in these chapters and in discussions with participants may be indicative how they understood themselves as teachers. Past research suggests that the effects of TEPs on teacher identity and practice are ephemeral (Olsen, 2011). Moreover, past work has shown that PSTs and new teachers often fall short of critically understanding systemic racism and systemic inequities, and this disrupts them in their classrooms (Boylan & Woolsey, 2015; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009a). As such, after they complete their training, they may not know how to disrupt systemic racism and inequities, and their social justice identities may become less central to their broader teacher identities.

Another potential reason for lack of discussion around social justice ideals in the later interviews is that new teachers may be scared to enact a social justice agenda. Research has found that teachers in their first year often find it difficult to do so because of the challenges of being in their first year and of not having tenure (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2007). In these early days, the ideals they have taken from their TEP may clash with the realities of their work and context, forcing them to alter their teacher identities (Flores & Day, 2006; Sydnor, 2017). Moreover, enacting a social justice agenda means questioning and disrupting the status quo. Often, new teachers who do not have tenure are worried that doing so could result in them losing their jobs (Athanases & de Oliveira, 2007). Whatever the reason, it was interesting to note the absence of talk about social justice or about disrupting inequalities in the final three chapters. I should note, however, that my positionality as a cisgender White male may have played a role in them not being forthcoming in issues of race. (For a more detailed description of my positionality, see Chapter 3.)

### Acknowledged Constraints and Maintained Optimism for Developing Teacher Identity

Throughout the previous chapters, participants seemed to recognize constraints on meeting their envisioned teacher identities that stemmed from an acute awareness of their status as novice teachers. They frequently expressed a sense that they were not where they wanted to be. In doing so, they seemed to express a level of discontent with their current teacher identities. That said, there was also a constant theme of optimism: The participants all believed they would be able to become the teachers the envisioned themselves to be.

In Chapter 6, when talking about colleagues in their professional support networks whom they wanted to emulate, participants described them as having mastery over the content and striking a balance between being well-liked and being respected as an authority. Earlier studies have highlighted this same tension (Dugas, 2016; Hildenbrand & Arndt, 2016; Vetter et al., 2013). When describing peers in their professional support networks who had these traits, participants expressed the belief that they were not at the same level in terms of mastery and balance, but they would get there. They seemed to sense their shifting and dynamic teacher identities by acknowledging teacher selves that were not where they wanted them to be and having a certain sense of optimism for the future.

Belonging is central to identity formation (Guibernau, 2013; Wenger, 1998). In Chapter 8, participants initially expressed a certain level of ambivalence about feeling like they belonged at their schools. They often felt like they did not belong *yet*, simply because they were new to their schools and were still trying to figure out who they were. They were optimistic that they would be able to belong in the future, however, once they had more experience. This was especially clear when participants discussed whether they felt like they were valued at their schools. Some indicated they did not feel valued because they could not contribute to their colleagues' practice or to their school more broadly. This type of contribution is integral to fostering a sense of belonging with a group (Filstad et al., 2019; Waller, 2020) and can increase feelings of efficacy and competence (McClure & Brown, 2008; Waller, 2020). Thus, it is not surprising that participants' beliefs that they could not yet substantially contribute added to their ambivalence about belonging—even if this ambivalence was tempered by a sense of optimism that this would change. In this way, participants' teacher identities never seemed to be settled; they were always looking forward, and their current teacher identities were expressed in what they *hoped* to become, once they had more experience in the classroom.

In fact, the optimism of achieving their possible teacher selves was especially clear in Chapter 9, where participants discussed their expected and hoped-for teacher selves (Hamman et al., 2010; Hamman, Coward, et al., 2013; Markus & Nurius, 1986). They expressed a sense that they would become the teachers they wanted to be and, in interviews, many of them felt like they achieved their possible teacher selves from the prior year. In particular, they described expected and hoped-for teacher selves who had a sense of stability in the classroom. They all wanted to be teachers whose lessons were well in order, who could think on their feet, and who could create engaging, student-led classrooms. Again, however, there was a sense in their responses that their inexperience hindered them from this goal: Until they had more experience and a better grasp of the content, they could not teach the way they truly wanted to—they could not enact their desired teacher selves. They all had visions of who they wanted to be, but those visions felt out of reach at the time of the interviews, though not completely unattainable.

This shows an awareness of the dynamism and constant negotiating of teacher identities in the first year of teaching (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004). Participants were all negotiating their teacher identities with their colleagues and their school contexts. By the end of their first year in the classroom, almost all felt like they had attained their hoped-for and expected selves, and like they had avoided the feared selves they had described at the end of their TEP. They attributed this success to the support networks at their school sites. Not only did other teachers at their schools offer templates for their possible selves, they also offered the support to get them there (Hamman et al., 2010; Ibarra, 1999).

### Belonging and Value Consonance Matter

A final common theme was the importance of feeling a sense of belonging for new teacher identity development. There is ample literature supporting the idea that belonging is a core component of identity and identity development (Allen, 2020; Blåka & Filstad, 2007; Guibernau, 2013; May, 2011; Miller, 2003). Despite this, little work has explored the antecedents and outcomes of belonging among PSTs and ECTs (Bjorklund & Daly, 2021; Bjorklund et al., 2020; Bjorklund et al., 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011, 2019). Moreover, the work that has been done has not sufficiently explored the interaction between belonging and teacher identity development.

While Chapter 7 focused specifically on the importance of belonging, *sense of belonging*—defined as feeling like one fits and is valued by a group or organization (Hagerty et al., 1992; Lambert et al., 2013)—was a theme that cut across the chapters. In Chapter 5, for example, feeling a sense of value consonance or value fit with the TEP and the people in the program had a positive relationship with participants' social justice teacher identities. Many participants described the strong role that the program had on their social justice teacher identities. This was in part because they felt like they had goals and visions of good teaching that aligned with the program's goals and visions—in other words, they felt like they fit in in the program. Notably, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011) similarly found that value consonance was an integral part of belonging for teachers.

When people feel a sense of fit or psychological membership with a group of people in a learning environment, it improves the learning environment and allows for more risk taking and growth (Booker, 2016). Though many TEPs have explicit goals of teaching for social justice (Zeichner, 2006), those goals can be stymied by resistance from students whose ideas about teaching do not align with the program or who do not see teaching for social justice as a part of their work (e.g., Daniel, 2009; Miller Marsh, 2002; Richmond et al., 2011). Here, feeling a sense of value consonance with the program helped shape participants' social justice teacher identities, which may not have occurred had those identities been absent.

In Chapter 6, teachers described their professional support networks and seeking out people who supported them openly and caringly. Social support from colleagues fosters belonging and confidence in new teachers (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009). Moreover, supportive and positive relationships with veteran colleagues are essential to new teachers' feelings of belonging in a new school (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2009). Additionally, claims of belonging are made based on feelings of shared values and shared meanings (May, 2011). Indeed, many participants described strengthening relationships with the colleagues they felt shared similarities with them. The support that participants described honored where they were in the process of learning to teach and made them feel like they were cared for. The colleagues who supported them made them feel like they belonged and that they were accepted. This type of support fosters a sense of belonging, which in turn allows individuals to seek help when they need it and to grow their support networks (Levett-Jones & Lathlean, 2008, 2009).

In Chapter 8, participants all described expected selves who belonged to and contributed to the larger school community. Almost all of them expected to be embedded in a community of teachers at the school. Moreover, they described future teacher selves who would have a place in the larger school community outside of their classroom—with parents and in extracurricular activities. In short, belonging was an integral part of their future teacher selves. Finally, Chapter 7 explicitly highlighted how important feelings of belonging were to identity development in teachers. The findings across these chapters together support the idea that belonging is integral to identity development.

## Contribution to the Literature

This dissertation builds on decades of teacher identity literature in four distinct ways: (a) by using a network approach to exploring identity; (b) by using multiple social network approaches to data collection and analysis; (c) by using identity theory as a tool to explore teacher identity; and (d) by showcasing the importance of belonging in teacher identity development. I discuss each of these contributions in turn.

Even though teacher identity is an inherently social endeavor (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Burke & Stets, 2009; Mockler, 2011b) few scholars have undertaken research using a theory or approach that privileges relationships. Social network theory foregrounds the "web of relationships in which actors are embedded that both constrain and provide opportunities" (Borgatti & Ofem, 2010, p. 18; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). In this dissertation, I showcased some possibilities for using social networks as a tool for exploring teacher identity.

Secondly, this dissertation adds to the literature by using both sociocentric and egocentric approaches to data collection and multiple approaches to analyzing the data. Drawing on social networks through a combination of sociocentric and egocentric mixed-method approaches afforded me the theoretical grounding and sets of robust methods to add nuance to our understanding of new teachers' teacher identities and social networks. Often the role of "social influence" related to identity is not as clearly assessed, although it is typically recognized.

Sociocentric and egocentric network approaches offer different visions of individuals' social networks and different paths for identity development. Using multiple network approaches and additional methods supported a more nuanced "social insight" into identity.

Additionally, these two approaches allowed me to draw on robust and innovative analytical techniques, like exponential random graph models (ERGMs) and churn analysis, which are not widely used in the PST literature and only recently have seen increased use in educational research more broadly. Using multiple social network approaches for data collection and analysis allowed me to better understand how relationships are driven by teacher identity and how teacher identity is driven by social interactions and social contexts. Future work should continue to explore teacher identity through mixed methods and social networks using multiple approaches. Doing so will offer a more nuanced picture of the social aspects of identity development.

As noted earlier, there are several theories and definitions of teacher identity. Over the decades, scholars have failed to land on a coherent definition or a cohesive theory of teacher identity (Rodgers & Scott, 2008). The inability to find one definition or unifying theory is likely due in part to how extremely complex and multifaceted teacher identity is (Mockler, 2011b). The multiple frameworks and approaches add to the richness of the research and the richness of our understandings of teacher identity. A few scholars have begun to use identity theory to explore teacher identity (e.g., Tsang & Jiang, 2018; van der Want et al., 2015, 2018a, 2018b). This dissertation builds on this nascent work and shows the utility of using an identity theory approach to exploring teacher identity. By defining identity as meanings ascribed to roles, groups, and traits by individuals and groups (Burke & Stets, 2009), and by providing a host of variables to measure identity, identity theory offers an innovative and coherent theory for exploring this topic. Future researchers should continue to use identity theory and constructs to explore teacher identity in innovative ways that can add unique perspectives to the existing teacher identity literature.

Lastly, this dissertation showcased the importance of sense of belonging for PSTs and new teachers in identity formation and teacher well-being. A large and growing body of literature has explored the importance of sense of belonging for students in K–16 settings over the past 30 years (e.g., Bjorklund, 2019; Goodenow, 1993; Hurtado & Carter, 1997; Strayhorn 2012). Moreover, there is a burgeoning literature exploring sense of belonging in the workplace (e.g., Blåka & Filstad, 2007; Dávila & Gárcia, 2012; Filstad et al., 2019; Waller, 2020). Much less research has explored the antecedents and outcomes of feelings of belonging for PSTs and ECTs (e.g., Bjorklund et al., 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011). As previously discussed, learning to teach is a time of struggle and dissonance. Feelings of belonging allay uncertainty and self-doubt (Guibernau, 2013). As such, more work should be done to understand sense of belonging in PSTs and ECTs. This work offers a path to stronger teacher identities and support for new teachers during difficult times that cause many to leave the profession (Hong, 2010; Ingersoll et al., 2018).

## Limitations

There are several limitations of this study worth noting. First, attrition from the in-depth interview sample was fairly high. Seven participants were excluded from the study after the first year, and unfortunately their experiences in their first of teaching may have differed in significant ways from the other participants. Moreover, the loss of those seven people made the sample slightly more homogenous in terms of ethno-racial identity and skewed it more toward middle and secondary teachers than primary school teachers. All in all, the loss of the seven participants after the first year limited the findings.

Secondly, the quantitative findings from the sociocentric networks in Chapters 4 and 5 are difficult to generalize, as the outcomes are true for those networks and may not be true for other networks. While I contend that this program and its participants are similar and representative of other programs in the region—in terms of mission, ethno-racial composition, age range of participants, and gender composition—these results should be considered preliminary. Future research should explore multiple sites to examine the antecedents and outcomes of social networks within a broader swath of programs.

A third limitation is that the last phase of data collection happened during the COVID-19 pandemic, in March–June of 2020. As such, I was not able to have face-to-face interviews with participants. Moreover, their experience of shifting to virtual learning and away from face-to-face instruction may have affected how they answered the questions. In short, the same research under non-pandemic conditions may have yielded different results.

Next, as I noted above and revisit below, teacher identity is an extremely complex and dynamic construct. The findings described in the previous chapters cannot possibly capture all of the nuances and complexities of participants' teacher identities. I was unable to include several notable data points; even if they had been included, I still would not have captured the full complexity of teacher identities. As such, the findings only capture slices of participants' teacher identities and how those identities interacted with their social networks.

Lastly, my positionality as a White cisgender male may have limited the authenticity of discourse around race and discrimination with my participants. Moreover, it may also have limited my ability to analyze my qualitative data, as I am a cultural outsider to many of my participants. As noted in Chapter 3, I belief that I fostered authentic relationships with my participants over the two years and that they were comfortable sharing their experiences with me. Additionally, I used participants checks (Creswell, 2016) during the course of the research to strengthen the validity of my findings.

## Concluding and Moving Forward

Teacher identity formation is a dynamic and ongoing process (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004; Day et al., 2006). At the same time, it has certain static qualities that allow it to guide the work of teachers. As such, it is both a process and a product (Olsen, 2008). Mockler (2011b) asserted that at different points in their careers, teachers anchor their identities in specific parts of their work. For example, a new secondary school teacher may anchor their identity in their subject—for example, math—and other parts of their teacher identity grow and develop around this anchor. At different times in teachers' careers, different identity anchors will be more salient and serve to ground teacher identities and provide a strong sense of who teachers are (Mockler, 2011b). For example, early career teachers in secondary school contexts may anchor their teacher identities in the subject that they teach—math, social studies, etc. Mockler (2011b) also noted that teachers may use multiple anchors to guide their understanding of themselves. The evidence from this dissertation seems to point to the notion that PSTs and ECTs have auxiliary or primary identities anchored in their relationships with colleagues and peers that guide and inform their teacher identities.

PSTs' and ECTs' teacher identities are intertwined with their networks and, simultaneously, their networks are intertwined with their teacher identities. Social networks act as a force on, and are a product of, teacher identity. Across the chapters of this dissertation, I have explored different networks and different aspects of teacher identity. What is clear from this work is the power that relationships and networks have to help new teachers understand themselves and their work. Even chapters in this dissertation that explored identity development without a network focus (Chapters 7 and 8) ultimately came back to the importance of networks in helping ECTs become the teachers they want to become and in forming constellations and communities of belonging (Guibernau, 2013; Pfaff-Czarneck, 2020) that help them understand who they are as teachers.

Overall, participants' teacher identity development was not linear; there was no clear, set pattern of identity development. Their teacher identities were complex, constantly being negotiated, grounded in their histories, and shaped in their social networks. Moreover, the participants all seemed to have an awareness of their teacher identities, the constraints of their identities, and the identities that they wanted to accomplish.

When I started collecting data for this dissertation, I thought that the lack of a unified definition or theory about teacher identity was a flaw in the literature. I have since learned that it is in fact just the opposite. Teacher identity is difficult to define because it is so multifaceted and complex (Mockler, 2011b). As such, the multiplicity of research approaches and theoretical frameworks is an asset to exploring teacher identity. It adds richness and depth to how researchers undertake this work. This dissertation adds to this diverse literature by exploring teacher identity via identity theory and social network theory.

As noted in each chapter—and by several scholars—teacher identities are multiple and inherently social (e.g., Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard et al., 2004). As such, identity theory and a social network approach to exploring teacher identity allow researchers the opportunity to explicitly privilege the social aspects of teacher identity and address the multiple meanings embodied in teacher identities. As the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter asserts, close relationships hold people together amid uncertainty. Another way to think about this is that close relationships help us define ourselves and create a sense of stability and coherence in our identities (Guibernau, 2013; May, 2011).

Learning to teach and building a teacher identity are rife with uncertainties, doubt, and dissonance. The social networks in which teachers embed themselves—or find themselves embedded—can assuage or amplify those uncertainties. The social networks of PSTs and ECTs in their first years are vital to their identity development and their growth as teachers (Baker-Doyle, 2012; Barnatt et al., 2017; Mockler, 2011b). I hope this dissertation can serve as a starting point to build new avenues for understanding and exploring teacher identity development.

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# Appendix A—Survey Items Used in Chapters

## Social network prompts

*Advice Network—Chapters 4 and 5*

| Please select the frequency of interaction with members of the cohort from ***whom you seek advice to improve your teaching practice****?* **If you do not seek advice from someone on the list leave the spaces to the right of their name blank.** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Once a quarter* | *Monthly* | *Weekly* | *Daily or almost daily* |
| Teacher 1 | | | | |
| Teacher K | | | | |

*Identify with Network—Chapter 4*

| ***With whom do you identify in your cohort?*** By identify with we mean someone who you believe shares similar traits, values, beliefs, or experiences with you. **If you do not feel like you identify with someone on the list leave the space to the right of their name blank.** | |
|---|---|
| | *Identify with (select all that apply)* |
| Teacher 1 | |
| Teacher K | |

*Close Relationships Network—Chapter 5*

| Of the cohort members, who are those with ***whom you have a 'close' relationship*****?** By 'close' we mean a person with whom you share personal information and/or spend time with in informal activities/settings. **If you do not feel like you have a close relationship with someone on the list then leave the space to the right of their name blank** | |
|---|---|
| | *Close Relationship (select all that apply)* |
| Teacher 1 | |
| Teacher K | |

## Scale Items

*Social Justice Beliefs Scale (Enterline et al., 2008)—Chapter 4*

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Respond to each of the statements by considering your feelings about teaching and learning. | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| | *Strongly Disagree* | | *Disagree* | | *Somewhat agree* | | *Agree* | | *Strongly Agree* |
| An important part of learning to be a teacher is examining one's own attitudes and beliefs about race, class, gender, disabilities, and sexual orientation. | | | | | | | | | |
| Issues related to racism and inequality should be openly discussed in the classroom. | | | | | | | | | |
| For the most part, covering multicultural topics is only relevant to certain subject areas. (r) | | | | | | | | | |
| Good teaching incorporates diverse cultures and experiences into classroom lessons. | | | | | | | | | |
| The most important goal in working with immigrant children and English language learners is that they assimilate into American society. (r) | | | | | | | | | |
| It's reasonable for teacher to have lower classroom expectations for students who don't speak English as their first language. (r) | | | | | | | | | |
| Part of the responsibilities of the teacher is to challenge school arrangements that maintain social inequalities. | | | | | | | | | |
| Teachers should teach students to think critically about government positions and actions. | | | | | | | | | |
| Economically disadvantaged students have more to gain in schools because they bring less to the classroom. (r) | | | | | | | | | |
| Although teachers have to appreciate diversity, it's not their job to change society. (r) | | | | | | | | | |
| Whether students succeed in school depends primarily on how hard they work. (r) | | | | | | | | | |
| Realistically, the job of a teacher is to prepare students for the lives they are likely to lead. (r) | | | | | | | | | |

(r) Indicates items that are reverse coded

### *Identity Prominence (Brenner et al., 2014)—Chapter 4*

The following items are meant to get an understanding of your feelings about yourself as a teacher.

| | *Strongly Disagree* | | *Disagree* | | *Somewhat agree* | | *Agree* | | *Strongly Agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Being a teacher is an important part of my self-image. | | | | | | | | | |
| Being a teacher is an important reflection of who I am. | | | | | | | | | |
| I have come to think of myself as a teacher. | | | | | | | | | |
| I have a strong sense of belonging to the community of teachers. | | | | | | | | | |

### *Possible Teacher Selves (Hamman, Wang, & Burley, 2013)—Chapter 4*

*Below is a set of statements about goals you might possibly expect of yourself during your first year of teaching. Using the 9-point scale, describe how much you expect each to be true for you next year. For statements you do not expect to be true for you next year, choose "absolutely do not expect." For statements you think are very likely to be true of you next year, choose "absolutely expect." For statements about which you have greater or lesser expectations, choose the numbers in the mid-range. There are no correct answers, only your opinions about what you expect of yourself during your first year of teaching*

| | Absolutely do *not expect* | | *Do not expect* | | *Sort of expect* | | *Do expect* | | *Absolutely expect* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Learn from experienced colleagues. | | | | | | | | | |
| Build positive relationships with parents. | | | | | | | | | |
| Learn new teaching strategies. | | | | | | | | | |
| Be successful in my profession. | | | | | | | | | |
| Be fair and consistent to my students. | | | | | | | | | |
| Have guidance from experienced colleagues. | | | | | | | | | |
| Develop classroom management skills. | | | | | | | | | |
| Be organized and prepared. | | | | | | | | | |
| Help students build a positive attitude. | | | | | | | | | |

*Below is a set of statements about things that student teachers have said they "fear" could happen to them during their first year of teaching. Please read each statement, and decide how likely it is that the statement will describe you as a teacher next year. That is, how much do you fear this could be true of you next year?*

| | Absolutely do *not fear this* | | *Do not fear this* | | *Sort of fear this* | | *Do fear this* | | *Absolutely do fear this* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not have a good classroom management plan. | | | | | | | | | |
| Not be successful in teaching my content. | | | | | | | | | |
| Lose control when students are disruptive. | | | | | | | | | |
| Be uncaring to my students. | | | | | | | | | |
| Not be a positive role model to my students. | | | | | | | | | |
| Become a worksheet teacher. | | | | | | | | | |
| Be a boring teacher. | | | | | | | | | |
| Treat students unfairly. | | | | | | | | | |
| Teach boring lessons. | | | | | | | | | |

*Value Consonance Scale (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011)—Chapter 5*

Respond to each of the statements by considering your feelings about your peers in the cohort and the program in general.

| | *Strongly Disagree* | | *Disagree* | | *Somewhat agree* | | *Agree* | | *Strongly Agree* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel like my values match the values emphasized by the program | | | | | | | | | |
| I feel like my peers in the cohort and I have similar opinions about what is important in education. | | | | | | | | | |
| I feel like this program shares my views of what constitutes good teaching. | | | | | | | | | |

*Identity Non-Verification (Burke & Tully, 1977; Stets & Burke, 2014b)—Chapter 7*

The items below are meant to capture how you currently believe you are as teacher, how you believe your students see you as a teacher, and how you believe your peers/colleagues see you as a teacher.

Each line below contains a pair of opposing adjectives or statements. For each pair, mark the node along the spectrum that you believe best completes the following statement:

As a teacher I think I am…
As a teacher my students think I am..
As a teacher my peers think I am…

| | **-3** | **-2** | **-1** | **0** | **1** | **2** | **3** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Classroom Management* | | | | | | | | |
| Strict | | | | | | | | Flexible |
| Unfair | | | | | | | | Fair |
| Impatient | | | | | | | | Patient |
| Inconsistent | | | | | | | | Consistent |
| Unapproachable | | | | | | | | Approachable |
| Unsympathetic | | | | | | | | Empathetic |
| Unrelatable | | | | | | | | Relatable |
| Playing a role | | | | | | | | Authentically me |
| Stressed | | | | | | | | Relaxed |
| Passive | | | | | | | | Assertive |
| Dispassionate | | | | | | | | Passionate |
| A novice | | | | | | | | An expert |
| Disorganized | | | | | | | | Organized |
| Boring | | | | | | | | Engaging |
| Teacher-centered | | | | | | | | Student-centered |

# Appendix B—Interview Protocols

## Interview #1—Oral History Interview (November-December 2018)

Teacher identity is a part of the research we are conducting here and scholars some scholars posit that our identity is the story that we tell others about ourselves. That being said many of them have focused on life history or oral history as a window into teacher identity. That being said this interview will mainly focus on your biography as a person, as a student, and how that fed into your decision to become a teacher. Feel free to answer as much or as little as you like from these questions.

**Personal background**

1. Where and when were you born?
2. Where and when were your parents born?
    a. When did your family immigrate to this country?
3. If not from SD, how did you end up coming to San Diego?
4. What occupations did you parents have growing up/currently have?
5. Do you have any siblings? How many?
    a. Where do you fall in the order of siblings?
6. What language was spoken in your house growing up?
    a. What other languages do you speak?
    b. How did you come to learn these languages?
7. Can you describe what was it like for you growing up in your family?
    a. Probe for relationships with family members, activities, family routines/traditions, adjectives…
8. What are some of your fondest memories growing up in your family?
9. Can you describe what was it like for you growing up in your community?
    a. Probe for memories, structures, descriptors of community
10. Can you describe and of your favorite activities growing up? Favorite books, hobbies, etc.
11. What social class would you consider your family when you were growing up?
    a. Working, Middle, Upper etc.
    b. Why do you think that?
12. Can you describe important role models for you growing up?
13. How do you define your racial/ethnic identity?
14. Are you currently married or in a relationship?
    a. How long?
    b. What does your partner think about your ambitions of becoming a teacher?
15. Do you have children of your own? (Ages, grades)
16. Thinking back over your life can you describe a moment that stands out as a “high point” in your life?
    a. Why do you think this particular moment is so salient for you?
    b. What do you think it says about you and your life?
17. Thinking back over your life, can you describe a moment that stands out as a “turning point” in your life? If you cannot think of a key turning point, can you describe a time in your life when you went through change?
    a. Why do you think this particular moment is so salient for you?
    b. What do you think it says about you and your life?

18. In order to really know you and who you are, what are somethings a person would need to know about you?
    ***Or***
    What are some adjectives that you would use to describe yourself?

**School History**

19. What do you remember most about your elementary school experience?
    a. Were there any particular teachers that had an impact on you?
    b. Were there any experiences that were salient to you?
    c. Probe for extra-curricular activities, relationships, school demographics, etc.
20. What do you remember most about your middle school/high school experience?
    a. Were there any particular teachers that had an impact on you?
    b. Probe for extra-curricular activities, relationships, school demographics, etc.
21. What do you remember most about your undergraduate experience? Positive/negative?
    a. First Gen? What impact did that have?
    b. Probe for extra-curricular activities, relationships with professors, etc.
22. How would you describe yourself as a student throughout your K-12 career?
    a. What influenced you as a student?
23. How would you describe your relationships with teachers throughout your K-12 career?
24. Are there any teachers you want to emulate or not emulate in your own practice?
25. Can you tell me about any specific lessons, activities, or particular teaching styles that you liked or disliked as a student?
26. Can you describe the role that you believe your race/ethnicity, gender, religion, linguistic heritage, or sexual orientation had on your experiences as a student? I ask them all together to give the opportunity for you to consider them together, but feel free to answer about one aspect of the question or another.
27. How do you think your life (as a student) influenced your decision to become a teacher?

**Teaching Life**

28. Tell me the story of how you decided to become a teacher.
    a. What prompted that decision?
29. Can you describe any experiences with teaching prior to entering the program?
30. Were there other occupations that you had an interest in pursuing/or did before you decided to become a teacher? Why didn’t you pursue/continue in of those professions?
    a. If no—How did you rule out other professions and decide to become a teacher.
31. Who or what do you think has had the biggest influence on your choice to become a teacher? Explain.
32. Similarly, who or what has had the most influence on the type of teacher you want to become? Explain.
33. Can you describe how your family/close friends feel about your decision to become a teacher?

**Identity Salience/prominence (Burke & Reitzes, 1991)**

34. If you were on vacation, and met someone new or met a group of people and struck up a conversation, how important would it be to you that during the course of that conversation you mentioned that you are a teacher/becoming a teacher?
    a. On a scale of 1-10. *10 being extremely important and 1 being not at all important?*
    b. Why did you respond that way?

35. To know you as you really are, how important is it to know that you are a teacher/becoming a teacher?
    a. On a scale of 1-10. *10 being extremely important and 1 being not at all important?*
    b. Why did you respond that way?

**Program questions**

36. What are some of the most important lessons or takeaways you have learned in the program thus far?
37. What do you feel is missing from your experience in the program thus far?
38. How would you describe your CT? Are you happy with your placement?

## Interview #2—Cohort (February-March 2019)

**Cohort**

1. If you had to describe your cohort/the people in your cohort to a random person…
2. How would you describe your relationships with people in your cohort?
3. Are there some people whom you feel very close to in your cohort?
    a. Why do you feel close to them?
    b. How did your relationship form?
    c. How are their ideas about teaching similar or different from yours?
4. How would you describe the dynamic between all of the people in your cohort? (SS only)
5. How would you describe your relationship to your peers who teach the same subject matter?
6. In general, do you believe your views of teaching and learning are similar or different from people in your cohort/school? Explain.
7. Do you believe that people in your cohort/school have impacted your ideas about teaching?
    a. Why or why not?
    b. How?
8. How have the people in your cohort shaped your understanding of what it means to be teacher?
9. How would you describe the level of diversity in your cohort?
    a. Why?
    b. How do you think it has impacted your experience?
    c. How do you think it has impacted your understanding of teaching?
    d. How do you think it impacted your understanding of what it means to be a teacher in an ethnically diverse classroom?
10. You named…as people with whom you identify in the social network survey?
    a. Has this list changed? If so, how and why?
    b. Out of this list—Who are the people with which you most strongly identify?
    c. Why did you select them?
11. What role do you think play in your cohort?
12. How do you think your peers in your cohort would describe you as a teacher?
13. Are any of your cohort mates at your school site?
    a. How what is that relationship like?
    b. How do they support you?

**Program**

14. Can you describe your expectations of the program in relation to your teaching?
    a. Has it met your expectations so far? Why or why not?
15. What would it mean for you to have a successful experience in this TEP?
16. Do you feel like this program has been a good fit for you? Explain.
17. To what degree has the program helped you to address issues of equity in the classroom?
    a. examples
18. To what degree has the program helped you to address issues of race in the classroom?
    a. Examples
19. Do you feel like the program has had an impact about your beliefs about teaching and what it means to be a teacher? Explain.

**Identity Theory questions**

20. As a teacher, I am…
21. As a teacher, I am not…

## Interview #3—Student Teaching Experience and Teacher Identity (May-June 2019)

### Student Teaching

1. How would you describe your placement to a complete stranger?
2. Do you feel like your placement has been a good fit for you? Why or why not?
3. What motivates you to get up in the morning and teach?
4. Can you describe a typical day in your classroom for you as a student teacher/intern?
5. Can you describe what you believe is the best part of your student teaching experience
6. Can you describe what you believe worst part of your student teaching experience
7. Can you describe sources of stress that you have/continue to face as a student teacher/intern
    a. How do you cope with this stress?
8. Can you describe some successes that you have had as a student teacher this year?
    a. What enabled you to have those successes?
9. Can you describe some obstacles/challenges that you have faced in your student teaching?
    a. What did you do when they arose?
10. How would you characterize your overall experiences as a student teacher/intern this year?
    a. How has it been similar or different from your expectations?
11. How would you describe your students?
    a. Can you describe any who stand out to you for any reason—good, bad, or somewhere in-between?
    b. How would you describe your relationships with your students?
12. If I was to ask your students to describe you as a teacher what do you think they would say?
    a. Do you think all students would say that? Explain
    b. Would all groups say the same things? Why or why not?
13. How do you want your students to see you as a teacher?
14. How would you describe yourself as a teacher?
    a. If there is a discrepancy—why do you think there is a discrepancy?
15. How do you think your race/ethnicity impacts your relationships with students?
16. How would you compare your student teaching experience now with your experience as a student?
    a. How do you think the classroom has changed since you were a student?

### Teacher Identity

***Explain the notion of possible selves and then ask…*--Connect to classroom**

17. What possible teacher self do you hope to be a year from now?
    a. What, if anything, are you currently doing to achieve this outcome?
    b. What do you think you need to do in the future to achieve this outcome?
18. What possible teacher self do you expect to be a year from now?
    a. What, if anything, are you currently doing to achieve this outcome?
    b. What do you think you need to do in the future to achieve this outcome?
19. What possible teacher self do you fear becoming a year from now?
    a. What, if anything, are you currently doing to avoid this outcome?
    b. What do you think you need to do in the future to avoid this outcome?
20. What are your goals as a teacher, for yourself and your future students?

21. If someone were to ask you to describe effective teaching, what you say?
22. If someone were to ask you to describe ineffective teaching, what you say?
    a. How do you think these characteristics change if you have different student demographics? How?
23. What impact do you think your race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, linguistic heritage, religion, (deafness) has had on how you understand yourself as a teacher?
24. What does it mean to you to be a teacher?
25. How would you describe the process of learning to teach?
26. How, if at all, do you think the process of learning to teach has impacted you?

## Interview #5—School and colleagues (October-November 2019)

### Colleagues

1. If you had to describe your culture among the teachers at your school to a random person what would you say?
2. Can you name colleagues whom you feel very close to at your school?
    a. Why do you feel close to them?
    b. How did your relationship form?
    c. Tell me about the colleagues whose ideas about teaching similar or different from yours?
3. How would you describe the dynamic between your colleagues?
    a. School wide
    b. Department/Grade Level
4. In general, do you believe your views of teaching and learning are similar or different from colleagues in your school? Explain.
5. If you had to choose two or three colleagues who have impacted your teaching practice who would you say?
    a. Why them?
    b. How?
6. How, if at all have your colleagues shaped your understanding of what it means to be teacher?
    a. Example?
7. Can you describe what role do you think play in your department/grade level?
8. Can you describe role(s) that your colleagues in your department/grade level play for you?
9. How do you think your colleagues would describe you as a teacher?
10. Does that differ at all from the way you view yourself?
    a. Discuss discrepancy

### Sense of belonging/Fit

11. Do you feel like you fit in at this school?
    a. Why/why not?
    b. Can you describe one or two experiences from this year that made you feel like you fit here—ask to the contrary if they say no
12. Do you feel like you are valued by your colleagues?
    a. Why/why not?
    b. Can you describe one or two experiences from this year that made you feel valued—ask to the contrary if they say no
13. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your sense of belonging at the school?
    a. Explain.
14. What do you believe to be factors involved in fostering or inhibiting your sense of belonging?
15. Have there been any experiences or people who have been an important influence on your sense of belonging at this school?
16. Do you see yourself building a career or home here? Explain?

### Race and teaching

17. Can you describe the racial demographics at your school?

18. Do you see any differences in the way that students of different racial-ethnic groups are treated at your site?
19. Can you describe how race is framed or talked about at your school?
20. To what extent do you believe your school is committed addressing issues of racial inequality?
    a. Why?
    b. Can you give an example?
21. Do you believe your colleagues are committed addressing issues of racial inequality?
    a. Why?
    b. Can you give an example?
22. How would you describe your racial-ethnic identity?
    a. Can you give me some examples of what it is like to be a [racial-ethnic identity] teacher at this school?
23. What does it mean to you to be a [racial-ethnic identity] teacher?
24. What do you struggle with as a [racial-ethnic identity] teacher?
25. Do you think that your gender identity and your race together have you treated differently?

**Possible selves**

***Many people have in mind somethings that they want to be in the future regardless of how likely it is that they will actually be that way or do those things. These are the kind of selves that you would hope to be like.***

26. What possible teacher self do you hope to be a year from now?
    a. What, if anything, are you currently doing to achieve this outcome?
    b. What do you think you need to do in the future to achieve this outcome?
27. What possible teacher self do you expect to be a year from now? **(Most likely to be true)**
    a. What, if anything, are you currently doing to achieve this outcome?
    b. What do you think you need to do in the future to achieve this outcome?
28. What possible teacher self do you fear or worry about becoming a year from now?
    a. What, if anything, are you currently doing to avoid this outcome?
    b. What do you think you need to do in the future to avoid this outcome?
29. Describe two or three things that you believe make your work meaningful.

## Interview #6—Teaching Experience and Teacher Identity (May-June 2020)

**Teaching**

1. How would you describe your school to someone who does not work there?
2. Can you describe a typical day in your classroom?
3. Can you describe what you believe has been the best part of your teaching experience this year?
4. Can you describe what you believe has been the worst part of your teaching experience this year?
5. Can you describe sources of happiness in your practice?
    a. Why do they make you happy?
6. Can you describe sources of stress that you have/continue to face?
    a. How do you cope with this stress?
7. Can you describe some successes that you have had as a teacher this year?
    b. What enabled you to have those successes?
8. Can you describe some obstacles/challenges that you have faced this year?
    a. What did you do when they arose?
9. Can you describe a moment/situation in the classroom or a lesson where you were truly happy or excited?
10. Can you describe a moment/situation in the classroom or a lesson where you were frustrated or unhappy?
11. How would you describe your students?
    c. Can you describe any who stand out to you for any reason?
    d. Can you describe positive relationships you have with your students?
    e. Can you describe challenging relationships you have with your students?
12. If I was to ask your students to describe you as a teacher, what do you think they would say?
    a. How does that make you feel?
    b. Do you think all students would say that? Explain
    c. Would all groups say the same things? Why or why not?
13. How do you want your students to see you as a teacher?
    a. If there is a discrepancy—why do you think there is a discrepancy?
14. Do you think students from different racial-ethic groups relate to you differently?
15. How do you think the racial-ethnic makeup of your students influences the way you teach?
16. How would you compare your student teaching experience now with your current experience as a teacher?
17. What motivates you to get up in the morning and teach?

**Ego Networks—DOUBLE CHECK FOR MATCHING NAMES**

*Asking about colleagues at school or colleagues they turn to for teaching support*

| Spring 2019 | Fall 2019 | Spring 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
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| | | |
| | | |

18. It seems that you did not include ___ and added___. What changed why drop/why add?
19. Why do you turn to ______ for support?
20. Can you give me an example of support that you received from them?
21. Do you feel like any of your school relationship have gotten stronger over the course of the year?
    a. If so, what conditions have enabled that to happen?
    b. If not, what restricted growth?
22. Can you describe any traits or values that ____holds that you want to emulate?
23. I noticed that you said you also go to turn to people outside of your colleagues for support regarding your teaching practice—generally speaking what type of support do you seek out or get from non-work-related others?

**Sense of belonging**

24. Do you feel like you fit in at this school?
    a. Why/why not?
    b. Can you describe one or two experiences from this year that made you feel like you fit here—ask to the contrary if they say no
25. Do you feel like you are valued by your colleagues?
    a. Why/why not?
    b. Can you describe one or two experiences from this year that made you feel valued—ask to the contrary if they say no
26. On a scale of 1-10 how would you rate your sense of belonging at the school?
    a. Explain.

**Teacher Identity**

27. What are your goals as a teacher?
28. What do you see as the role of the teacher in the classroom?
    a. Do you feel like this has shifted since you started teaching this year?
29. If someone were to ask you to describe effective teaching in 3-5 points, what you say?
    a. Do you feel like this has shifted since you started teaching in this year?
30. If someone were to ask you describe ineffective teaching in 3-5 points, what you say?
    a. How do you think these characteristics change if you have different student demographics? How?
31. What does it mean to you to be a teacher?
32. How would you describe the process of learning to teach this year?
33. How, if at all, do you think the process of learning to teach has impacted you?
34. Can you think of one or two ideas or beliefs about teaching that you had when you started this year that have changed dramatically or that you no longer hold?

You identify as X…

35. What does it mean to you to be a [racial-ethnic identity] teacher?
36. What do you struggle with as a [racial-ethnic identity] teacher?

***Possible Selves***

***Many people have in mind somethings that they want to be in the future regardless of how likely it is that they will actually be that way or do those things. These are the kind of selves that you would hope to be like.***

37. What possible teacher self do you hope to be a year from now?
    a. What, if anything, are you currently doing to achieve this outcome?
    b. What do you think you need to do in the future to achieve this outcome?

38. What possible teacher self do you expect to be a year from now?
    a. What, if anything, are you currently doing to achieve this outcome?
    b. What do you think you need to do in the future to achieve this outcome?
39. What possible teacher self do you fear becoming a year from now?
    c. What, if anything, are you currently doing to avoid this outcome?
    d. What do you think you need to do in the future to avoid this outcome?
40. Share their responses from last year and ask them:
    a. Do you feel like you have accomplished/avoided this?
        i. Why do you think this happened?

**Meaning**

41. Describe two or three things that you believe make your work meaningful or fulfilling?

**Identity Theory Activity**

42. As a teacher, I am/s a teacher, I am not
43. You said x and now you seem to have changed explain.

## Appendix C—Ego Network Survey

**Name generator**

*In the last 5 to 6 months who have you turned to for support—emotional, pedagogical, or otherwise? This could be anyone in your life—family, friends, colleagues, etc. List as many people as you can think of up to 20 people."*

**Name Interpreters**

1. What is your relationship to [Name] (Check all that apply)?
    a. Significant other (husband, wife, partner, boyfriend, girlfriend)
    b. Family
    c. Friend/Non-work related
    d. Friend from my teacher education program
    e. Friend/Colleague
    f. Colleague
    g. BTSA Coach or similar role
    h. Administrator
    i. Former Professor
    j. Other (Please Specify): _________
2. How close are you to [Name]?
    a. Not very close (1)
    b. Somewhat close (2)
    c. Close
    d. Very Close
    e. Extremely Close
    f. Closer than most people in my life
3. What type of support do you receive from [Name]? Select all that apply.
    a. Emotional Support (provides you with care, love, empathy, trust, and respect)
    b. Instrumental Support (provides you with tangible aid or services: e.g. financial assistance or does work for you)
    c. Informational Support (provides you with advice, suggestions, or information to help you to solve problems)
    d. Appraisal Support (provides you with advice, suggestions, or information to help you evaluate your actions and determine their quality and/or level of appropriateness)
4. How often have you turned to [Name] for support regarding your teaching practice?
    a. Never
    b. Once or twice
    c. A few times
    d. Weekly or almost weekly
    e. Daily or almost daily
5. How long have you known [Name]?
    a. Less than 1 year
    b. 1 year
    c. 2 years
    d. 3 years
    e. 4 years
    f. 5 years

    - g. 6 years
    - h. 7 years
    - i. 8 years
    - j. 9 years
    - k. 10 years
6. To the best of your knowledge, does [Name] identify as:
    - a. Male
    - b. Female
    - c. Gender Non-Conforming
7. To the best of your knowledge, what Ethno-racial group(s) does [Name] identify with? Select all that apply.
    - a. White
    - b. Latina/o/Hispanic
    - c. Asian
    - d. Black/African American
    - e. Middle Eastern/Arab
    - f. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
    - g. Native Alaskan/Native American
    - h. Other (Please specify):___________
8. Besides you, who else doe [Name] interact with in your network?
    - a. [Name] Yes/no
    - b. [Name] Yes/no
    - c. [Name] Yes/no
    - d. [Name] Yes/no