ELL-FOCUSED CONTENT AREA PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: CAPTURING PERSPECTIVES AND MEETING NEEDS

by

MARY CRAWFORD MCGRIFF

A dissertation submitted to the

Graduate School of Education

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Literacy Education

Approved by

_____

Dr. Mary Curran, Chair

_____

Dr. Penelope Lattimer, Committee

_____

Dr. Sharon Ryan, Committee

New Brunswick, New Jersey

October 2010

ABSTRACT

As English language learner (ELL) enrollment in suburban schools increases, so does the need for ELL-focused professional learning. There has been limited research investigating suburban secondary teachers' experiences in ELL-oriented professional development. Therefore, this study examines the following questions:

1. How do suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in an ELL-oriented reflective inquiry group?
    a. What questions, challenges and interests do these teachers identify as priorities in their ELL-oriented professional learning?
    b. How does the study of these questions, challenges and interests unfold as teachers interact in a reflective inquiry group?
2. How are the ELL-oriented instructional approaches studied during professional development actually enacted in these teachers' practice?
3. How do the opportunities or constraints present within a suburban middle school structure impact the content area literacy instruction they provide for the ELLs in their classrooms?

Method

A qualitative case study methodology was employed to investigate the interactions of five content area teachers and one ESL teacher during eight ELL-focused professional learning sessions over a thirteen-week period.

Data were gathered from professional learning sessions, intermittent interviews, periodic classroom observations and related documents. Data were coded to identify common themes relative to participants' interactions during sessions that focused on

ELL-oriented comprehension scaffolding tools, creating opportunities for authentic classroom participation and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Findings

The school's interdisciplinary team design and lead teacher framework were potent validating sources that heightened participants' agency and mediated interactions during sessions. Team-based content teachers were less receptive to culturally responsive strategies and scaffolding measures that promoted ELL / non-ELL interaction. Yet when attendance was sustained, interest in these concepts increased. Participants who acted as leaders during sessions modeled and actively supported the learning of co-participants, whether or not they officially held lead teacher positions in the school. The ESL teacher, who held an institutionally marginalized position, interacted in a commensurately marginalized manner.

Significance

Findings highlight the need to better utilize suburban secondary schools' institutional features to promote sustained ELL-focused professional learning. This includes integrating the ESL teachers' role within these central school structures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3: 5-6

Above all else, I thank God, the source of all blessings and the straightener of all paths. I dedicate this accomplishment to His glory and service.

To my dissertation committee: Mary Curran, Penelope Lattimer and Sharon Ryan: I am especially thankful for all of the support, time and thoughtful feedback you gave me. You continually encouraged me to extend my thinking and to keep my vistas broad. Children benefit from the work that we do; thank you for helping me to make *this* work the best that it can be.

To Dorothy Strickland, Lesley Morrow and William Firestone: Thank you for your insights and guidance throughout my graduate experience.

To my doc teammates, Nicola, George and Winston: I am grateful that we can draw strength and encouragement from one another. Our journey continues...

To my mentors and friends, Audrey Crum, Becky Richards, Judy Marino and Sal Randazzese: Thank you for your examples of wisdom, service, courage and integrity.

To my parents, Alfred and Evelyn Crawford: You taught me that love endures all things. I owe so much to your example of unconditional love and boundless support.

To my children, Joshua, David and Samuel: Thank you for your patience, encouragement and love. I wanted you to see that with faith, a tremendous amount of work and countless prayers, you can accomplish any goal, no matter how challenging or seemingly unlikely. Remember that.

To my best friend and husband, Sammie: Thank you for your integrity, inspiration and love. We have been deeply blessed, and we have much to pay forward.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

Statement of the Problem

I first became aware of the professional learning challenges surrounding adolescent English language learners eight years ago during my tenure as a middle school language arts teacher. Over winter break that year, my suburban New Jersey middle school unexpectedly enrolled five new immigrant Costa Rican students, and as the only language arts teacher who could speak Spanish, I was given responsibility for their English literacy instruction. That year began a pattern of English language learner enrollment that was occasionally punctuated by dramatic spikes and declines, but that overall reflected a continual increase in this population of students, and this enrollment shift highlighted staff members' limited capacity for teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students. For me, that year sparked an on-going interest in professional learning that is geared toward English language learners. Now, after having studied English language learner enrollment patterns over the past 20 years, (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007; Walqui, 2006), I realize that my experience that year was evidence of an ever broader demographic shift that has impacted school districts nationwide.

As current immigration patterns continue, public schools in the United States become more ethnically and linguistically diverse, and educators have an immediate need to effectively support these students' academic achievement. Between 1992 and 2002, the number of English language learners in the US doubled, increasing by nearly eight times the rate of total student enrollment during this same time (Walqui, 2006). It is important to recognize that the geographic distribution of English language learners is

also rapidly changing, and states such as New Jersey that previously managed pockets of English language learners in its urban centers, now search for viable ways to support the pervasive expansion of these students into suburban and rural districts across the state. For example, suburban districts such as Flemington saw a 9% increase in their English language learner (ELL) population between 2001 and 2006, and the one-building, rural district of Lambertville saw a 216% increase within the same time frame (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006). Many non-urban districts with limited state subsidies are especially challenged to support the highly specialized needs of this population of learners. At the same time, ELLs in these districts are measured by the same proficiency standards as ELLs who live in larger districts where multilingual, multiliterate teachers, literacy coaches, and a range of curricular programs are available for their needs (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006).

While the education of ELL students is a challenge facing all educators, it is the education of adolescent ELLs that presents the most significant challenge. These students have less time to acquire requisite English and content area knowledge before transitioning to post-secondary educational settings or to employment. Additionally, *No Child Left Behind* legislation requires that districts report these students' proficiency scores and graduation rates, and this reinforces the pressure on schools, ELL specialists, and content area teachers to ensure that students of limited English ability are, in fact, performing proficiently across all subject areas (US Department of Education, 2006). To date, this mandate has not been successfully realized. The Carnegie Corporation reports that 31% of ELLs fail to complete high school, while native English-speaking youth drop out at the lower rate of 10% (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Additionally, 96% of eighth

grade ELLs scored below basic level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Reversing this circumstance requires interventions that enable ELLs to experience greater success in their adolescent years—years in which these students must successfully demonstrate conceptual and procedural mastery in several content areas. Identifying and promoting instructional approaches that will afford ELLs greater access to each discipline's curriculum, therefore, offers the greatest promise in this endeavor. Since classroom routines, expectations for student conduct and prerequisite knowledge can vary from one subject area to the next, content area teachers must develop proficiency in adapting their strategies, assessments and materials to accommodate students who, in addition to English and disciplinary content, also need to learn a full complement of school-based norms. In order to be able to meet these students' needs, all classroom teachers, regardless of what they teach, require effective instructional approaches and on-going professional learning opportunities to ensure that these approaches are enacted effectively.

Research on teacher learning confirms that if teachers are to acquire new instructional skills and knowledge, it takes more than merely transmitting information during planned in-service training sessions. Rather, professional development models must recognize that teacher knowledge is best constructed when learning opportunities are on-going, collaborative and authentically situated (Westheimer, 2005). Additionally, teacher knowledge research informs us that learning is most impactful when it includes opportunities for intellectual inquiry around issues of daily practice and when this inquiry

is then extended to encompass broader societal implications (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

ELL-oriented research undertaken from a sociocultural perspective has brought forth viable strategies for harnessing students' culturally based resources, interests and beliefs to promote literacy and language development (Conchas, 2001; Moll & Gonzalez, 1994). Most of these studies have concentrated exclusively on teacher beliefs about ELLs themselves without seeking to capture teachers' perspectives and experiences in implementing effective instructional practices. Current research has not sought to illuminate teachers' perspectives and experiences as they engage in the professional development measures needed to implement ELL-oriented instruction (August & Calderon, 2006). In addition, most studies of teachers and ELL learners have involved elementary school teachers and not high school teachers (August & Shanahan, 2006). In other words, not a lot is known about how secondary school teachers experience professional development and the actual instruction of ELL students that results from professional development efforts. Within this category, even less is known about how middle school teachers in non-urban school districts experience these phenomena. Without this kind of information, it remains difficult to plan professional development initiatives that address middle school teachers' pedagogical needs, beliefs and practices in ways that are individualized and context specific. This study is one attempt to address this issue. By examining ELL-literacy oriented professional development experiences and the resultant instructional practices of secondary teachers in one suburban New Jersey middle school, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in an ELL-oriented reflective inquiry group?
    a. What questions, challenges and interests do these teachers identify as priorities in their ELL-oriented professional learning?
    b. How does the study of these questions, challenges and interests unfold as teachers interact in a reflective inquiry group?
2. How are the ELL-oriented instructional approaches studied during professional development actually enacted in these teachers' practice?
3. How do the opportunities or constraints present within a suburban middle school structure impact the content area literacy instruction they provide for the ELLs in their classrooms?

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

In this chapter, I provide an overview of three salient bodies of literature that frame this investigation of ELL-oriented professional learning. I begin by examining Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), which emphasizes the roles of social interaction and culturally-based tools, especially language, in mediating learning. This is followed by an examination of the related communities of practice concept (Lave & Wenger, 1991), which is a model of learning that focuses on apprenticeship relationships that support learners as they progress toward full competence in the skills and knowledge germane to their community. The literature surrounding communities of practice and its applications in teacher learning offers a fitting framework for analyzing participants' interactions and how these interactions scaffold their professional development (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993 & 1999; Little, 2003; Westheimer, 2005). I then proceed to review the body of research that focuses on ELL language and literacy development. This literature explains the value of cognitively-based and culturally-rooted strategies as tools for promoting English and discipline-specific learning (Calderon, 2007; Lucas & Villegas, 2002; Swain, 2000; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002). However, before discussing these bodies of literature in relation to the present study, it is important to first situate this study within the history of teacher education research. This preliminary measure will enable me to establish the need for this study from a historical perspective; it illustrates the manner in which teacher education research has traditionally developed and evolved in response to societal needs over time, and it accordingly identifies the

needs that this particular inquiry will address. This review of literature then proceeds to discuss sociocultural theory, the communities of practice concept and language /literacy research in turn. These discussions further contextualize this study, both theoretically and in terms of actual teacher and ELL needs.

Historical Review of Teacher Education Research

The teacher learning that will be studied in this inquiry will be structured and interpreted according to a sociocultural framework, which falls within a line of teacher education research that has been shaped by societal priorities throughout recent US history. A brief overview of teacher learning research that has been undertaken since the mid-20th century provides the social and historical context that further underscores the need for the present study.

Teacher education research from the 1950's through the 1980's was set against the backdrop of US – Soviet political tensions and the resultant emphasis on scientific advancement. Teaching was viewed in a mechanistic, objective manner, and studies of this era aimed to identify specific teaching skills and prerequisite competencies as opposed to focusing on broader, essential understandings that teachers should possess. For example, Allen's (1967, as cited in Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008) study sought to identify the best way to divide a lesson into "microteaching" segments that prospective teachers could then study and be assessed on. In this study, student teachers' performances in each lesson segment were scored and statistically analyzed to determine the structure of microteaching segments that yielded the overall highest performance in lesson delivery. Allen's study results reflected this period's prevailing focus on

objectivity and precision by calling for "more focus on the exact technical skills that were being taught in the microteaching clinic" (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008, p. 1075).

Another goal of teacher education research during this period was to identify specific behaviors that enabled teachers to execute lessons in a highly prescribed manner (Shulman, 1986). Flanders's (1970, as cited in Shulman, 1986) and Baker's (1969, as cited in Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008) inquiries provide two examples of studies that used a process-product design to identify teaching competencies that yielded specific student outcomes. Overall, this line of research did generate generic results that related more to classroom management or to use of higher order questioning (Shulman, 1986). It did not, however, establish a link to subject-specific student achievement outcomes (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008). Additionally, the teacher education research conducted in this period failed to account for the significant role of teacher decision-making in classroom instruction. However, through these studies, researchers and practitioners came to understand that instruction is guided by more than mastery of discrete skills and that teachers draw on a variety of knowledge sources in their day-to-day instruction (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008).

Teacher education research of the 1980's – 2000's sought to address the previous era's shortcomings with a focus on teacher knowledge, the sources of teacher knowledge and the ways teacher knowledge carries over to influence instruction (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005). Contextually, these foci aligned with concerns over student achievement in light of international competition. The aim of research conducted during these decades was to contribute to the professionalization of teaching by studying how pre- and in-service teachers learn and use their pedagogical and content knowledge over time

(Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008). Generally, studies utilized cognitively-based methodologies (Clark & Peterson, 1986); however, an increasing awareness of cultural influences gave rise to the use of anthropological methodologies as well (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008). For example, Grossman's study (1990, as cited in Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008) used semi-structured interviews and multiple classroom observations to identify the role of subject-specific content knowledge among novice English teachers. Coding of these data within and across cases led Grossman to surmise that teachers who possessed a "coherent and consistent" vision of teaching and learning were flexible, open to innovative approaches and better equipped to consider students' perspectives (Grossman, 1990, as cited in Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008, p. 1079). While this research substantially contributed to the image of a teacher as a knowledgeable, decision-making professional, it never linked professionalization to student outcomes.

From the late 1990's to today, research has sought to fill this void with explicit, quantitative ties to achievement outcomes. For example, the Report of the National Reading Panel (2000) was a Congressionally-commissioned meta-analytic study of experimental and quasi-experimental studies that focused on how reading is taught and learned. Among its determinations, the Panel found in-service teacher education produced significantly higher student achievement. However, the Panel also clarified the need for targeted research to determine how teachers can optimally be supported over time to ensure sustained implementation of specific instructional approaches. The need for specific information to inform teacher learning efforts was also identified in August and Shanahan's (2006) meta-analysis focusing specifically on ELL literacy. While the current focus of empirical research is establishing causal links between specific types of

teacher education and student achievement, its designs are typically too broad to address context-specific needs, and as our public school population grows increasingly diverse, the need for context-specific data to inform instruction increases (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008).

Sociocultural theory attends to cultural and historical influences of learning and provides the field with (a) a perspective that is congruent with the needs of an increasingly heterogeneous student population, (b) a perspective that values the role of teachers as generators of knowledge and theory through systematic inquiry, and (c) actual research findings that, in their specificity and rich description, complement the large scale statistical studies popular today (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2008). This investigation attends to each of these foci. It will describe the process by which suburban, secondary teachers learn to address the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. It will highlight the context-specific knowledge that comes forth as teachers participate in this enterprise, and it will also highlight knowledge that can be applied more broadly. In these ways, this study responds to current gaps in the knowledge base on teacher education, gaps that have emerged and become apparent as teacher education research has evolved over the course of the past 50 years. By targeting ELL-oriented content area teacher education, this study will add greater specificity and detail to what is presently known about how teachers can support this complex and rapidly increasing segment of our student population.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Learning and Development

Lev Vygotsky was an early 20th century Soviet scholar who studied and taught literature and psychology. Vygotsky drew upon Marxist doctrine, and he related this to

the study of human cognitive development. Marx believed that historical changes in society and in day-to-day life lead to changes in human consciousness and behavior (Vygotsky, 1978). Consistent with this, Vygotsky emphasized the foundational role of history and culture in his work. The sociohistorical backdrop that influenced the development of his theory was the Soviet Union's emphasis on science as a means of addressing the economic and social hardships brought on by the Russian Revolution and exacerbated by world war. Accordingly, Vygotsky's contribution to this goal was in the domain of cognitive development, and his work incorporated the study of learning patterns in mentally and physically disabled students. The broader goal of his work and the central aim of his sociocultural theory were to support the better understanding of mental processes of all people and to contribute to the creation of educational programs that maximize the potential of individual learners (Vygotsky, 1978).

One of the foundational tenets of sociocultural theory is the fact that human cognitive development is mediated by historically and culturally rooted practices and beliefs (Johnson, 2002; Moll, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky held that individual cognitive growth could not be properly understood without placing this development within the context of a person's individual experiential background and the historical background of the social groups and broader culture to which he or she belongs. Accordingly, Vygotsky structured his work from the standpoint that the defining events of the individual's life, those of his family, school and other institutions with which he is associated, and those of the broader culture into which those institutions are embedded mediate the individual's thinking (Vygotsky, 1987; Wells, 2000). Furthermore, Vygotsky maintained that within this historical context, humans gain access to tools that were

developed by previous generations and that by mastering the use of these tools and the practices in which they are used, human development is enriched and extended beyond the limits of biological maturation alone. Vygotsky stated, "the intellectual abilities that make us distinctly human 'are a copy of social interaction' all higher mental functions are internalized social relationships" (Vygotsky, 1981 as cited in Wells, 2000).

In this manner, Vygotsky's research supported his claim that learning through social interaction proceeds development, and this stance rejected the prevailing belief that students must first reach a defined stage of cognitive development before they can begin to learn the skills and knowledge associated with that stage (Vygotsky, 1978). In fact, through his study of children's learning patterns he discovered that teaching only the activities that corresponded to a student's present level had the effect of habituating the learner to that level of thinking, and it suppressed the student's ability to advance to increasingly abstract forms of thought. As a result he concluded that, "learning which is oriented toward developmental levels that have already been reached is ineffective from the viewpoint of a child's overall development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 89). Instead, he asserted that learning is best measured in relation to a student's potential level of development that can be achieved through interactions with more capable individual(s). In shifting the focus of learning to a student's potential level of achievement, Vygotsky developed the concept *Zone of Proximal Development* to describe the distance between a learner's actual developmental level and the potential level that he or she can attain with assistance. He demonstrated that in the Zone of Proximal Development, learners interact with teachers and with tools, and these make up the mediators that support their learning (Johnson, 2002; Vygotsky, 1978).

Sociocultural theory identifies language as among the most important of culturally derived tools to aid a learner's developing capabilities because it enables interpersonal communication as well as organization and regulation of one's internal thoughts. Vygotsky (1978) identified four stages of language development: (a) social speech, (b) egocentric speech, (c) inner speech, and (d) written language. He maintained that the process by which an individual develops and gains mastery of language begins during infancy. At this earliest stage, social speech consists of pointing and other gestures, and it progresses to limited word use in which the words are furnished by others. Egocentric speech emerges between ages three – five, and at this point a child is able to verbally manipulate words on his own, using them to puzzle through challenges or to request adult assistance. Egocentric speech lacks the grammatical features of interpersonal speech. For instance, one word may be used to represent a sentence-length request. When a child is able to reason through problems without speaking out loud, this indicates his transition to inner speech. At this point, he can use language privately to organize information and to appropriate it by interpreting it through his unique combination of prior experiences, beliefs and knowledge. Unlike social or egocentric speech, inner speech is highly abbreviated and generally devoid of phonetic conventions. Vygotsky believed inner speech to be the primary means of higher cognitive functions because it promotes a learner's ability to observe and analyze the patterns of behavior around him. He stated, "[b]ut while in external speech thought is embodied in words, in inner speech words die as they bring forth thought. Inner speech is to a large extent thinking in pure meanings" (Vygotsky, 1986 as cited in Johnson, 2002, p. 114).

The Role of Mediation in Education

In the field of education, sociocultural theory is especially powerful because of its emphasis on mediation. It minimizes the role of a learner's inherent capability and instead focuses educators' attention on the ways they can mediate their students' development through well-planned, carefully delivered instruction. Sociocultural theory is also especially relevant in education because it speaks to the importance of social interaction, of learners' sociocultural backgrounds and of the ways in which culturally derived beliefs, practices and tools – language foremost among them—play an integral role in mediating learners' cognitive development. It is not surprising, therefore, that the growing use of Vygotsky's theory coincides with the increasing number of governmental mandates that all students, regardless of their sociocultural backgrounds, reach predetermined levels of academic proficiency. In relation to ELL-oriented teacher learning, this theory is even more pertinent because it also foregrounds the influence of school cultures and the ways in which the culturally-rooted beliefs and practices in school communities mediate teachers' professional development. Examining the communities of practice concept contributes to the theoretical framework of this study by magnifying the role of community in teachers' learning processes.

Communities of Practice Concept

Viewing schools as communities and studying them from this perspective offers additional insights into this study of how teacher learning unfolds overall and how ELL-related professional learning is experienced and reacted to. Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger developed the communities of practice concept (1998) during their study of apprenticeships as a form of mediation, and their elaboration on this specific aspect of

sociocultural theory provides a useful framework that aligns closely with the structure and aims of this study.

Sociocultural theory holds that learning within the Zone of Proximal Development precedes and fundamentally enables actual development, and Vygotsky stated that a learner progressively reaches higher levels of actual development "under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Lave and Wenger further explored the nature of this "guidance" in apprenticeship relationships. They discovered that, unlike the commonly held view of an apprentice working alongside a master, apprenticeship, in fact, involves a complex web of social relationships in which learning takes place mainly with journeymen and with more advanced apprentices. They created the communities of practice concept, therefore, to convey the idea that in societies, knowledge exists collectively among community members as opposed to with one more knowledgeable other.

Lave and Wenger's (Wenger, 1998) research on apprenticeship also revealed the universal nature of learning; all community members learn through their interactions, novices and more experienced practitioners alike. They developed the term *legitimate peripheral participation* (Lave & Wenger, 1991) to conceptualize the gradual process by which novices move toward full, central membership in the practices of a community. Concerned that peripherality not be equated with passive observation, they stress that legitimate peripheral participation, "crucially involves *participation* as a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the 'culture of practice'." (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 95). To illustrate the learning that full community members experience, Lave and Wenger provide an example from their anthropological study of an insurance claims

processing office. In this setting they discovered that the processors' day-to-day interactions lead to strategic shortcuts that all coworkers appropriated and benefited from, regardless of their tenure with the company. This finding led to their claim that it is not only one's defined role as a novice in a community that enables learning to take place, but rather that learning is a universal consequence of participation in the community's work. In this regard, the importance of participation is integral across a community's organizational structure, and Lave & Wenger identify three dimensions that define a community and the learning that occurs through it: *mutual engagement*, *joint enterprise* and *shared repertoire* of resources.

Mutual engagement describes the idea that community members must work together in an endeavor that has value to them. As they continually work together, they discover new methods, challenge or affirm current concepts, and enhance existing procedures related to their purpose. They collectively negotiate meaning of the overall endeavor as well as its component tasks. Additionally, individual community members develop identities for themselves relative to their role in the enterprise, and they receive reification from others based on their efforts. For instance, Lave & Wenger's study of a claims processing office documents how the processors came to learn which coworker possessed a strong knowledge of medical diagnosis codes, which coworker maintained the office refreshment supply and so on. The claims processors continually referred to these select individuals for support in their areas of expertise, and these "specialists" continued to provide the sought after help. This process had the effect of further reinforcing their identities as specialists. Wenger stated, "Through the negotiation of meaning, it is the interplay of participation and reification that makes people and things

what they are" (Wenger, 1998, p. 70). Importantly, this is a continual process so that these understandings are fluid, perpetually being renegotiated by participants as their interaction continues.

The second component of the communities of practice concept that Lave & Wenger identify is *joint enterprise*. This captures the notion that there is a community-wide investment in the particular endeavor so that all members share a sense of mutual accountability toward its accomplishment. This sense of joint enterprise is the force that enables members to reconcile conflicting interpretations of what the enterprise is about. It allows them to successfully negotiate understandings and it allows the process of ongoing mutual engagement to continue. In their study of a claims processing office, the processors shared the common goal of meeting their processing quotas. This required that they rely on one another to share strategic information about how to prioritize their work and that they depend on one another to maintain a productive, inviting office climate in which to work.

Shared repertoire describes the collection of resources that the community develops over time through its mutual engagement in an enterprise to which all members share a sense of commitment. For instance, physical tools, routines, concepts and specific terminology can all arise from the sustained engagement of community members in a defined activity. Returning to the claims processing study, the processors in Lave & Wenger's research developed data entry short cuts and abbreviated terminology to enable them to meet their processing quotas. So, the ability to participate, in fact, determines an individual's membership in a community. Without the ability to participate, individuals cannot take part in the ongoing interaction that yields common and fluid understandings

about the meaning of their work. They cannot contribute their efforts and perspectives to the negotiation of shared understandings, nor can they contribute to the creation of resources. Additionally, without participation, individuals cannot be identified as having any distinguishable role (expert at something, supplier of something else, etc.), and this makes their commitment to the joint enterprise inexplicit.

Communities of Practice in Teacher Learning

Lave and Wenger's three-part definition of a community of practice can readily be applied to a school context and to professional learning endeavors that occur within it. In schools, it is necessary that novice, mid-career and veteran teachers alike routinely update their pedagogical skills as well as the underpinning knowledge on which these are based, and each teacher brings his or her prior experiences and current fund of knowledge to the task.

In some states, mutual engagement in ongoing professional development is a licensure requirement. For instance, in New Jersey, teachers are required to complete 100 hours of professional development to maintain their teaching credential (New Jersey Department of Education, 2008). Additionally, teachers may take part in professional learning in order to better meet mandates such as student proficiency requirements and curriculum content standards. While the extent to which learning is a joint enterprise depends on the structure of the undertaking, increasingly *No Child Left Behind* accountability measures promote a sense of shared accountability among schools whose staffs have a common interest in avoiding the penalties that accompany classification as a school in need of improvement (US Department of Education, 2006). As schools encourage teachers to engage in professional development experiences, a shared

repertoire of tools and other resources typically arises in support of their work. In many instances these include discipline-specific coaches, online resources and a common lexicon of terms that further reifies the community by giving its members a systematic vocabulary to promote a common understanding of learning. Lave and Wenger's concept also applies to teacher professional learning contexts from the pragmatic standpoint that in schools teachers are organized by grade levels or disciplines, and teachers with varying levels of experience commonly interact, share commitment to their discipline and share a repertoire of resources according to their teaching assignment. The communities of practice concept relates to this teacher professional learning study, in particular, because the topic will be new to all of the participants, novice, mid-career and veteran teachers, alike. In addition, all participants will bring their community-influenced knowledge, skills and dispositions to the shared task of learning how to support the learning needs of linguistically, culturally diverse learners.

Teacher Learning Research Using the Communities of Practice Concept

Studies conducted on teacher learning developed around the communities of practice concept have provided descriptive data to inform implementation of this framework and the generation of teacher knowledge in a variety of contexts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Little, 2003). Additionally, quantitative research points to specific aspects of teacher professional learning endeavors that result in improved teacher practice (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Garet, et al., 2001). A review of representative studies focusing on culturally diverse student needs and on effective modes of professional learning offers further insights into how Lave and Wenger's concept supports the aims of this ELL-oriented professional development study.

Just as learning and participation in a community of practice have a reciprocal, mutually sustaining relationship in Lave & Wenger's conceptual design, the learning and participation in a teacher learning community are viewed interdependently. This assumes that teachers learn by generating situated knowledge of their craft through mutual engagement in the work of challenging their own pedagogical assumptions, of posing problems, and of studying their own classrooms and schools. In teacher learning communities, schools are the sites where matters of practice are problematized, and where theories developed by others are questioned and applied. In teacher learning communities, teachers engage in these inquiry-based endeavors in order to generate site-specific understandings and broader knowledge that can then be applied to social and political issues (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). Throughout these processes, the interconnectedness of learning and practice remains consistent and apparent in all three facets of Lave and Wenger's communities of practice concept: mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire.

Mutual Engagement in Teacher Learning Communities.

The types of work that teachers engage in through inquiry-based activities include curriculum creation, development of pedagogical models and refinement of instructional techniques. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993) conducted narrative and case study research over a six year period that highlights their participants' involvement in these endeavors. They draw from their and their participants' group discussions, written reflections and essays to call attention to the worth of collaborative engagement around matters of practice. For example, Cochran-Smith and Lytle highlight the work of a teacher group from a private Quaker school in the Philadelphia area. These teachers formed a learning

community in order to study instructional challenges that arose from the school's growing minority enrollment. Ultimately the group sought to recommend curricular revisions based on their work together, which consisted of describing students' work, reflecting together on key concepts and analyzing other classroom data. Through these activities, the participants realized that they had different assumptions about their students' diversity which impacted their goals for their curriculum project. Some of the teachers came to the endeavor with the belief that racial, cultural and economic diversity positively contributed to learning. They viewed this as an opportunity to expand their skills in addressing learning needs. Others believed that socioeconomic diversity diminished the school's mission. These teachers joined the group hoping to clarify academic standards and, therefore, weed out seemingly unfit students. A third category of participants had a more neutral stance on diversity and joined hoping to gain a stronger understanding of how children learn in general. Through their work together, the teachers were ultimately able to understand how their values and assumptions clouded their ability to accurately interpret students' difficulties and how this, in turn, limited their ability to effectively meet students' educational and emotional needs. Following this realization, the group was then able to develop curricular recommendations to better meet these students' needs. Underscoring the role of collective inquiry in this process, one of the participants shared, "[h]ad we not reflected upon [our] own values, perspectives and experiences, we would not have been able to push past our own biases and see the topic of learning diversity in a new light" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 54).

Little's (2003) exploration of two high school learning communities' work on improving their day-to-day instructional practices compliments Cochran-Smith and Lytle's research by offering numerous excerpts from teacher work sessions. Overall, her case study data consisted of inquiry group observations and individual teacher interviews, and these effectively spotlight the specific interpersonal dynamics that lead to teacher learning about issues of equity. Little highlights a teacher group that formed with the shared goal of increasing their students' access to and achievement in college preparatory math classes. Once the objectives of each meeting were addressed, the group's routine was to use the last few minutes of their meetings for teachers to share and get feedback on instructional concerns. In a segment from one meeting, Little describes a teacher sharing her need to have math problems that will engage her "slow learners," while not leaving her "fast learners" bored. Rather the suggesting specific problems, group members challenged her to reflect on these characterizations of her students, and they brainstormed ways that she could even help the students themselves to interrupt their personally held assumptions about what it means to be "slow" or "fast". These discussions together with other examples illustrate how the most substantive work in teacher learning communities can occur coincidentally and apart from the planned agenda.

Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1993) and Little's (2003) examples are representative of the body of teacher learning community research that broadly applies to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. They aptly demonstrate how knowledge (meaning) is negotiated as community members interact and how tensions and conflicts are a typical part of the process. Yet they also illustrate how through mutual engagement,

teacher learning advances beyond its defined aims to create opportunities for transformative professional growth (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993 & 1999; Little, 2003; Westheimer, 2005; Raphael et al, 2001).

Joint Enterprise in Teacher Learning Communities.

Wenger defines joint enterprise as shared commitment to a purpose and mutual dependency among community members (Wenger, 1998). Assessing researched cases of teacher inquiry from this perspective provides a means of gauging the groups' coherence and therefore its viability relative to its selected work. In Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1993) description of the curriculum revision project, evidence of the group's commitment existed in the fact that its thirteen-person membership remained largely intact throughout the two-year duration of the project. This occurred despite beginning their work with a vast range of beliefs about culturally and socioeconomically diverse students and their presence at this school. In spite of this wide span of perspectives and an equally wide range of teaching assignments, the group's decision to persevere through the tensions brought on by such heterogeneity was a significant factor in their successful completion of their task.

Little's (2003) description of the math teacher group also demonstrates the power of joint enterprise in supporting group cohesion. When one teacher challenged his colleague's reference to her students as being slow learners and fast learners, his carefully phrased statement revealed a strong interest in maintaining a sense of trust and safety within the group. He stated, "What I find is that when I have mindsets like that that they get in my way in terms of thinking about the curriculum…Um…But I think that's from thinking about a group of kids as slow learners and that's how we're acclimatized to

think about learning." (Little, 2003, p. 928). His use of "I" and "we're" deflected any hint of accusation away from the teacher of "slow learners". Little also observed that this teacher remained after the meeting ended to individually follow up with his colleague, and she asserts that such overtures reflect commitment to the group's broader goals.

Shared Repertoire in Teacher Learning Communities.

Published studies of teacher inquiry-based learning communities are replete with examples of resources that groups have created and used to support their work. Raphael, Florio-Ruane, Kehus, George, Hasty, & Highfield's (2001) study of a teacher inquiry network describes the group's fundamental shared resource -- common belief in the need to re-engage low-achieving readers—as a foundation upon which they created a masters level literacy education course, a curriculum model for mixed ability groups and a rubric to support instructional conversations among student groups. Other teacher learning community repertoires include specialized vocabulary, routines and procedures to help group meetings progress efficiently, and common texts to serve as springboards for discussions or written reflections (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Little, 2003; Westheimer, 2005).

Since language is the primary means by which community members in teacher learning communities interact, it comprises an essential resource to support their practices. Language-- social, inner and written—is used to negotiate common understandings about the role of socioeconomic diversity in learning, the need for student engagement, the creation of math problems, and any other goal for which a learning community forms. Language enables the exposition and resolution of conflicting perspectives, it allows for the generation of data that make possible the consideration of

alternative approaches, it reinforces a sense of joint enterprise and it serves as the raw material for many resources created to support community ends (Cochran-Smith, & Lytle, 1993 & 1999; Little, 2003; Raphael, et al., 2001; Westheimer, 2005).

Taken together, mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire of resources aptly capture the substance of teacher learning communities, and the communities of practice concept provides a framework that can be used to study the work of promoting ELL instructional capacity. Yet, while this framework reveals the positive, transformative results of inquiry in teacher learning communities, it is important that this body of research be balanced with inquiries that capture breakdowns within this framework. The number of published studies that reflect such breakdowns is small since public elucidations of staff conflict could compromise researcher/teacher rapport and therefore limit the overall knowledge that could be generated from such investigations (S. Lytle, personal communication, March 16, 2010). However, a limited number of school-based communities of practice inquiries does reveal limitations within the concept. Importantly, these few studies also provide additional perspectives on learning communities that, taken together with the optimistically cast research sited above, provide a broader, multidimensional view of the mutual engagement, joint enterprise and use of shared resources that occurs in such communities.

Disjunctures in Teacher Learning Communities

In developing the communities of practice concept, Lave and Wenger (1991) note that as individuals join communities and take up the work that is integral to the community's shared goals, they orient toward the attributes and interests that they have in common and assume interconnected roles relative to their positions within the group.

Lave and Wenger do allow that dilemmas, contradictions and conflicts will arise during the course of this work, but they maintain that through continued mutual engagement, these disaccords will naturally be resolved, "[c]onflict is experienced and worked out through a shared everyday practice in which different viewpoints and common stakes are in interplay," (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 116).

While the prevailing research on teacher learning highlights the confluent aspects and benefits that result from the teacher learning with a community of practice structure, a small number of studies have instead examined conflict that can arise within communities. This research points to a notable limitation in the communities of practice concept: its failure to account for individual differences among community members, particularly when such differences place community members at ideological odds with established beliefs and practices. The work of Hodges (1998) and Linehan and McCarthy (2001) explores the role of the individual by highlighting it as an outside influence that shapes a teacher's engagement in, commitment to and resource use within school-based learning communities. These researchers note ways in which individuals' differing worldviews and foundational orientations intersect with community norms, and they go on to explore the effects of individual -- community disaccord on teacher learning and on the student learning that occurs as a result.

Hodges (1998) uses the communities of practice concept in a theoretical analysis of her experience as the only lesbian participant in an early childhood teacher education program. She illustrates a fundamental misalignment between her identity as a gay woman and the practices she was expected to appropriate as a prospective preschool teacher. Hodges states,

> I became self-conscious about my difference: I was not very girlie. I was not feminine. I was not subdued. I was not obedient. At that point, a few weeks into the first year of this program, I found myself "closeting" my queerness, fearful that "girliness" and feminine heterosexuality were the unofficial prerequisites for teaching young children (Hodges, 1998, p. 280).

This conflict constrained Hodges's ability to fully commit to the community enterprise, and it limited her relationships with other student teachers (Hodges, 1998). To illustrate this point, Hodges describes the conflict and alienation she felt at having to observe children from behind a one-way mirror. She reflected that as a tool for defining and regulating "normalcy" in child development, the one-way mirror immediately challenged her ability to participate in this program requirement because as a gay woman, she believed that she, too, fell outside the bounds of "normalcy" as defined in *this* setting. She writes,

> Again, my discomfort was not simply a sign of resistance to the activity, but a sign of dis-identification, of not identifying with the practice, not identifying with the work of observation. In that moment of possible identifications, I identified with the terrors of being observed, with the helplessness of being "regulated" as a "normal" body, with the impossible position of concealing myself in a room full of glass and mirrors (Hodges, 1998, p. 287).

In this instance, Hodges ceases her engagement in a required practice, her thoughts of dis-identification signal a disconnection with the enterprise, and she rejects an integral resource within the community's repertoire. In short, this instance illustrates a situation in which the communities of practice framework, as constructed by Lave and Wenger, categorically fails to apply to her actions or beliefs within the teacher education program.

Hodges's challenge in trying to appropriate pre-service teacher practices that clash with her identity points to another underdeveloped aspect of Lave and Wenger's concept: the lack of distinction between the legitimate peripheral participation that

novices typically engage in and marginalization, which fringe members of a community may be obliged to experience. Lave and Wenger (1991) hold that conflict is resolved through participation, yet Hodges's experience illustrates that while conflict may lead to gradual changes over time, such changes are always influenced by those in power within a community so that marginalized perspectives perpetually remain outside the norm, and marginalized individuals must participate from a position of subordination within the community. Hodges explains that historically, the caring for young children has aligned with notions of traditional heterosexual femininity and that over time these norms (along with specific theories of child development) have come to shape practices and beliefs about how pre-service teachers peripherally participate in field experiences during their teacher education program. By contrast, Hodges asserts that her experience of being a marginalized teacher education candidate fundamentally <u>changed</u> her participation in the program.

In one episode, her marginalization caused her to feel a sense of solidarity with another marginalized individual within the community—a child with behavior challenges. Here Hodges describes disregarding classroom management procedures by not exercising her power to reprimand the misbehaving child. She declines to place the child in timeout and later apologizes to the child when her cooperating teacher then steps in to enforce the sanction. Here, Hodges's actions not only reflect non-participation in established preschool teacher education practices, they represent counteractive behaviors that overtly distance her from the community as a whole. Hodges' work adds to the communities of practice concept by calling attention to the influence of power structures in constraining the participation of those individuals whose core beliefs and orientations

are not fully aligned with the norms of the community. Finally, it paints a vivid portrait of how such disjunctures manifest themselves as varied forms of non-participation in community work.

As Hodges examines the intersection of individual identity and participation in pre-service teacher learning settings, Linehan and McCarthy (2001) extend the teacher learning context to include in-service teacher interactions with school children. Their two-year case study of interactions in a fourth grade classroom explores how different modes of participation (and non-participation) among children are revealed through classroom discourse. This inquiry sheds light on the complex nature of participation in learning communities by examining the ways that individual students assume changing identities and how these shifts impact their participation in classroom practices. Linehan and McCarthy's study uncovers further complexities in the nature of participation that are not fully developed by Lave and Wenger (1991). However, when added to the body of research that applies the communities of practice concept in teacher learning contexts, it measurably enriches the means of understanding individuals in relation to their community membership.

Linehan and McCarthy (2001) highlight one particular exchange in which the teacher selects a student volunteer, Lisa, to share her response to a math question involving fractions. Analysis of the teacher's attempt to help Lisa in this process reveals that her words not only prevent Lisa from offering her response to the question, but also incite another student to openly question Lisa's competence as a member of the class. Linehan and McCarthy explain,

> T's [teacher's] addition of "girls these are too easy aren't they" underlines her perception of the unproblematic nature of her question. The way in which this

> comment immediately follows a directive to Lisa (i.e., not to look at her fraction chart) can be read as placing Lisa in an awkward position...Before Lisa has a chance to respond another student (Amanda) accuses her of not "knowing where we are".... Lisa's subsequent pause is problematic: If this material is easy and she is assumed to be able to work independently of resources, then her answer should be quicker (p. 139).

This example illustrates how the teacher's words along with those of Amanda lead to an identity shift on Lisa's part. Lisa moves from viewing herself as a competent volunteer who is able to respond to a question to a position that leaves her unable to respond to the very question she volunteered to answer; her lack of response renders her a non-participant in this lesson on fractions.

Taken together, these studies illuminate the sociocultural and personal historical contexts that shape individual learners and that mediate individual participation in community work. Moreover, they call attention to the complex nature of mutual engagement by illustrating how participation can lapse, cease or become counteractive, depending on the specific community norms and how closely they align with those of individuals within the community. In addition, this work reveals the influence of power structures within communities of practice to marginalize differing perspectives and to inhibit learning.

When added to the body of research exploring the positive dimensions of Lave and Wenger's concept, this work provides valuable counter perspectives that balance the literature highlighting aspects of unity and coherence within the concept. By underscoring complexities in how individuals struggle to participate in a community, and by calling attention to varying forms that participation may take, this research offers additional tools with which learning can be theoretically analyzed. Practically, it offers

factually detailed, affectively rich portraits of marginalized learners so that teachers and teacher educators may more fully understand how community beliefs, practices and power structures influence participation.

Critical Components in Teacher Learning Communities

In seeking to identify and understand the aspects of teacher learning communities that are most salient to teacher learning and to enhanced instructional practice, qualitative studies such as those highlighted in the sections above offer valuable descriptive details about how specific structures and routines within teacher learning initiatives can promote (or impede) changes in teaching practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Hodges, 2002; Little, 2002, Raphael et al., 2001). In addition, one quantitative investigation is particularly beneficial in confirming which specific structures predict changes in the ways teachers plan and instruct (Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001). This three-year longitudinal study of 30 schools in five states measured the effectiveness of specific aspects of professional development by using a least squares regression model to calculate the effects of professional development components on specific classroom practice. Supporting the findings noted in qualitative research, this investigation concluded that three structural features of professional development activities definitively predicted teacher learning and utilization of target instructional practices. These were (a) activities that took place over multiple sessions, (b) activities that involved the collective participation of groups of teachers, and (c) activities that included opportunities for relevant, authentically situated inquiry into teaching and learning.

It is important to recognize that on-going, collaborative and authentically situated professional learning opportunities may contrast with several engrained practices and patterns of belief among secondary school teachers. These norms strongly affect how teachers view themselves, their roles as colleagues, their growth as educators, and their beliefs about their students. Therefore, many content area teachers embarking on professional learning endeavors of this nature may require additional support as they reshape their views of themselves and define their responsibilities as the teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Research has also identified specific professional development supports that are critical in helping content area teachers accomplish this paradigm shift. Building and district administrators were consistently found to play an active role in cultivating professional learning communities that support English language learner achievement by offering logistical support and verbal encouragement to staff members engaged in this work (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Levine & Marcus, 2007; Knapp et al., 2003). Researchers have also found that the patterns of noninterference and isolation that are characteristic of traditional school configurations must be transcended in order for learning communities to succeed. Teachers accustomed to a standard of privacy needed to develop comfort soliciting input, offering suggestions and critiquing colleagues' instructional practices. Here again, school leaders were found to play a pivotal role in fostering an openness to collaborative, transparent sharing and discussion of classroom practices (Heller & Greenleaf, 2007; Levine and Marcus, 2007; Knapp et al., 2003). For example, in their comparative case study of fledgling learning communities within a California high school, Levine and Marcus (2007) highlight the fact that the principal provided staff members with training in protocol use to help them

feel safe in giving and receiving critiques. Levine and Marcus also found that the principal also supported teachers' engagement in learning communities by providing access to external sources of learning, such as readings, university professionals and observations of model programs in other school districts.

Overall, these studies identify the salient features of professional learning endeavors that result in changed planning and instruction. They inform us that improved classroom practice results from professional learning experiences are ongoing, collaborative and authentically situated around the study of teaching and learning. However, this research also underscores the fact that such improvements require the substantive support of school leaders since these qualities of professional learning may challenge their existing professional paradigms.

Overall learning communities, complete with their advantages, limitations and salient features offer an especially relevant format with which to investigate ELL learning. English language learners' linguistic and cultural differences threaten to substantively limit their opportunities to develop identities as full classroom participants (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Yet their participation is essential to their English acquisition since authentic participation in community work is the essence of learning itself (Wenger, 1998). So, when teachers work within a learning community structure to increase their understanding of how best to serve ELL needs, the process and content of their professional development converge to measurably impact the ways in which they interpret and carry out their work. Cochran-Smith and Lytle describe this manner in which teacher learning in communities impacts teachers' foundational understandings and beliefs about their practice, "[a]t the base of this commitment is a deep and

passionately enacted responsibility to students' learning and life chances and to transforming the policies and structures that limit student' access to these opportunities (Lytle and Cochran-Smith, 1994 as cited in Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 279).

English Language and Literacy in the Content Areas

It follows that when teachers experience transformative professional development in inquiry-based learning communities that they should look to establish spaces such as these for their own students. Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice concept offers an ideal structure for facilitating ELL academic achievement because of its emphasis on the relationship between learning and participation in culturally-rooted practices. In order to foster ELLs' ability to proficiently use English, both written and oral, as a means of learning disciplinary skills and knowledge, content teachers need an understanding of the specific ways in which the three components of the communities of practice concept can be implemented in support of this goal. Studies exploring classroom language and literacy practices shed light on ELLs' access to mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire of resources. These studies also describe how ELLs' opportunities to participate in their classroom communities of practice can be maximized.

Mutual Engagement: ELL Learning through Participation in Classroom Practices

Case study and action research effectively illustrates the manner in which authentic occasions to participate in classroom activities determined ELL access to the community's repertoire of content and language learning resources. One such example is Hawkins's collaborative action research study that she conducted with a kindergarten teacher. In this study, the two investigators designed and implemented curricular initiatives that shed light on the factors contributing to and constraining occasions for

ELL classroom participation. They collected descriptive data on student interaction during these learning activities and ultimately used their findings to generate guidelines to support ELLS' successful participation in regular education settings. Most prevalent among their findings was the importance of language itself as a resource to support language learning. Hawkins asserts that classroom communities are socially situated spaces where language functions, not just as subject-specific terms and grammar, but rather as a reflection of the ways of thinking, acting and valuing that are accepted in that group. Citing Gee's work (2001) she explains, "[t]hus, using 'language' appropriately is not just a matter of words and grammar, it is part-and-parcel of a 'toolkit' where multiple components must be packaged together correctly in order to be recognized (and for communication to occur successfully)" (Hawkins, 2004, p. 17).

In this study of a kindergarten ELL student's classroom interactions, Hawkins describes an instance in which the ELL's participation in a photograph sharing activity gained her acceptance and membership as part of the group by her classmates. Hawkins uses this along with many negative examples experienced by this student in order to illustrate that participation is an essential factor in getting ELLs to assume identities as learners in a classroom community and, therefore, become participants in language-rich communities of practice in which they will be exposed to apprenticeship opportunities in which they can observe and practice using language in meaningful activities (Hawkins, 2004).

Hawkins (2004) identifies many questions that educators should actively consider in their efforts to maximize opportunities for ELL participation in classroom practices. Among these, the most fundamental questions to consider are: (a) What forms of

language and literacy are represented in the classroom? (b) What are the social and academic practices required for successful participation in classroom communities? and (c) What connections (or disconnections) exist between the home discourse practices and social relations and those expected at school?

The ability to substantively evaluate the questions raised by Hawkins above depends on a teacher's views of ELL needs and of the role he or she ascribes to him or herself in meeting those needs. Teachers who can accurately conceptualize the participatory needs of ELLs and who can understand and act upon their role in providing opportunities for participation can support their content and language growth in definitive, quantifiable terms (Haneda, 2008).

Haneda (2008) conducted a fourteen week exploratory ethnographic study in a Midwestern US middle school. Data from bi-weekly observations of ESL, non-tracked math and tracked English classes, informal conversations with teachers and students and semi-structured teacher interviews were analyzed using pattern matching (Fetterman, 1998 as cited in Haneda, 2008), open coding and focused coding (Emerson et al., 1995 as cited in Haneda, 2008). Among her findings, Haneda included that within mainstream content area classes, opportunities to participate are especially critical because they present the richest opportunities to gain exposure to peer culture, which is implicitly woven into language and practices, and which, therefore, affects many types of classroom discourse. Yet, the middle school teachers in this study who believed ELLs needed to learn English before they could learn content or engage in critical thought tended to offer limited opportunities for their participation in academically challenging activities. Therefore, their access to the "toolkit" of linguistic and content specific norms and

practices was equally limited. Conversely, teachers who took a more comprehensive view of their role as supporters of ELLs' overall social and academic growth provided these learners with occasions to participate in academically meaningful activities. These experiences enabled students in this study to authentically engage, alongside their English proficient peers, in the language use and other language embedded practices of the domain. Frequently, these practices included connections to students' home lives as well as cognitively challenging elaboration of academic concepts. By demonstrating how these teachers' practices align with empirically validated CREDE Standards for Effective Pedagogy, Haneda claims that ELLs in these classes accomplish greater language and content area achievement (Haneda, 2008).

Like Hawkins, Haneda's study includes numerous negative examples of participatory opportunities. However, her overall findings support the position that ELLs learn language—academic vocabulary and grammar <u>and</u> the language-mediated norms related to each discipline—through authentic engagement in academic practices. ELLs have been found to appropriate the language forms and the ways of being that are embedded in language use when they take part in structured discussions around academic content and where the teacher has identified specific objectives and assessment methods connected to them (Gavelek & Raphael, 1996; Wells & Arauz, 2006). When ELLs participate in content-related discussions with their teachers, teachers can monitor their output and track their progression from use of every-day oral language to use of academic terminology to describe domain-specific phenomena (Gibbons, 2003; Swain, 2000). Recasting, reformulation and recontextualizing ELLs' responses facilitate their progression toward more advanced academic vocabulary and language structures

(Gibbons, 2003). Similarly, student-to-student interactions such as peer tutoring and literature circle discussions help ELLs appropriate domain-specific language (Donato, 2000; Gavelek & Raphael, 1996).

Joint Enterprise: Building Shared Commitment through Culturally Congruent Endeavors

A student's ability to engage in a classroom enterprise is influenced by his or her sense of commitment to the specific work taking place as well as to the community of individuals engaged in it. Ethnographic, case study and quantitative research conducted over the past three decades has consistently documented the fact that ELLs' investment in the classroom learning activities they encounter is strongly enhanced when their cultural norms and practices are reflected in these very activities (Heath, 1982; Au, 2000; Goldenberg, Rueda, & August, 2006).

Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner & Meza (2003) conducted a case study of middle school Mexican immigrants' home literacy practices in order to document disjunctures between home and school reading and writing norms for these students and to provide evidence-based recommendations that schools could use to capitalize on ELLs' linguistic and cultural norms. During the study they conducted observations of literacy events in participants' homes, observed their classes, collected journal entries and other related documents and conducted interviews with the participants, their parents, their teachers and the building principal. The findings they generated brought to light an important cultural belief that was consistently demonstrated in all students and their families; there was a pervasive conviction that all household members should use their individual abilities for the good of the family unit. More than individual accomplishment, the strength of shared family goals emerged as powerful motivator in the students' success

with these literacy tasks. Jimenez's (2001) descriptive research of effective literacy-building practices for ELLs highlights a school community that recognizes students who serve as language brokers for family members. Not only does this recognition encourage reading and writing in an overt sense, it also establishes a strong home/school connection by affirming the value some cultures place on contributing to the family unit.

Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner & Meza's findings align with the work of Moll and Gonzalez (1994) whose research also highlights ELLs' strong family and communities ties and resources. They assert that these connections, known as Funds of Knowledge (Moll, 1992), can be tapped to promote intellectually challenging literacy building opportunities that are fully congruent with students' cultural norms and foundational beliefs about family, community and authenticity of purpose. Moll and Gonzalez (1994) highlight one case in which a sixth grade teacher used neighborhood volunteers to teach her students about the construction field. Importantly, these volunteers offered intellectual as well as hands-on contributions to the lessons, and the teacher built these into academically rigorous science and language arts activities that ELLs actively participated in. Research focusing on similar classroom endeavors has reported uniformly high levels of ELL engagement (Au, 2000; Conchas, 2001; Lee & Buxton, 2009; Moje et al., 2004; Reyes & Moll, 2008; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002).

In addition to creating new interdisciplinary themed units or topics of study that relate to their students' sociocultural backgrounds, the studies noted above have also provided evidence for specific recommendations about how existing classroom practices and lessons can be made more culturally responsive. Villegas and Lucas (2002) assert that changes to daily classroom routines and lesson planning can only happen when

teachers develop a sense of sociocultural consciousness. This is an awareness that an individual's ways of being are mediated by the norms of his or her culture, and teachers who are culturally responsive understand that this fact applies not only to their learners but to themselves, as well. Sociocultural consciousness also involves the acknowledgement that it is the dominant culture's beliefs, norms and practices that are often privileged over those of minority groups. Nieto and Bode (2008) illustrate this with the juxtaposition that US mainstream culture stresses the importance of independence at an early age, while Latino cultures emphasize interdependence as an important value. Recognizing and making provisions for this means not characterizing manifestations of this belief in a negative manner. For example, teachers should respect the causal factors of a young student's difficultly separating from his or her parents, etc. (Nieto & Bode, 2008). They should critically examine their own positioning relative to their students' cultural differences and mainstream norms to reduce the chance that they unintentionally communicate disrespect for beliefs or practices that are not their own.

Culturally responsive teaching requires that educators approach their instruction from a constructivist stance that views all students as capable learners and that views any and all culturally-rooted differences as valuable resources for promoting learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Among these differences, learning preferences, communication styles and language differences have a powerful impactful on classroom instruction (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Culturally responsive teachers, therefore, include a diverse range of activities that enable students to successfully capitalize on knowledge and skills germane to their cultural backgrounds. At the same time, they recall that learning is influenced by a range of factors, and they do

not blanketly assign students to specific activities solely based on their cultural backgrounds. Rather they enable all students to broadly develop their skills and knowledge by exposing them to a range of learning modalities (Nieto & Bode, 2008). Additionally, culturally responsive teachers promote their diverse learners' academic achievement when they themselves become students of cultural diversity. These teachers understand how both learning and teaching are culturally mediated activities, and how to be successful with all of their students, they need to learn about their own and others' cultural practices and perspectives. With this knowledge, they can make adaptations to their instruction so that it acknowledges cultural differences and works to affirm diversity and promote education equity and achievement (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). When culturally and linguistically diverse students are members of classes with teachers who practice culturally responsive pedagogy, and when they are provided with the means to draw upon their strengths and feel valued for who they are in the classroom, then their investment in these endeavors rises commensurately. Culture is a critical consideration when seeking to cultivate joint enterprise in a classroom that includes ELLs.

Shared Repertoire: Resources to Support ELL Learning

In communities of practice, mutual engagement in shared enterprises occurs through the use of a repertoire of resources that scaffold the work of the community. In classroom learning communities, therefore, ELL content and language learning requires a focus on the resources that provide contextual support in order to make learning means and goals accessible to ELLs in a variety of ways (Johnson, 2004). These include resources that scaffold language development, resources that support literacy and

collaborative dialogue, an especially potent tool that has valuable applications across disciplines.

Resources to support language development.

The idea that instructional input should be fully comprehensible to ELLs stems from Krashen's research (Johnson, 2004). Although his work is situated within the cognitive/information processing paradigm, the tools that came forth from it offer teachers a variety of effective scaffolding approaches. The notion of comprehensible input, therefore, is viewed as a culturally-derived tool that mediates ELL language and content area learning. This concept has informed the research and development of numerous scaffolding approaches. For example, Freeman, Freeman and Mercuri's (2003) case study research with sixth grade ELLs revealed that input is more comprehensible to students when it is received through the integrated use of reading, writing, speaking and listening activities. Additionally, Lesaux, Koda, Siegel & Shanahan's research synthesis (2006) includes results from four experimental studies demonstrating the gains in comprehension and writing quality that resulted when adolescent ELLs received instruction that combined these modalities with listening/speaking activities. On the whole, this descriptive and experimental research sustains the effectiveness of integrating reading, writing, listening and speaking because reading and writing skills were found to reinforce one another.

Oral language development also enables ELLs to better participate in academic discussions during class, which further strengthens their ability to comprehend related reading and extend their understanding through writing activities (Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002). In addition to integrating these components, ELLs benefit from

maximizing the comprehensibility of each individual aspect (Calderon, 2007; Lee & Buxton, 2009). Teachers can ensure that the reading materials ELLs use follow a predicable format. For expository texts typically encountered at the secondary level, they can explicitly teach ELLs how to recognize and strategically use common features such as marginal notes, graphs, section headings and indexes. Teachers can maximize the comprehensibility of the oral input ELLs receive by using terms in multiple contexts, adjusting the language load for students at varying levels of English proficiency, and using language that matches students' communicative competence in length, complexity and abstraction (Lee & Buxton, 2009; Walqui, 2006). These methods for providing ELLs comprehensible input are particularly valuable because they can viably support ELL language development in all content area settings.

Resources to support literacy development.

Cognitive and metacognitive comprehension strategies are tools generated from classroom contexts that promote comprehension of written text. For example, learners can be taught how to mentally visualize what they are reading or to group items they are learning into meaningful categories, either mentally or through the use of graphic organizers. Intermittently summarizing information they read offers ELLs another strategy to support their comprehension (Calderon, 2007; Chamot & O'Malley, 1986; Walqui, 2006). Metacognitive strategies help ELLs plan for, monitor, and adjust their performance during an activity. For instance, students can be provided with concrete examples of phrases they can use to identify unclear material as they read such as, "I'm not sure what this is about, but if I look at the picture, it shows _____" (Walqui, 2006). However beneficial these learning strategies, without an adequate understanding of

English—actual word meanings and implied connotations—ELLs will not be in a position to fully utilize them. In fact, numerous educators have identified the need to compensate for limited English word knowledge as among the most pressing requirements for language minority students (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002; Nagy, Garcia, Durgunolu, & Hacin-Bhatt, 1993; Wong-Fillmore & Snow; 2002).

Teaching specific word-learning strategies to ELLs offers a highly efficient and effective use of instructional time because it equips these students with the tools needed to independently construct meaning from unknown words across subject areas. Another advantage of word-learning strategies is that they provide students with a broader understanding of a word-- its literal meaning, its various connotations, the ways it can be used in different sentence structures, the morphological options it offers, its etymology, etc. (Carlo, et al., 2004). A nationwide experimental study of middle school ELLs demonstrated the utility and overall value of teaching students how to use these strategies. Students in the treatment group received instruction in the word-learning strategies noted above and participated in collaborative learning activities to reinforce their learning. For example, after learning the meaning of the root *graph*, the students would participate in an exercise requiring them to work in teams to create as many words as possible using that root. Instruction of word strategies and reinforcement activities such as these led students in the treatment group to modest gains on an assessment measuring morphology and significant gains on assessments measuring word association, mastery, and polysemy (Carlo, et al., 2004).

A particularly beneficial word learning strategy is that of cognate recognition. The study of cognate vocabulary is especially important for Spanish speaking ELLs since

cognates make up from one third to one half of an average educated person's vocabulary: estimated 10,000-15,000 words (Carlo, et al., 2004). Nagy, Garcia, Durgunolu & Hacin-Bhatt (1993) found that teaching Spanish-English cognates to fourth through sixth grade students within the context of expository text resulted in significant gains in student comprehension. These students knew 67% of target vocabulary for which they also knew the Spanish cognates. By contrast, they only knew 37% of target vocabulary for which they did not know the corresponding Spanish cognates. Garcia's research synthesis (1999) offers further insights into cognate use with adolescent ELLs. These findings revealed that adolescent ELLs accessed cognates more readily than younger students, but that overall this strategy has the potential for greater utilization when teaching ELLs whose native language have cognates with English.

Collaborative dialogue as a resource for learning in all content areas.

The teacher-student and student-student conversations that unfold during instruction are particularly beneficial in language and literacy development in all content areas (Wells, 1993). Swain (2000) identifies conversations of this nature as collaborative dialogue or, "dialogue in which speakers are engaged in problem solving and knowledge building" (p. 102). In her investigation of this concept in language education, she highlights an example of two French students' verbal interactions to demonstrate how their output outweighs input as a mediator of learning. In this scenario, the input that the French students provided one another was not comprehensible. Rather, it was made up of disjointed utterances as they thought aloud to resolve the dilemma of how to say "the new threats" in French. One classmate picked up on the gist of the other's output, joined the process of puzzling through whether the noun *threats* was masculine or feminine, and

together they looked up *threats* in the dictionary, jointly discovering its gender and jointly determining the proper adjective form to use with it. This collaborative process demonstrates how dialogue can serve as the means by which the two classmates construct meaning through output. It shows how in second language learning, language is both the final product and the resource used to produce it. The French students' aim was to determine the correct way of saying "the new threats" in French, and language allowed the two students to engage in the back-and-forth process of negotiating meaning by suggesting different hypotheses, testing them and deploying different problem solving strategies along the way.

To further substantiate her claim about the value of collaborative dialogue, Swain draws upon the empirical research of her students. This study sought to establish the validity of collaborative dialogue as a means of advancing learning toward meaningful, grammatically accurate language production (Holguna, 1994 as cited in Swain, 2000). In this research two test groups and a control group received instruction on verb form accuracy. Both treatment groups were taught to use strategies, but one group was also taught to verbalize the strategies while working with partners. This test group outperformed the others on discrete-item questions and on open-ended questions involving conditional tense verbs. Analysis of this groups' collaborative metacognitive strategy use confirmed that this form of collaborative dialogue helped them to recognize knowledge gaps, predict linguistic needs, develop strategies and monitor their language use. Notably, these transcripts also describe the students' affective reactions to their tasks as well as the empathetic or motivational responses their interlocutors used to keep the process moving. In this manner, their language use reflects not only academic

processes but also social /emotional dimensions used in support of language learning. Overall, these findings affirm the worth of social, dialogic interaction for language learning. Additional research points to the effectiveness of collaborative dialogue use in other content areas.

Wells and Arauz's (2006) seven-year, mixed method study of collaborative dialogue use across disciplines affirms the value of this scaffolding technique in broadening student inquiry and encouraging critical thought. During the study Wells and Arauz collected taped classroom dialogues from twelve teachers. Each speech episode was then coded both according to the level of cognitive demand demonstrated and according to where it fell in a sequence of turns related to a single topic. In this manner, they sought to establish a relationship between the length of an exchange and the level of critical thought reached through the exchange.

Quantitative results reflected a great deal variability depending on the teacher's role in each dialogic sequence. Comparing coded data from the three teachers who remained in the study from start to finish, Wells and Arauz noted a decrease in teacher-initiated speech episodes and an increase in student-initiated speech episodes. They also noted an increase in the percentage of high level evaluative or interrogative utterances made by students in each of the three teachers' classes from year one to year seven of the study. These results suggested that teachers' sustained use of collaborative dialogue during lessons was associated with longer, more analytic student initiated discussions. Qualitative findings from this study further describe these dialogic exchanges according to the content area in which they took place. For example, an extended student-to-student dialogue during a fourth grade novel study led students to deepen their understanding of

the main characters' conflicting philosophies and of how these philosophies affected events in the novel. The 55 minute discussion included thoughts about how the characters' beliefs could have been reflected differently in the novel and about how these beliefs connect to real life events. The transcript of this dialogue also showed that the students agreed and disagreed with one another using evidence from the text and that they could recognize the positive attributes of positions other than their own. Wells and Arauz (2006) highlight another dialogue that took place during a math lesson. Here the students had to identify distinctions between the terms *predict*, *guess*, and *estimate*. In this exchange students offered well-elaborated statements that captured their growing understanding of these abstract terms in relation to the viewpoints of previous speakers. As the learners continually refined their descriptions of these terms, they ultimately reached an understanding of each that surpassed the initial descriptions. Wells and Arauz's study (2006) offers similar examples of how collaborative dialog was used as a tool to scaffold student's learning of concepts in social studies and science.

Overall, the instructional resources described above are exceptionally valuable tools for ELLs because when ELLs can construct meaning from academic texts and classroom discussions, they gain greater independence in completing out-of-class assignments, and this fosters their overall sense of proficiency as students. When teachers and ELLs themselves use this body of resources to make oral and written English accessible, they then gain access to the range of skills and knowledge within each discipline. Consistent with Lave and Wenger's concept (1991), mutual engagement, shared commitment to joint enterprise and a shared repertoire of resources converge in a learning community structure to enable ELLs to advance beyond their actual levels of

linguistic and content area development. With these community-based scaffolds, the learning that occurs in ELLs' zones of proximal development remains focused on higher potential outcomes that can tenably be achieved.

Summary

In summary, this literature review positions the present study within a history of teacher education research that has remained responsive to the needs of society overall. It highlights three bodies of literature—sociocultural theory and the related concept of communities of practice, teacher professional development research, and ELL language and literacy development research-- that contribute to our understanding of how teachers learn to foster ELLs' content area language and literacy development. Importantly, each topic in this review affirms the importance of language in internalizing new concepts and information and in mediating higher cognitive functioning in teachers and ELLs, alike. Additionally, research undertaken from a sociocultural perspective underscores the power of social interaction in promoting concept learning, and it demonstrates the advantages to teachers and ELLs when, through content or process, learning experiences take into account culturally based beliefs, experiences and backgrounds. Professional development literature calls attention to the value of community engagement and critical inquiry among teachers. Research on ELL language and literacy development underscores the importance of participation in valued classroom practices as a means of scaffolding learning. It also highlights the importance of culturally rooted beliefs, practices and resources in promoting ELL achievement in all content areas.

However, as noted, these bodies of literature do not capture secondary teachers' perspectives, beliefs, and experiences of ELL-oriented professional development and

instructional approaches (August & Calderon, 2006). By conducting a sustained, inquiry-based professional development initiative in a suburban middle school, this investigation will capture these perspectives. It will also describe efforts to implement the broader approaches and specific strategies to support ELLs covered during professional learning sessions within this study. This professional development inquiry aims to provide an immediate benefit to participants and to their students while documenting the opportunities and / or constraints that affect participants' professional learning. By targeting non-urban students at the secondary level, this study will provide needed information about professional development enactment that can be used to inform professional development efforts in comparable settings.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

As outlined in the chapters above, ELL enrollment in New Jersey's non-urban schools is steadily growing (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006). Notwithstanding this enrollment shift, these districts do not have coaches, bilingual specialists and other resources to build the capacity of their teachers to support the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006). This difficulty is compounded by the fact that the current body of research surrounding ELL-oriented professional development does not adequately inform efforts to address knowledge gap at the secondary level (August & Calderon, 2006). This study responds to these shortfalls by addressing the following research questions:

1. How do suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in an ELL-oriented reflective inquiry group?
    a. What questions, challenges and interests do these teachers identify as priorities in their ELL-oriented professional learning?
    b. How does the study of these questions, challenges and interests unfold as teachers interact in a reflective inquiry group?
2. How are the ELL-oriented instructional approaches studied during professional development actually enacted in these teachers' practice?
3. How do the opportunities or constraints present within a suburban middle school structure impact the content area literacy instruction they provide for the ELLs in their classrooms?

To examine these questions I utilized case study methodology as it offered an ideal framework for a qualitative, professional development inquiry. The purpose of a case study is to inquire into a phenomenon that occurs within a clearly defined context or "bounded system" (Merriam, 1998). For this study, a teacher professional learning community that centered on ELL content area literacy was the phenomenon that I investigated. The participating English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, the content area teachers who teach the school's ELL population, and the suburban middle school community in which they work made up the bounded context that defined the scope of the study. Given the strong need to expand the capacity of content teachers in relation to ELLs, this study shed light on this process and its contextual characteristics, thereby informing future professional development efforts that occur in similar contexts or focus on similar issues.

Sociocultural theory provided the theoretical framework for this study. According to this framework, learning has its roots in social interactions, and language is an essential tool through which individuals learn (Johnson, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 2000). Learning takes place through collaborative, committed engagement in endeavors that are valued within a community, and an individual's identity within his or her community is ascribed based on his or her role in these endeavors (Wenger, 2005). As such, the professional development experience that was the focus of this study established an ELL-oriented teacher learning community context in which to expand teacher capacity for building their students' English literacy. It was then assumed that as the teacher participants integrated relevant instructional approaches into their teaching, on-going inquiry and collaborative problem solving would enable them to construct

theoretical and practical knowledge of how to best support ELLs' learning of the literacy skills germane to their disciplines. This collaborative learning community structure provided a means for participating teachers to gain a unique grasp of how the instructional strategies we studied fit their particular contexts, with their particular class compositions, subject areas and expected learning outcomes.

Role of the Pilot Study

During the winter and spring of 2008, I conducted a pilot study at Harding Middle School[1], the school where the present investigation took place, and findings from that pilot study heavily influenced the professional development focus and case study method selected for the present inquiry (McGriff, 2008). The pilot study was conducted as a requirement for a qualitative research methods course in which I was enrolled at the time. It addressed the questions, "What do teachers believe about ELLs' academic ability and potential?" and "What contextual factors mediate the beliefs teachers hold for ELLs?" I interviewed Harding Middle School's one ESL teacher and two of the content area teachers with whom she shared students. I utilized NVivo7 software to deductively code interview transcripts according to a coding format I developed from extant research on adolescent ELL literacy and teacher knowledge research. I then inductively coded the same transcripts in order to identify patterns intrinsic to the data that were not captured during deductive coding. By analyzing these coded data, I was able to generate findings regarding the professional beliefs and school context factors that mediated these teachers' instruction of their ELL students. My findings included the assertion that teachers' expectations for their ELLs appeared to align more closely with their sense of

[1] The names of the town, school district, school, teachers and students have been changed to respect the privacy of the participants.

professional efficacy in teaching these students than with their particular job title. For instance, one content teacher possessed many years of experience working with culturally diverse learners; her level of experience in this regard surpassed that of the ESL teacher. I found that this particular content teacher tended to approach the task of ELL instruction with greater expectations for positive learning outcomes. Additionally, I found that the constraints and opportunities unique to the school context appeared to mediate the participating teachers' beliefs. For example, limited opportunities for ELL/content area teacher collaboration contributed to teachers feeling ill-equipped to effectively instruct ELLs. Evidence of this pattern was found in all of the interviews I conducted. Overall, however, the most pervasive pattern I found while conducting the study was the need for additional professional development for teachers of ELLs.

The interview design of this pilot study enabled me to thoroughly document three teachers' perspectives regarding the need for expanded professional development, and even more needs became apparent through my data analysis. Overall, one of the most pervasive themes that I found while conducting the pilot study was the need for culturally responsive teaching strategies. With a background in ELL literacy instruction, I possessed the knowledge and skills to help satisfy this clear and present need, and my interest in and commitment to teacher education led me to incorporate this service as part of my study of professional learning in this particular setting. My decision to design this inquiry as a case study also stemmed from this finding. As a case study, I was able to magnify the process of teacher learning, focusing on the multiple complexities and perspectives that arose from ELL-targeted capacity building. In this manner, members of

the Harding school community did benefit from a directly applicable example that will hopefully serve as a springboard for future study.

After the pilot study ended, a valuable structure for promoting teacher collaboration was instituted at Harding Middle School. As a contract provision, teachers were given professional development credit hours for participating in a teacher learning community experience. Additionally, teachers were required to serve on a school committee, and the principal determined that learning community work satisfied this new contractual requirement. This, therefore, served as a contextual factor that promoted professional learning about ELLs. It also offered a measure of institutional motivation to the teachers who participated in the study.

Research Setting

This study took place in Harding, New Jersey at Harding Middle School. I was able to gain access to this research site because I taught language arts there for four years and was acquainted with the building principal as well as several teachers there. Additionally, I conducted the above referenced pilot study in this school, and I learned of their emerging interest in professional learning communities while collecting data for that study.

Harding is a township of 54 square miles located in central New Jersey. Historically Harding had been a rural community of farms, mills and related businesses to support local agriculture. Gradually, however, Harding transitioned from a rural community to a predominantly suburban township (Harding Township, n.d.). In 1990, Harding was home to 770 Latinos, and by 2000, Harding's Latino population increased to 1740. This represented a 126% increase in its Latino population while the total Harding

population increased by only 27% during these years (The New Jersey Data Book, 2008). Indeed, the enormity of this increase became even more apparent when reviewing recent school enrollment data. From 2006 – 2008, Harding Middle School experienced a 167% increase in Latinos, increasing from six students to sixteen (New Jersey Department of Education 2006; NJ Department of Education, 2008). Percentagewise, the home languages spoken by Harding students were: 98.7% English, 1% Spanish, .1%, Taiwanese, .1% Russian, .1% Polish, .1% Gujarati and .1% Mandarin (NJ Department of Education, 2008). According to the school's ESL teacher, Harding Middle School responded to the resulting increase in their ELL student population by increasing her part-time position to full-time status. At the time of this inquiry, ELLs at Harding Middle School attended language class 40 – 120 minutes per day; the ESL teacher would determine whether one, two or three 40-minute periods of language class were needed depending on each student's English proficiency. During the remaining hours, they were instructed by literacy, science, social studies, math and related arts content area specialists who possessed a limited knowledge base around second language acquisition and English literacy development (McGriff, 2008). Additionally, since this demographic shift occurred in Harding's recent past, many of these teachers had limited practical experience teaching linguistically and culturally diverse students. As such, the school found itself experiencing a challenge that many formerly homogenous, monolinguistic schools also faced. That is, they were working to help content teachers gain instructional capacity to teach ELLs (US Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, 2008).

With these student and teacher characteristics, Harding Middle School offered the ideal location in which to address this study's research questions. The professional learning experiences that formed part of this inquiry supported the immediate professional development interests of participating teachers. Additionally, the study findings inform the professional development efforts of districts that are experiencing similar demographic changes.

Participants

Harding Middle School teachers who taught ELLs were invited to take part in the study since their needs for professional learning on this topic were most immediate. The school principal issued this invitation, and all six teachers volunteered (See Table 1). A group of six was ideal because this gave each participant sufficient opportunities to play an active role in the planned professional learning activities, to raise questions, to share reflections and to have their contributions reflected on and responded to in a thoughtful, complete manner by the others in the group. Harding Middle School had the practice of placing its ELLs in a 120-minute literacy class designed for the school's struggling readers and writers. In addition, they all attended a 40-minute period of second language instruction taught by the ESL teacher, and they took 40-minute classes in gym, related arts and math. Seventh grade ELLs took science and 8th grade ELLs took social studies since their intensive literacy instruction combined with second language instruction did not leave time for both. Finally, the ESL teacher met once or twice per week with these students during their lunch period to reinforce science or social studies concepts covered in these classes.

Table 1

Sample Descriptors

Participant	Position	Years of Experience	Years in Current Position	Degree(s) Earned
Georgia	8th Grade Team Social Studies Teacher	15	11	BA- Elementary Education (Middle School Social Studies Highly Qualified)
Eris	7th Grade Team Science Teacher	4	3	BS- Chemistry MA- Master of Arts in Teaching
Jean	Lead Writing Teacher	7	2	BS- Marketing Post-Bache laureate Alternate Route Teacher Certification Program
Devon	Lead Reading Teacher	14	4	BA- Elementary Education MA- Literacy
Deena	Remedial Language Arts Teacher	13	10	BA- Elementary Education/English MA- Education MA- Educational Administration
Nancy	ESL Teacher	12	7	BA- Elementary Education/Psychology Post-Bache laureate ESL Certification MA- Literacy

Professional Development Model

Participating teachers took part in a thirteen week, ELL-oriented professional learning experience during fall 2009. This experience drew upon the communities of practice concept (Wenger, 2005; Westheimer, 2008) that focuses on interactions within a learning community, emphasizing the role of collaborative work and shared goals in shaping teacher learning. Since this study sought to describe this process within the

specific context of Harding Middle School, it was important that the professional development sessions address the site-specific needs that participants identified. It was equally important that the content of these sessions aligned with the three communities of practice tenets that grounded the entire study: mutual engagement, shared commitment to a joint enterprise, and shared repertoire of resources.

First, in classroom communities learning happens through participation, where learners are mutually engaged in classroom endeavors (Wenger, 2005). Based on this guiding premise, we examined what participation looked like in each discipline and within each teacher's day-to-day routines. We identified and discussed ways of maximizing ELL engagement in the actual work of their classes (Hawkins, 2004; Swain, 2000).

Second, in classroom learning communities, learners have a shared commitment to the endeavors they engage in. They depend upon one another for work to be successfully accomplished, and they are all invested in the outcome (Wenger, 2005). Mutual dependency and shared commitment are facilitated when there is congruence between the participants' cultural beliefs and practices and those that ground the endeavor itself (Moll, 1992). Therefore, as a learning community we explored issues of cultural congruity, or in other words, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) (Curran, 2008; Lucas & Grinberg, 2005; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). First, we determined how ELLs' languages and cultural backgrounds influenced how they make sense of schooling norms. Second, we discussed which existing practices and routines at Harding Middle School were particularly incongruent with some ELLs' cultural backgrounds and/or prior schooling experiences.

Third, a repertoire of resources arises from and facilitates completion of these collaborative enterprises (Wenger, 2005), and both Lave and Wenger (1991) and Vygotsky (1978) identify language as a particularly potent resource in this regard. As such, our professional learning sessions sought to enhance teachers' understanding of student dialogue and the ways that it might be implemented in their particular content areas (Wells, 2000; Swain, 2000).

In a parallel manner, the format of these sessions was designed to maximize the teachers' opportunities for meaningful participation, to foster a sense of shared commitment in our work together and to generate / build up teachers' competency with the repertoire of resources that support discipline-specific language and literacy development. Pinnell and Rodgers's (2004) inquiry-based teacher learning community model provided the overall structure for the professional development activities within this study. This particular model suited this study's emphasis on collaborative questioning and reflecting on instruction because it provided for collaborative group, one-on-one and individual contexts for teacher inquiry.

Collaborative Group Context

The group of participants met eight times over the course of thirteen weeks. During these sessions I facilitated collaborative activities aimed at cultivating their knowledge of ELL language and literacy development. Together we applied this knowledge to each participant's classroom and subject area in order to create viable strategies and approaches to supporting ELL content language and literacy growth. Table 2 specifies each session's objectives and topics.

One-to-One Contexts

During this professional development study, I conducted lesson observations and post-observation discussions in order to support the participants' implementation of approaches we studied during our weekly sessions. These observations and discussions occurred at the onset, midpoint and close of the study. Through reflection, questioning and analysis of the interactions in each lesson, participants were given the opportunity to cultivate skills, knowledge and dispositions required for effective ELL instruction.

Individual Contexts

Individual participants had opportunities to reflect on their own learning and practices throughout this study. Questions for individual reflection were posed at each weekly session and throughout each post-lesson discussion. Additionally, I encouraged teachers to engage in self-initiated reflection, questioning and analysis.

Overall, this multi-tier framework provided the six teachers who took part in this study with three distinct means of fostering their ability to critically reflect on their teaching practices as they went through the process of learning about ELL-targeted comprehension building measures. As the teachers actively examined their instructional practices and clarified their understandings, I assumed that they would be better able to adapt their teaching practices in response to these new understandings (Pinnell & Rodgers, 2004).

Table 2 –Timeline of Activities

Date	Activity -- Process	Objective(s)/Topic(s)
August 2009	Individual Preliminary Interviews (Appendix E)	• Introduce study. • Determine years of teaching experience, specific teaching assignments and other descriptive data. • Identify teacher's dispositions

		toward multicultural / linguistically diverse learners. • Identify teacher-identified needs/ challenges surrounding ELL instruction (These will be categorically woven into the PD sessions below). • Identify teacher-identified knowledge relating to second language acquisition. • Identify teacher-identified knowledge/skills relating to content area reading/language scaffolding strategies. • Identify teacher's knowledge, skills and dispositions toward multicultural / linguistically diverse learners based on language and literacy development research.
August 2009	Preliminary PD Session	• Determine group preferences regarding PD content, the general flow of group meetings, topics & schedule for meetings.
Sept 14 – 18, 2009	Initial Classroom Observations	• Evaluate ELLs' opportunities to substantively participate in content area learning activities. • Identify procedures that could be adjusted readily to encourage ELL & English proficient students' shared commitment to learning activities. • Identify literacy skills germane to the discipline.
Sept. 18, 2009 and Oct. 2, 2009	Group PD Sessions #1 & #2	• Develop understanding of stages of language acquisition—sociocultural (identity through participation & reification, CRT) and cognitive dimensions.
Oct. 9, 2009	Group PD Session #3 (Science, Social Studies and ESL teacher session)	• Present schema-building and vocabulary learning activities. • Discuss ideas for integrating ELL content reinforcement with opportunities for in-class student collaboration.
Oct. 16, 2009	Group PD Session #4 (Literacy and ESL	• Present strategies for text

	teacher session)	comprehension. • Identify how these strategies can be customized for participant's specific needs.
Oct. 23, 2009	Group PD Session #5	• Identify classroom-specific applications for two structures that support student-to-student dialogue. • Apply concepts and strategies discussed thus far in brainstorming approaches to support a selected ELL student's academic achievement.
Nov 13, 2009	Group PD Session #6	• Identify classroom-specific applications for two structures that support student-to-student dialogue. • Apply concepts and strategies discussed thus far in brainstorming approaches to support a selected ELL student's academic achievement.
Oct. 26 – Nov 16, 2009	Lesson Observation with each participant	• Observe ELL participation in lesson activities and classroom routines. • Observe teachers' use of language and literacy scaffolding tools/activities.
Oct. 26 – Nov 16, 2009	Post-lesson Conference immediately following observation	• Facilitate teacher's reflection about ELL participation and language / literacy scaffolding measures. • Analyze/evaluate participation of individual ELLs in planned activities. • Identify needs and goals relative to each ELL (manipulatives, seating, participation, concept reinforcement, etc.).
Dec 4, 2009	Group PD Session #7	• Explore culturally responsive pedagogy in a distant setting with a dissimilar student population to better facilitate objective reflection on the concept. • Apply concepts and strategies

		discussed thus far in brainstorming approaches to support a selected ELL student's academic achievement.
Dec. 11 2009	Group PD Session #8	• Explore needs and possible approaches to future ELL-oriented professional development opportunities. • Apply concepts and strategies discussed thus far in brainstorming approaches to support a selected ELL student's academic achievement.
Dec. 3 – 15, 2009	Lesson Observation with each participant	• Observe ELL participation in lesson activities and classroom routines. • Observe teachers' use of language and literacy scaffolding tools/activities.
Dec. 3 – 15, 2009	Post-lesson Conference directly after each observation	• Facilitate teacher's reflection about ELL participation and language / literacy scaffolding measures. • Analyze/evaluate participation of individual ELLs in planned activities. • Identify needs and goals relative to each ELL (manipulatives, seating, participation, concept reinforcement, etc.).
Dec. 3 – 15, 2009	Post-study Interview	• Assess professional development session format in supporting ELL-oriented instruction. • Assess professional development session content in supporting ELL-oriented instruction. • Assess lesson observations & post-lesson conferences in supporting ELL-oriented instruction. • Identify teachers' perspectives on next steps.

Data Collection

The purpose of this case study was to build a rich description of how ELL-oriented professional development was experienced and reacted to by a group of six teachers at Harding Middle School. Accordingly, observations during professional development sessions and classroom lessons played an integral role in this process. Additionally, teacher interviews and documents related to instruction supported the aims of this study. The methods I used to collect data are described below.

Observations

During professional learning sessions, I served as discussion facilitator. Therefore, my role was that of a participant observer for data collection purposes (Merriam, 1998). Each professional learning session was video recorded to enable me to better capture the ways in which the teachers' interactions and overall use of language reflected their learning. I created a transcription log to allow me to summarize and catalog the content of professional development sessions. Instead of transcribing each session, the log enabled me to strategically decide what to transcribe based on its relevance to my research questions. For example, following each session, I viewed the video recording and wrote a log entry that summarized the session, noted the codes addressed in the recording and described my overall reflections about the significance of the session. To assure the accuracy of these data, each teacher was provided with a bulleted summary of our discussion points. They were also advised that they may view the session recordings at any time. None made this request.

I conducted at least three scheduled lesson observations in each participant's classroom during the study in order to understand the manner in which the strategies

discussed during professional development sessions were actually being implemented. Just as important, my lesson observations allowed me to scaffold teachers as they gained greater comfort with the process of reflective inquiry (Pinnell & Rodgers, 2004). Instruction was audio-recorded in order to provide as complete a record as possible. Recordings were transcribed and teachers were provided with a copy of the recordings. In addition to audio recordings, I took field notes during each lesson observation. Field notes were recorded using an observation code (Appendix D) I developed based on the ELL-oriented instructional priorities and needs noted above. The observation codes focused on aspects of the lesson that could be captured on a sound recording. For example, I took notes on the teacher's use of eye contact with ELLs, her non verbal gestures, her movement about the room, the location of ELLs in relation to the teachers and other classmates, and the use of lesson materials throughout the lesson. Field notes were then used to annotate the transcripts, indicating where in the recorded dialogue the observed actions, gestures and other noted particulars occurred. In this manner, the final observation transcripts included compiled audio and observational data. To assure the accuracy of these data, each teacher was provided with a copy of her transcripts to review and, if needed, note corrections. No participant noted corrections.

Interviews

According to Patton, "[w]e interview people to find out what we cannot directly observe…The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective (Patton, 1990, as cited on Merriam, 1998, p. 72). The semi-structured interviews (Appendix E) I conducted with the participants and principal, therefore, enabled me to enter into their perspectives on multiple aspects of ELL-oriented

instruction. Pre-study interviews (Appendix E) enabled me to capture perspectives about what ELL learning presently looked like in their classrooms. While I was particularly interested in learning how the teachers and principal described the measures they already put in place (if any); I was also seeking to learn how each of these participants described ELL learning in a broader sense. The pre-study interviews also solicited participants' thoughts about their ELL-oriented professional development needs, their knowledge of and beliefs about culturally responsive pedagogy, and their general perspectives on ELLs' impact on their school. As noted in the *Professional Development Model* section above, this input informed my development the professional development plan. Each of these interviews was audio recorded, and following each interview I transcribed the recording, saving it as a Word document on my computer and on a back-up jump drive. To assure the accuracy of my interview data, each teacher was provided with a copy of her interview transcript to review and, if needed, note corrections. Again, none of the participants indicated that any changes needed to be made to the transcripts.

In addition to the transcriptions, I summarized my impressions of the participants' comments relative to my research questions, and I recorded these thoughts on contact summary sheets. The contact summary sheets included facts about the interview, such as the time, date, location and any circumstance that would impact the nature of the responses I receive (i.e.—fire drill to interrupt follow of discussion).

Directly following each lesson observation, I conducted a post-observation conference. These were informal debriefings in which the teachers and I shared our impressions of the lesson overall. As with professional development sessions, I completed contact summary sheets (Appendix A) for each of these meetings. These

contact summary sheets contained my summary of the lesson and post-observation conference, and my initial impressions of these in relation to my research questions.

At the end of the thirteen week study I also conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants to gain their perspectives on the reflective inquiry process, its effectiveness in promoting ELL content-specific language and literacy development. These interviews enabled me to capture their thoughts regarding "the next steps" in meeting ELL and teacher learning needs (Merriam, 1998). Interview recordings were transcribed, validated and stored in the same manner as pre-session interview data (Merriam, 1998).

Documents

Documents contributed a measure of authenticity and reliability to educational case study research because they are produced for reasons other than the research, and, therefore, they do not alter the research setting in ways that the presence of a researcher might (Merriam, 1998). The following documents supported my description of the full context in which participants teach and their ELLs learn. They were also used to corroborate or challenge findings from interviews and observations.

School report card.

I collected descriptive statistical data from the school's *New Jersey School Report Card* (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006; New Jersey Department of Education, 2008). This document included demographic data on Harding Middle School's racial, ethnic and linguistic composition. In also included information regarding class size, standardized test score results and district graduation rates. These data enhanced my description of the context.

Lesson plans and learning materials.

Teachers shared blank copies of student work samples (such as graphic organizers and learning logs) for all lessons I observed. These data enhanced my description of the participants' strategy implementation, including its mediating influence on student learning.

Photographs of participants' classrooms.

I used photographs of each participant's classroom (taken while room was unoccupied per District requirement) to create a record of desk arrangements, wall displays and other environmental factors that influenced student learning. These photographs complemented lesson transcripts, field notes and post observation conference data and supported my description of the participants' strategy implementation.

School and District parent communications.

Relevant web site postings, newsletters, event calendars and other school – home communications provided contextual information regarding Harding Middle School and the district as a whole. Accordingly, I collected current school – home communications that were disseminated during the course of this study.

I completed document summary sheets (Appendix B) for all documents that I collected. The document summary sheets note the date that the documents were issued and retrieved. They also include my impressions of each document's significance in relation to the study. All electronic documents were saved in Word format and were backed up on a jump drive. All paper documents were secured in a file cabinet in my home.

Role of Researcher

As a researcher with a background in ELL instruction, I am strongly in favor of the approaches that participants explored during this study. So, in order that they have an optimal opportunity to construct their own understandings around these topics, it was important for me to remain aware of my own beliefs and the potential they had to influence the participants' professional learning. Therefore, I used a research journal to support self-reflection as the study unfolded (Merriam, 1998).

During the data collection phase of the study, I used my research journal to chronicle my decisions and rationales in planning and facilitating each professional learning session. The journal was especially critical in my in-study, early analyses of participants' professional learning because it detailed how and why my plans for these sessions developed and changed in response to participant needs or interests. Equally as important, the research journal was also used for me to record and reflect on my work in this study. For example, some of my participants possessed views different from my own regarding cultural responsiveness in instruction. In spite of this, to remain effective as a learning community facilitator, my interactions with study participants had to remain well-moderated and professionally objective. Then once data collection concluded, I continued to use my journal to record my own reactions, perceptions, and beliefs about my planning and refinement of professional development sessions, the interactions among the study participants (myself included), and my observations of lessons. Overall, my research journal offered a vehicle for self-reflective expression, and I made free use of it during this investigation. As a second method I engaged in peer debriefing with George Jackson, a fellow doctoral student (Merriam, 1998). Conducting these peer

debriefings enabled me maintain self-awareness and full transparency as data analysis unfolded.

Data Analysis

Data collected during this study were organized and analyzed according to the following procedures.

Organizing the Data Set

Once all data were gathered, my data set consisted of the following records: (a) professional learning session transcription log, (b) selected professional development session transcripts, (c) lesson observation transcripts that were annotated per observation field notes, (d) post-lesson observation summary sheets, (e) transcribed pre-study interviews with teacher participants, (f) transcribed post-study interviews with teacher participants and principal, (g) contact summary sheets for each interview and observation, (h) the Harding Middle School *School Report Card*, (i) lesson plans and student materials for each observed lesson, (j) photographs of participant's classrooms, (k) relevant school and district home – school communications, (l) document summary sheets for all documents noted above, and (m) a research journal. These data are organized in files according to participant; this allowed me to better analyze and describe each participant's experience. The group professional development session transcription log and the research journal are stored in separate file folders.

All of the data collected during the study were beneficial in shaping my analysis and understanding of ELL-focused teacher learning at Harding Middle School. However, specific categories of data were particularly salient in addressing each individual research question and sub question as described in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Data Analysis Organized by Research Question

Research Question / Sub question	Salient Data Supporting Analysis
1. How do suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in an ELL-oriented reflective inquiry group?	• Professional development session transcription log • Selected professional development session transcripts • Transcribed pre study interviews with teacher participants • Transcribed post study interviews with teacher participants and principal • Contact summary sheets for each interview • Research journal • Individual case descriptions
a. What questions, challenges and interests do these teachers identify as priorities in their ELL-oriented professional learning?	• Professional development session transcription log • Selected professional development session transcripts • Transcribed pre-study interviews with teacher participants • Research journal • Individual case descriptions
b. How does the study of these questions, challenges and interests unfold as teachers interact in a reflective inquiry group?	• Professional development session transcription log • Selected professional development session transcripts • Contact summary sheets for each professional development session • Research journal • Individual case descriptions
2. How are the ELL-oriented instructional approaches studied during professional development actually enacted in these teachers' practice?	• Lesson observation transcripts that were annotated per observation field notes • Post-lesson observation summary sheets • Transcribed post-study interviews with teacher participants • Research journal • Individual case descriptions
3. How do the opportunities or constraints present	• Transcribed pre-study interviews with teacher participants

within a suburban middle school structure impact the content area literacy instruction they provide for the ELLs in their classrooms?	• Transcribed post-study interviews with teacher participants and principal • Contact summary sheets for each interview • Harding Middle School *School Report Card* • Photographs of participants' classrooms • School and district home – school communications • Document summary sheets for all documents noted above • Research journal • Individual case descriptions

The following data analysis plan enabled me to describe the manner and extent to which the participants interacted during our study of ELL-oriented language and literacy building strategies.

I began data analysis by describing the data set using a deductive categorization process that Coffey & Atkinson (1996) describe in their texts as a "code-and-retrieve procedure" that permits researchers to (a) notice relevant phenomena, (b) collect samples of those phenomena, and (c) analyze those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns and structures" (p. 29). For the research questions under study, these procedures enabled me to pinpoint the common and distinct patterns of behavior and discourse surrounding (a) participation in a teacher learning community in a suburban middle school setting, and (b) classroom application of new knowledge, skills and dispositions around ELL content area literacy. To facilitate this procedure, I used Nvivo 7 software. Specifically, I imported each Word document into an Nvivo 7 project file that I created for this study. I then coded the interview transcripts and field notes

using this software. Lesson materials, classroom photographs and parent communications were coded manually.

Deductive Coding

Coding is a process used to describe data by sorting information into different categories, and in this study, coding of interview transcripts, observation transcripts, observation field notes, professional development session transcripts, lesson materials and documents followed the deductive process that Miles and Huberman (1994 as cited in Coffey & Atkinson, 1996) suggest as creating a "start list" of codes prior to reading the data or even prior to field work. According to this guideline, I placed words, phrases and longer passages from each transcript and document into categories, or codes, related to professional learning via reflective inquiry and ELL language and literacy development. These codes (Appendix D) were identified from my review of related literature, including the small pilot study I conducted at this school in spring 2008 (McGriff, 2008).

As deductive coding ensued I noted that the codes developed from my review of literature – codes pertaining to second language and literacy development and to teacher professional learning – did not, by themselves, enable me to sufficiently interpret my participants' actions during the study. Focusing on second language and literacy, and on teacher professional learning did not did not offer a means of understanding what appeared to be more fundamental interests and imperatives among the participants. I then turned to inductive coding in an effort to understand these fundamental interests and imperatives.

Inductive Coding

I inductively coded my data in an effort to discover a foundational pattern of participation among the participants. While inductive coding did not lead to any major findings in this study, it prompted me to reread several journal articles included within my literature review, and during this rereading, I noted a reference to Gee's identity model which was cited in Hawkins's article, *Researching English language literacy and development in schools (2004).* After reading Gee's description of this model (2001), I suspected that is would permit me to achieve a foundational and consistent understanding of my participants' interactions during this study. I therefore utilized Gee's identity model (2001) as a supplemental lens to support my analysis of these teachers' interactions during professional learning sessions, scheduled interviews and classroom instruction. As data analysis proceeded, it became clear that Gee's identity model would, in fact, serve as an important anchor for many of my findings. I therefore provide a description of this model here so that my findings may be understood in a full, contextually complete manner.

In his model, Gee (2001) states that when a person interacts with others in a given context, that interaction causes him/her to be known as a "certain kind of person" (p. 99) within that context. It is this recognition he uses to define "identity." Gee is careful to stress that this construction of identity stems from interaction with and legitimization by others in a particular setting as opposed to originating from an individual's core sense of self. He offers four sources, or bases upon which an individual may come to be recognized as a certain kind of person. First, Gee identifies nature-based identity and points out that nature may serve as the source of a person's identity. As an example, Gee states that having an identity as a twin could be considered a nature identity because

being a twin is a condition that occurs through natural means. Second, Gee names institution identities as being those that are based on institutional structures. For instance, he states that having an identity as a professor could be thought of as institution identity because it requires a university or some other educational institution to authorize its existence. Third, Gee marks discourse identities as those which have their origins in the ways in which an individual is spoken of by others. Importantly, Gee maintains a person need not play a passive role in the ascription of a discourse identity and provides that he or she "may actively recruit and facilitate the responses of others that constitute her D [discourse] identity. (Gee, 2001, p. 104). Lastly, taking part in the distinctive practices of an affinity group enables a person to be recognized as a certain type of person. In Gee's example, engaging in the practices linked to being a *Star Trek* fan provides the source by which he can be recognized as a Trekkie. Most significant to this study, Gee holds that these four types of identity are not discrete categories into which individuals are permanently sorted, but rather that all four types interrelate and combine in different concentrations in a given setting. Gee states, "[t]hey are four strands that may very well all be present and woven together as a given person acts within a given context. Nonetheless, we can still ask, for a given time and place, which strand or strand predominate and why" (Gee, 2001, p. 101).

Gee's model, therefore, provided me with a multidimensional mechanism to better explore how specific aspects of the participants' identities surfaced and predominated during the course of this study and in study-related ways within the broader Harding Middle School context. Additionally, I was able to consider the extent to which participants, both within and beyond the scope of their study-related interactions,

exercised their own agency in “constructing and negotiating an achieved D [discourse] identity for themselves" (Gee, 2001, p. 104).

Deductive Coding

Using Gee’s identity model as a lens, I deductively coded the data according to institution-, discourse- and affinity-based identities that appeared to explain the participants’ actions. Analyzing these codes then enabled me to note fundamental patterns and relationships, both at Harding and out of school, that explained the nature of the participants’ actions in a consistent, broad-based manner.

Constructing the Cases

I used analytic memos as a guide together with the research questions to develop a rich portrait of each teacher’s experience taking part in this professional development initiative. These individual descriptions then enabled me to identify common orientations and modes of participation among the participants. These memos were also used to construct a detailed portrayal of the ELL-focused professional learning experience itself. While analytic memos and research questions guided development of these cases, I selectively accessed the full data record in order to provide substantiating examples and details for each case.

Cross-Case Analysis

Once each case was written, I looked at the relationships across cases to identify broader themes and patterns that described the professional learning initiative and the manner in which it was experienced by participants. I considered irregularities, contrasts and other exceptions to the patterns while seeking to identify and describe overarching themes in relation to the research questions.

Validity and Reliability

Over the course of this inquiry, I studied ELL-oriented professional development through observations, interviews and participation in professional development sessions with teachers. I also gathered school and district documents related to this purpose. These data were verified through my time spent in this school, member checks and thick description (Merriam, 1998). Additionally, triangulation of these different sources and triangulation of responses across different participants during data analysis enabled me to identify consistencies and/or contradictions, and to ensure the validity of the findings I generated (Merriam, 1998). Finally, I used a research journal to record the methodological and pedagogical decisions I made during the study and during data analysis and to capture the ways that my subjectivity influenced my interpretations of the data (Merriam, 1998). This together with my explicitly described data collection and analysis plan served as an audit trail for this study.

In the following chapters, I proudly share the findings generated from this inquiry. In Chapter 4, I present findings produced from the eight professional learning sessions. With a focus on my role as session facilitator, these findings illuminate my actions, reflections and interactions that aimed to optimize professional learning for all participants. Then in Chapter 5, I offer summative findings related to the six teachers' overall participation in the professional learning sessions, observations and interviews. Finally in Chapter 6, I look across these findings to consider the implications for future research and practice.

CHAPTER 4

Findings: Professional Learning Sessions

The primary aim of this study was to describe Harding Middle School teachers' participation in an ELL-focused professional learning experience, and how these teachers participation depended, not just on the perspectives and experiences that they each brought to the endeavor, but also on how I selected and planned session topics of discussion and materials so as to optimize their engagement and meaningful learning. Therefore, this chapter provides an account of the eight professional learning sessions in which the participating teachers took up the study of English language and literacy scaffolding measures. I present these findings from my perspective as the session coordinator and as a co-participant in our learning community in order to highlight how participant interactions during sessions and salient inter-session contacts guided my steps in planning and facilitating each professional learning session.

As detailed in my review of literature, this study is framed around the communities of practice concept (Wenger, 1998) because it effectively supports an examination of learning that results from work accomplished in a collaborative, or community, setting. Consistent with this framework, I coordinated the professional learning experience assuming that learning would derive from the collective, committed engagement of the teacher participants and that the knowledge gained from our shared learning could be understood according to the three foundational tenets of the communities of practice framework: mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire of resources (Wenger, 1998).

In a community of practice (Wenger, 1998), mutual engagement describes the idea that community members work together in an endeavor that has value to them. As they continually work together, they discover new methods, challenge or affirm current understandings and improve current procedures related to their purpose. In this study, one demonstration of mutual engagement included participants' attendance at the scheduled professional development sessions during which such learning took place. It also entailed their active reflection upon and discussion of the concepts discussed during these sessions. According to Lave and Wenger, (1998) joint enterprise captures the idea that there is community-wide investment in the particular endeavor so that all members share a sense of mutual commitment to its accomplishment. Joint enterprise was reflected in this inquiry by the ways in which the teachers made use of the knowledge created through their participation. This included limited demonstrations of classroom practices that aligned with the fundamental aspects of second language acquisition. However, given the short time frame in which these sessions were concentrated, evidence of joint enterprise was principally illustrated through the ways in which participants discussed their learning and identified ongoing learning needs during the professional learning sessions themselves. Lave and Wenger (1998) point out that shared repertoire describes the collection of resources that the community develops over time through its mutual engagement in an enterprise to which all members share a sense of commitment. Here, shared repertoire referred to the ELL language and literacy-building tools and concepts that the group discussed, evaluated and incorporated into their fund of professional knowledge and skills.

Following an overview of the content covered over our eight meetings, this chapter provides the reader with a sequential account of each session that includes: (a) a summary of professional learning objectives, (b), a description of session activities and the professional learning that resulted from them, and (c) my post-session reflection on the session events and interactions, including details about how these informed my planning of subsequent study-related activities. This session-by-session portrayal of the professional learning experience aptly captures the whole of my efforts to optimize professional learning through responsive planning, monitoring and facilitating of participant activity throughout the study.

Professional Learning Content Overview

Current literature on second language acquisition and participant input guided my selection of content for our professional learning sessions, and our topics of study fell under three major categories: ELL participation in mainstream learning activities, scaffolding tools for text comprehension and culturally responsive pedagogy.

English language learner participation in authentic mainstream learning activities is significant because such participation enables ELLs to acquire the ways of thinking, acting and valuing that form an integral part of each classroom culture (Hawkins, 2004; Haneda, 2008). Over our eight sessions, our group discussed how ELLs' opportunities to use language in regular education, content area classes becomes a resource to support language learning itself (Gee, 2001; as cited in Hawkins, 2004). Our group explored how structured peer discussions around academic content offer one approach to expose ELLs to the daily routines and specific practices that are embedded in classroom

language use (Wells & Arauz, 2006), and I shared specific strategies that teachers could use to promote these instructional discussions.

This professional learning experience also focused on teaching tools for making the academic English encountered in text books, worksheets and novels easier for ELLs to understand (Calderon, 2007; Walqui, 2006). This was important because these resources aligned with teachers' existing instructional priorities, and they added an element of immediate practicality to the overall learning experience. Meetings, therefore, included relevant samples of templates, charts, illustrations, graphic organizers or other tools that teachers could readily modify or immediately xerox for use in their classrooms.

Culturally responsive pedagogy was the third focus that our professional learning group explored. Culturally responsive pedagogy describes teaching that encompasses an awareness that teachers' and students' respective practices and beliefs are mediated by the norms of their cultures (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). While culturally responsive teaching benefits all students, it is especially important for ELL students whose linguistic differences necessitate additional scaffolding to support their integration into the mainstream classroom (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). During our sessions, we discussed the need for culturally responsive teachers to hold a stance that views all students as capable learners and that accordingly maintains high academic expectations for them. As a related matter, we discussed the importance of recognizing any and all culturally-rooted differences as valuable resources for promoting learning (Moll, 1992; Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2002). Like language itself, the role of culture is a critical aspect in second language acquisition, and consideration of this topic within our

professional leaning experience provided participants with the opportunity to critically evaluate their beliefs and practices in this regard.

My purpose in selecting ELL participation, tools supporting text comprehension and culturally responsive pedagogy as the foci for our professional learning was to build participants' knowledge of the aspects of second language acquisition that applied to them most as content area teachers. My challenge was to accomplish this in a manner that encouraged deliberate, critical reflection about these concepts while also meeting participants' need for tools and strategies that could, without careful planning and presentation, be perceived as "quick fixes" to a deeply complex instructional matter. Culturally responsive pedagogy, in particular, stems from the foundational awareness that all individuals' -- teachers' as well as students'-- ways of thinking and acting are mediated by their sociocultural backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). When effectively employed, cultural responsiveness pervades instructional decision making and reflects itself in all student interactions, even the selection and use of a reproducible organizers and charts to support ELLs' concept learning. Without culturally responsive pedagogy as a foundation, these tools could still be used, however their use would be superficial, and it would not lead to sustained and authentic academic engagement. Therefore I considered it a priority that participant understand the greater context in which these tools should be used.

The following session-by-session account of our professional learning includes a description of the objectives, activities, specific tools (all appearing in Appendix F) and professional learning that occurred each time our group convened. My reflections about

each session chronicle my efforts to integrate relevancy and substance while also optimizing teachers' engagement.

Professional Learning Sessions

September 18, 2009 --

Professional Learning Session #1

Objectives.

I planned session one to address a fundamental concept in the field of Second Language Acquisition, that language is a socioculturally-rooted tool to scaffold thought (Vygotsky, 1978), and more specifically, self-concept (Wenger, 1998). Applying this concept to ELLs, I also introduced the topic of ELL-native English student collaboration and included opportunities for consideration of how authentic participation in academic activities enables ELLs to develop the language of school and to ascribe for themselves identities as students within the Harding Middle school academic setting.

Activities and professional learning.

Meeting in Jean and Dawn's centrally located classroom, teachers began arriving at 8:15, our designated start time. At 8:20 Georgia and Eris had still not arrived. I made the decision to begin at 8:20 without Eris since none of the other teachers was aware of why she might be absent. Georgia, however, notified me ahead of time that she had a meeting with the school principal and would arrive by 8:30, which she did.

To begin the session, participants used an internet-ready TV monitor to view a well-known Calgon water softener commercial from the 1970's in which a harried woman recalls the various demands made by her boss, her children, her dog and a ringing telephone. After exclaiming, "Calgon, take me away!" she appears in the next scene

relaxing in a sunken tub filled with Calgon-softened water. As I anticipated, this clip was immediately recalled by all of the present participants, and it provided an ideal spring board for our discussion of their different routines for sorting through the varying demands made on them during any given day. The teachers readily shared their current routines for thinking via spoken or written words, and these personal connections enabled them to further encode this concept. Illustrating this point, Devon shared,

> I walk and run on my treadmill, so that's when I do it. That's my down time, when my kids are asleep. And so that is how I remember what I did today and what and I'm going to do tomorrow, and I schedule in my head. Plus, I actually walk in and write. Like last night I said I would write my schedule down—all the things I have to do coming up so that my decompress is my rev up for the next day all in one (PD1, lines104 - 108).

Additionally, Jean shared, "I would say in the office, too. That's when you and I talk about our days. As soon as we get back to the office in the afternoon; that's the first thing we do is talk about what's going on" (PD1, lines 110 - 111).

Through this discussion, it was agreed that words (spoken or written) enable us to reflect and make sense of events, to plan for the upcoming day and in a broad sense, to think. Like the woman in the commercial, the participants then identified the different roles they ascribed to themselves: student, teacher, spouse, parent, pet owner, etc. I then explained Pavlenko and Lantolf's (2000) concept of identity loss and reconstruction. I reiterated the need for students from different countries or cultures to take part in learning experiences side by side with other students at Harding so that they can begin to understand what *student* means in Harding's context and so that they can begin to identify themselves as Harding students. As this discussion proceeded, the participants began to draw connections to students of theirs and to consider how these students'

conceptualizations of their roles as students, children and grandchildren differed because they were grounded in different cultural norms. For example, Jean shared,

> Grandchildren and grandparents...extended family roles can vary. My friend had a student who was Chinese and in their house, nobody would touch anything until the grandparents started their meal. The grandfather went first and then the grandmother and then everyone else was allowed to eat. And it's the opposite here (PD1, lines 193 – 196).

At this point, the homeroom bell rang, and Georgia immediately rose to leave. I asked her to remain a moment as I quickly overviewed their handouts: (a) Pavlenko and Lantolf's (2000) *Second language learning as participation and the (re) construction of selves*, (b) a bulleted summary of this same article (Appendix F, p. 273), which I included to facilitate their reading of the material, and (c) a connection and reflection task (Appendix F, p. 274) that asked participants to first, think of one student (past or current) within the context of identity breakdown/reconstruction and to consider how this process played itself out in observable ways, and second, to identify one question they have about the idea that language is a tool we use for constructing our thoughts.

By design, I planned for the connection and reflection tasks to be ones that participants thought about and completed following our meeting. I made this decision because I wanted them to have time to think back over our discussion, to evaluate the concepts of participation and identity (Pavelko & Lantolf, 2000) relative to their existing understanding of second language acquisition, and then to thoughtfully select a student and one reflective question that would enable them to situate these ideas within their own teaching contexts.

Post-session reflection.

As I reflected back over participant interactions during our first session, I determined that the five teachers' discussion of ELL participation and identity was productive and mutually engaged everyone in attendance. The homeroom bell did bring an abrupt end to this discussion, however, and I did not have sufficient time to appropriately explain each handout. These materials were included to promote the teachers' continued reflection about our session, and ideally each handout would have received more than the cursory explanation I provided. To adjust for this, I planned to set the timer feature on my audio recorder so that I could better monitor the time during discussions.

Eris later emailed me explaining that she did not come because she had to prepare a quiz that she was giving that day, and she explained that Nancy delivered her copies of the session materials. Her absence was noteworthy insofar as this session's discussion laid the conceptual foundation for continued discussion about identity and participation. However, the other five participants readily took part in the discussion and the links they made to their personal routines or to the observations and experiences of their students testified to their shared construction of knowledge about this topic.

October 2, 2009 --

Professional Learning Session #2

Objectives.

This session's objectives were: (a) to extend participant's understanding of ELL identity loss during language acquisition by examining the experiences of a storybook character, Yoon, in the children's picture book, *My Name is Yoon*, and (b) to discuss

cooperative learning strategies in light of the opportunities they provide for ELL's to conceptualize themselves as students within the Harding Middle School context.

Activities and professional learning.

As we gathered around Devon and Jean's small group reading table to begin our session, Georgia informed me that Nancy would be absent because she had the flu. The remainder of our group, however, was present and ready to begin on time. I began by recapping the main points of Pavlenko and Lantolf's (2002) article and introduced *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits, 2003). When summarizing the story, I displayed the enlarged centerfold illustration that accompanied Yoon's teacher reading a book about cats to the class. In this illustration, one half of Yoon was drawn in color and the other half in black and white. In both halves, Yoon was drawn with cat ears.

To promote collaborative discussion, I used the cooperative learning strategy, Numbered Heads Together (Kagan, 2001) (Appendix F, p. 275). This strategy required pairs of participants to discuss a topic and then to share their thoughts with another pair of participants. After forming participants into pairs, I invited them to speculate about what the illustration suggested that Yoon was thinking. Rather than adhere to the Numbered Heads Together procedure, however, the teachers immediately began to verbalize their ideas about Yoon's thoughts. Their analysis of Yoon's school experiences was very lively and was filled with speculation, interpretation and connection-making as evidence that they were actively constructing understanding of this concept.

Deena: I think it is interesting that it is in two different ...um
Jean: That's what I was wondering...is that what it looks like. Black and white on one side.

Deena:	Well that's what it shows; it's the half the page with the words that is black and white so it's almost like the language side is a ghost and the colored side--reality side is her.
Jean:	Yeah
Eris:	[to me] So, this is what Yoon is thinking [pointing to the picture]?
Mary:	Yes.
Deena:	So, she's thinking…cats are the people. Cats are a kind of people.
Jean:	I just said she may believe the author is talking about her.
Deena:	Exactly
Jean:	Am I a cat?
Devon:	I was thinking perhaps because of her broken English, and because she has been transplanted into the American society, she needs to assimilate to someone or something, and she needs to assimilate to this because she doesn't know…she doesn't have a schema for cats, so maybe she thinks she's a cat and she's trying to assimilate to that.
Eris:	Yes. And the color, too. One side is white and the other side is darker, so he is unclear…very unclear and confused…
Georgia:	[to me] – are they all like that throughout the book.
Mary:	Yes, but this is the most poignant one.
Deena :	It's ghost-like. And you know, it's eerie. She also has a Mona Lisa kind of smile. Look at it, one side is ____ and the other side is kind of…
Jean:	Non committal.
Deena :	Yeah
Jean:	Notice how it says cat three times…it's like she is hanging in limbo somewhere.
Devon:	Uh huh. Cat? Cat? Cat?
Eris:	I think she has that scared look on her face.
Mary:	So, there were a lot of different ideas. What about if there were one statement that you all had to agree to…
Deena:	[instant response] – This child is trying to internalize what cat is and has no idea (PD2, lines 43 - 92).

In this excerpt, Jean assumed the role of Yoon and expressed her ideas as though she herself were Yoon, "Am I a cat?" Devon also adopted Yoon's voice to share her comments about what Yoon is thinking, "Cat? Cat? Cat?" The assumption of Yoon's voice in these two instances demonstrated the extent to which Jean and Devon were drawn into the uncertain, foundationless position in which Yoon was placed as she learned English words and struggled to make meaning of them in an unfamiliar culture.

Deena's observation reflected a broader understanding of the topic when she speculated about the influence of those English words that happen to have meanings in other languages and cultures.

> You know that brings to mind another aspect that we don't take into consideration when we're working with our language. So many of these kids have other meanings for these words. But sometimes a word will come up that is totally foreign and just because we have given it this meaning, these sounds and this attribute doesn't mean they have. And I wonder how many times we are not aware of it. They share it, they'll say it, and if it's like a curse word, you know we will find that one out. But all those other times that we never know of...what they mean. It is very interesting. I hadn't thought about it like that until I ...I don't know why it went thought my brain now, but it did. You know what I am saying (PD2, lines 149 - 156)?

In this manner, the session cultivated a multidimensional recognition of the culturally-rooted nature of language, a perspective that departed from an Anglo-centric stance because it considered that the sounds and meanings that English speakers assign to words are not the only possible sounds and meanings that those same words can have. By broadening the scope of the discussion of English words to include multiple phonological and definitional possibilities, Deena's contributions enabled other participants to consider the reality that English speakers do not solely determine the meanings of words, a stance that greatly extended the focus of today's session by challenging the status quo assumptions about the participants' own language.

In addition, the text of *My Name is Yoon* itself played a significant role in scaffolding these teachers' understanding of the role language played in identity development. The language arts and science teachers made numerous observations about how Yoon's identity loss is expressed through the placement of words on the pages and

in the color and tone of the illustrations. This further demonstrated the participants' understanding of the role of interaction with printed language (text) in shaping identity.

Next, the teachers connected this concept to specific student interactions or to specific instructional episodes of their own. This led to a discussion of Carlos, an 8th grade retainee whose use of the familiar expression, "You've got to be kidding me," with Georgia led to her loudly and publically reprimanding him for being disrespectful. The other teachers also shared their observations about how Carlos struggled to use English that was appropriate for the classroom, cafeteria and other school settings in which he found himself. Georgia noted Carlos's avoidance of her and went on to comment negatively about his participation in class.

> Deena: Well also, too, they don't pick up that these derogatory terms will get you in trouble if you say them. They *WILL* say them.
> Georgia: Like Carlos. You know, he still avoids me in the halls. [laughter]
> Jean: Yes he does. He walks past us coming from lunch and he goes (gesture indicating apprehension) "Mrs. Caldwell." (gesture shaking head). And I go, "Are you kidding me?"[more laughter]
> Georgia: Carlos walked right up to Nancy and said hello to her and walked right past me. I said, "Carlos, am I chopped liver? I said hello. How are you?" and he froze. He couldn't even respond. I said, "It's nice to see you. I'll be over to say hi sometime." He [sweeping hand gesture] avoids me. I wish he felt like that when he was in the classroom. He would have done something
>
> [Nancy mutters, "Uh huh," and looks down. Deena turns the page in her book. No other comments are made.]
>
> Mary: But, um...[passing out reflection slips] One of the things we talked about last time was the reflection (PD2, lines 162 – 181).

Georgia's comment, "I wish he felt like that when he was in the classroom. He would have done something," is consistent with her earlier comments made during our initial interview. There she stated, "With several students, and I touched upon this with you in our conversation…work ethic can be a problem..nonexistent" (CCC lines 184 – 185).

Now, when introduced to an alternative perspective, namely that students' conceptions of what is means to be a student (and to possess a student's work ethic) are culturally mediated, Georgia brought up her relevant encounter with Carlos. However, as her inappropriate handling of the matter was confirmed by another group member, laughter gave way to an uncomfortable pause in the dialogue. Deena and Devon dropped their heads and began to look through the handouts, and after several moments I changed the subject by recalling last session's reflection questions. However, even as the discussion resumed, Georgia did not engage in the subsequent reflection, and she did not speak for the remaining seven minutes of the session. This notable change in Georgia's demeanor occurred as her default response of making negative assumptions about student work ethic collided with new information about how ELLs acquire language and other norms associated with school, and it may suggest her reassessment of her stance in light of this new information.

Following this, Jean shared that she asked her students to describe what it means to be a student in their home countries. This sparked a discussion about expectations for students from Asian and European countries. Eris took exception to Deena's assertion that Italian schools use corporal punishment, and a tense interaction involving Eris and the three language arts teachers ensued.

Deena:	But all my students, at one point or another, all most all the ESL have been struck on the hand depending on the score they got on the test.
Jean:	Yes. Right.
Deena:	For every point under 100 they would get open palm slapped with a ruler. So if you score a 75 you got 25 smacks on your hand.
Eris:	Not all ethnicities.
Deena:	Well I've had all ethnicities tell me at one time or another.
Eris:	Not if they are Europeans. No, Asians probably.

Deena:	I've had all my kids tell me...I mean across the years, I don't have any of them right now, but they have all said at one time or another that they have had this. I don't mean every single child.
Eris:	Asians alright, but Europeans are more relaxed than we are here.
Deena:	My Hispanic students have told me that, also. It depends on where you came from.
Jean:	And Julia told me she was hit. She is Italian.
Devon:	Julia told me she was hit in school.
Jean:	In school. She told me she was hit in school and also by her parents.
Eris:	I'm surprised. I'm surprised. I don't believe her. [shaking head. arms crossed] Not in Italy (PD2 lines 236 - 272).

This episode occurred because several teachers' assertions about corporal punishment in Italian schools conflicted with Eris's knowledge of European schools. Up until this point in the discussion about Harding ELLs' culturally-rooted ideas of what it means to be a student, Eris had remained quietly attentive. Yet Deena's remarks were challenging in that they left no room for alternative possibilities, and Jean's and Devon's confirmation that Julia (an 8th grade ELL from Italy) said she was hit in Italian schools further marginalized Eris's perspective. In response, Eris's tone became abrupt. She shook her head repeatedly and crossed her arms to reinforce her opposition to this idea, and the sum of her verbal and nonverbal responses reflected a commensurate assertiveness, a stance that was also unopened to alternative possibilities.

Eris did not comment as I closed our session by reviewing the session handouts. Referring to the Numbered Heads Together instruction sheet, I pointed out how this approach could be used to enable ELLs of varying abilities to offer non verbal, single word or detailed responses in smaller, non intimidating contexts during classroom instruction. I also pointed out the session reflection question, which asked participants to consider complications they have encountered when attempting to integrate ELLs into

classroom activities in the past. I completed an explanation of these handouts prior to the 8:50 homeroom bell, and our session ended.

Post-session reflection.

The picture book, *My Name is Yoon* played a significant role in scaffolding these teachers' understanding of the role language plays in identity development, and all participants made observations about how Yoon's identity loss as she worked to understand English words. I noted, however that none of the teachers wanted to use the Numbered Heads Together protocol to discuss the story and its significance for ELL instruction. Originally I had planned to use this activity to demonstrate how ELL inclusion could be accomplished in a general education setting; however, the participants' inclination was to discuss rather than experience this strategy. I surmised that this might be due to the fact that they were still facing a full day's worth of teaching demands and may have preferred a simple and expeditious explanation of the strategy. Since our meetings were from 8:15 – 8:50, this position had merit, and I decided that their professional learning would be better served with straight forward discussions as opposed to orchestrated cooperative learning activities.

I also gave considerable thought to the two instances of conflict that arose once the focus of our discussion shifted from the picture book to actual Harding students. My concern was that Georgia's and Eris's observable engagement in our discussion ended after they were respectively challenged by perspectives that did not align with their own. I knew that conflictual episodes are not unusual when learning communities work together because each member brings a range of differing beliefs and experiences to the effort (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Little, 2003), yet I had not anticipated how I would

manage such conflict when it arose. Reflecting on both instances and considering the fact that the duration of this experience would not be long enough to permit the ordinary reconciliation that occurs over a longer period of mutual engagement, I decided that I could best promote engaged participation in future sessions by being more explicit in pointing out the immediate relevance of the strategies we discussed and by doing this earlier in our sessions. Prior to our third session, I received an email from Georgia that confirmed the need to attend to the issue of relevancy, especially among the non language arts teachers.

Post-PD Session #2 interaction.

The week after our second professional learning session, I received an email from Georgia expressing concern about the pertinence of our meetings. The following excerpt captures the essence of her displeasure.

> Each time we have met, I walk away feeling that your sessions are more geared toward the literacy teachers. Science and Social Studies classes are not really the place where we can stop and spend much one on one time with the ELL students. There are often 20+ additional students in a class with maybe 4 ELL students. That is the reason Nancy is in our classrooms. And I believe Nancy has been working with ESL for twenty years now. 10/7/01 Email from Georgia

I contacted Nancy and arranged to meet with her the afternoon I received this email to gather her insights regarding Georgia's concerns. Nancy confirmed the different positions taken by the language arts teachers vis-a-vis the social studies and science teachers. To accommodate these differing points of view regarding ELL instruction I suggested holding two separate sessions so that I could keep each group engaged in professional learning about ELL language and literacy in a manner that accommodated each group's present stance. I looked at this as an in-course adjustment of sorts, as a

modification that was necessary to sustain the participants' shared commitment (Wenger, 1998) to our overall professional learning focus. I also asked Nancy if I could regularly attend the lunch period tutorials she held with ELLs in order lend a hand in supporting their content learning and also to support her use of session strategies in her ELL-only, small group setting. By increasing my own engagement as a participant in this undertaking, I sought to demonstrate my own commitment to the professional learning goals and to hopefully encourage others' authentic, active involvement in future professional learning sessions. Nancy agreed with both of these suggestions, and she further recommended that time be allotted during future whole group sessions for participants to inquire into the progress of one designated student per session. Since the teachers in this study were all either prior, current or future teachers of these specific students, Nancy's idea would provide a unifying aspect to further bolster the participants' ongoing engagement and investment in our professional learning experience.

The occurrences following our second session uphold the importance attributed to mutual engagement in a community of practice. Georgia's effort to write an email led to Nancy's and my effort in brainstorming content and procedural changes that included our increased collaboration during lunchtime tutorials. In this fashion, Georgia's engaged discontentment opened the door to even greater opportunities to enhance involvement and optimize professional learning. Admittedly, I had hoped that these opening sessions would be well received by each participant, and receiving Georgia's email was somewhat deflating. However, the changes Nancy and I made were promising ones, and I regained a sense of optimism as I turned my attention toward preparing a well-targeted session for Eris, Nancy and Georgia.

October 9, 2009 --

PD Session #3 for Science, Social Studies and ESL Teachers

Objectives.

The objectives of this session were: (a) to present cognitive strategies for vocabulary building (b) to present schema activation strategies, and (c) to discuss how, when these approaches are used during lunchtime tutorial periods in Nancy's class, enhanced participation in science and social studies classes will occur.

Activities and professional learning.

Nancy offered her classroom as a meeting place for this session. After outlining the objectives for our meeting, I made a point of edifying Nancy for allowing us to try these strategies during her lunchtime tutorial class as a way of supporting ELLs' progress in science and social studies. Georgia shared that she was already starting to see nice progress in her ELL students, Konrad and Shilpa, in particular. While this discussion did not include mention of specific pedagogical approaches, it did spur Georgia to wonder about when and when not to pull ELL students from her class so that Nancy could reinforce content with them in small group.

Georgia:	We [to Nancy] need to come to grips with when we should pull them....with when they are not going to benefit from something. But then again this need to transition them...for them to feel like they are a part of the average group is important and when else are they going to be using computers but in a computer lab project situation.
Nancy:	I think it is good for her to be there and get that practice.
Eris:	Oh yeah.
Nancy:	Even if she can't keep up (PD3C, lines 31 – 41).

In this exchange, Georgia acknowledged that ELLs need to be a part of the mainstream group, and Nancy and Eris's support for ELL participation in Georgia's mainstream lessons reflected additional recognition of this concept.

Following this I moved straight into a direct explanation of a schema-building photo gallery, the Merriam online dictionary word pronunciation feature and illustrated vocabulary cards, which were all strategies for promoting reading comprehension (Appendix F. pp. 276 - 277). As part of my explanation, I suggested that, in addition to whole group, these could be set up as activity stations where pairs of ELLs could review vocabulary pronunciations while the teacher worked with another group on a different skill. At this moment, Georgia clarified the fact that I was referring to lunchtime tutorial and not to her classroom instructional time, and she reiterated her position that such instructional measures could not be implemented in her classroom.

Georgia:	I have a question about what you just said...about these activities ...you were talking more when Nancy sees them at lunch?
Mary:	Yes...with Nancy, but I would be at lunches to help, too.
Georgia:	Because I'm telling you, that would never work in my class.
Eris:	No. You mean for them to help each other out? That's like the blind leading the blind.
Nancy:	[to Mary] but they do a lot of great stuff in their classes.
Georgia:	With you [indicating Nancy], yes. But we can't do a lot of that stuff the way we run our classroom.
Mary:	That's why I'm saying it is the carryover that you should see. What we are looking for is greater confidence in the kids when they get to you. We're looking for them to be willing to take more risks and being able to participate with more confidence. And so if we are able to work on that vocabulary, let's see what works, what doesn't and where we need to go from there. So, that's what I'm talking about.
Georgia:	Because I was thinking...you know what I'm like when I am talking. When I'm talking, you're not (PD3C, lines 146 – 169).

I noted that Georgia's preference for teacher-directed instructional approaches was as adamant as her consistent refusal to entertain student-centered forms of instruction that more readily enable ELL authentic participation. However, she did recognize the value of illustrated vocabulary cards.

> Mary: And then I wanted to share this – *chromosome* -- it's a vocabulary flash card. I used the illustrations from Eris's book, and you can use any color printer for this. So the diagram or picture would go on this side with the syllabicated term to help with pronunciation. Then on the reverse side, it's the definition. I put the term on this side, too, but without the syllable breakdown, so they can get used to seeing it like it appears in the text.
>
> Georgia: That honestly would be something we could do at the beginning of a unit with 40 words. "Here. You have a week to make these." And we [to Nancy] could do stuff with them during a warm up.
>
> Eris: Yeah. That's nice.
>
> [Bell rings]
>
> Eris: We have homeroom.
>
> Georgia: No, but I love that idea, not just for ELL kids but it is something that the others would benefit from, too, because all they do is copy down the word and say they are done. I teach pronunciation. Parts of speech because I'm reinforcing literacy because I'm finding that with this group ...these students don't do anything until they are told to do it.
>
> [To Nancy] I'll just pull out that blue chart and we'll start putting them on cards on the wall (PD3C, lines 239 – 285).

While I presented the vocabulary cards as one of three activities that *together* support content area instruction, this was the only activity that Georgia expressed interest it. Syllabicated and illustrated terms provide important visual support for ELLs as they work to construct understanding of words and ideas; however, when used in isolation, their advantage to ELLs is less pronounced. Georgia's gravitation toward the illustrated vocabulary cards was very consistent with her stated preference for traditional instructional approaches. However, defining terms, separating words into syllables, and

selecting relevant graphics are all closed-ended activities that require no student-to-student interaction. Used alone they limit ELLs' language acquisition by further limiting their opportunities to take part in collaborative activities with their native English speaking classmates. I decided not to mention this concern, however, because illustrated vocabulary cards were more beneficial to ELLs than nonillustrated word lists, which Georgia's social studies series currently provided. Additionally, the broader aim of this meeting was to engage content teachers in a discussion of how to foster ELL literacy, and Georgia was actively engaged in this type of reflection.

The discussion of vocabulary terms led Eris to comment that many scientific terms are, in fact, universally understood due to their Greek origin.

> Eris: A lot of the scientific words are world-wide known. Like chromosome...they might say it in a different language, but it might be very similar. A lot of these scientific words are based from the Greek language, too, which is worldwide. I know Greek, myself, so I know that is, and in Spanish, it may be similar.
> Mary: Cognates. I know that was true from Latin words, but I didn't know that it carried over for other languages, as well.
> Eris: A lot of these scientific words are based from the Greek language, too, which is worldwide, and I guarantee you that they probably know Chromosome in their language (PD3C, lines 151 – 160).

Here Eris noted her own knowledge of Greek and speculated that many students may likely recognize the term chromosomes in their own language. When walking from the room she again speculated, "I wonder how they think, these ESL students. When they do see a word, do they think to themselves, 'Oh, how do I say chromosome in my language.' And I wonder if they make that connection," (PD3C, lines 263 – 265). This reflection was very significant because up until this point, Eris's statements had been very brief and matter-of-fact. Here, she considered science learning from an English leaner's

perspective, and my inclusion of a science vocabulary card appeared to have supported her ability to engage in this reflection.

Post-session reflection.

On the whole, dividing participants for this one session effectively addressed perceptions that the professional learning activities were geared for literacy teachers, and Georgia, Nancy and Eris's engagement increased. To further encourage their engagement, I decided to send follow-up emails to Eris and Georgia. Eris's email contained a link to a multilingual science glossary that offered numerous translations of scientific terms. Georgia's email expressed my thanks for her candid feedback about the relevancy of our meetings.

Further reflecting on this session, I questioned its effectiveness in promoting ELL-native English student interaction. During the discussion, Georgia clearly affirmed her belief in traditional modes of instruction. Additionally, both she and Eris affirmed their beliefs about the inappropriateness of collaborative methods that would better accommodate ELL students, and as coordinator of these meetings, these affirmations caused me to reconsider the advantages of content-area only sessions. While the literacy teachers' dialogue may appear alien to Georgia and Eris, would hearing it and experiencing the dissonance that accompanied exposure to views different from their own ultimately support their professional learning? Upon reflection, I decided to recombine language arts and content area teachers into one group following the scheduled language arts-only session that would be taking place the upcoming week. When reuniting all participants in the ensuing sessions, I decided to explain one or two comprehension scaffolding tools at each session and to explicitly provide examples with science or social

studies content so as to accommodate Georgia and Eris. However, by including language arts teachers' input and by broadening the discussion to include dialogue about individual students whom Georgia and Eris teach (which was Nancy's recommendation), I anticipated that I would be able to strike a balance between content area relevancy and substantive dialogue about aspects of second language and literacy instruction that may not necessarily align with Georgia's and Eris's respective interests.

October 16, 2009 --

PD Session #4 for Language Teachers

Objectives.

Session four (language arts) had the following objectives: (a) to present strategies for text comprehension: *Coding Strategy, Poem in Two Voices* and *Think Loud for ELLs* (b) to identify how these strategies can be customized for participant's specific needs.

Activities and professional learning.

Although this session was intended for language teachers, Georgia attended because she inadvertently confused our meeting dates. I welcomed her along with the others and began by directly explaining three comprehension scaffolding strategies: *Coding Strategy, Poem in Two Voices* and *Think Loud for ELLs*. The *Coding Strategy* (Appendix F, p. 278) is an approach that helps students evaluate text relative to their existing background knowledge of a subject. *Poem in Two Voices* (Appendix F. p. 279) is a framework for collaboratively identifying the most important facts about a subject and using these in expressive writing. *Think Aloud for ELLs* (Appendix F. p. 280) is a collection of sentence templates that scaffold ELLs' use of distinct strategies such as predicting, questioning and activating prior knowledge. I illustrated each of these with

examples from the ELLs' current social studies unit on Islam and Judaism. After explaining the think aloud procedure, teachers immediately began sharing how they could customize and apply each of the instructional tools I presented. Through this dialogue, they created shared knowledge about these language and comprehension building approaches. In the following exchange Jean, Georgia and Devon discuss the different uses of these strategies across one another's classrooms.

Devon:	I'm actually thinking with this that I would put each prompt on an index card. I would hand out "Predict"—that would be before. And then I would have them predict about the story. And them a card with the "Question" one so that they would have to –maybe in pairs—come up with a question. So that during the lesson they are orally making a prediction...orally giving me a question. You call it monitor...I call it self-assessment. I would hand out that and we would stop reading after a certain point and discuss that. And maybe have "Visualizing" somewhere in between...but have each one on a card. Especially I'm thinking of a couple of my students who need to be able to actually see and read it to do it. (PD3L, lines 26 – 33)
Georgia:	Well, there are definitely things that we could use. The "Summarize" with our book...with places for specific notes. We could focus on pre-read this. Answer this question. Nancy, you could use this one ...the "Prior Knowledge"...
Nancy:	We do...when it is a small group of ESL students, we talk about things that they know already or how things are in their own countries...or
Georgia:	Which brings to mind...I have to interject this...Carlos came up...I was out in the hall the other day and he was standing there...you could see he was like holding on to the door, but I said, "Carlos, how are you?"...and he went, "Good ." And I said, "Good. Nice to see you. Bye." And I went by. I wanted to make it brief, but it was good (PD3L, lines 131 - 143).

Here the teachers were not merely saying how these strategies could work in their own classrooms; instead they were building off of one another's ideas and offering each other added tips to support each other's stated intentions for implementation. I also found it quite significant that Georgia shared the positive hallway encounter she had with Carlos.

While sharing this comment, Georgia's tone reflected relaxed excitement and satisfaction. Her interjection of this observation in the middle of a discussion regarding comprehension strategies suggested, first, that she had continued to think about the lasting apprehension she caused Carlos due to last year's incident, and second, that she was concerned about his affective welfare. Her comments and my observational notes about her classroom management style indicated that Georgia was not overly solicitous toward her students. So, this type of overture toward a student reflected a significant departure from her normal mode of interacting with students, and it also reflected her growing understanding of ELLs' needs and how they differ from those of native English students.

Notably, Nancy did not participate actively in this session. Her single comment came only after Georgia suggested a relevant use for the "Prior Knowledge" cue in her own classroom. When Georgia suggested that she could use it, Nancy's reply of, "We do...when it is a small group of ESL students we talk about things that they know already or how things are in their own countries," lacked specificity when contrasted with other teachers' specific naming of uses within their individual units. For example, when referring to the coding strategy, Georgia observed, "These are strategies that I like. The kids can do something like this as a warm up activity. They can come up with questions about the geographic features of Africa...the Bantu...this is good," (PD3L, lines 170 – 173).

I also noted that Jean shared a unit-specific adaptation for this approach.

> The one I would add to this is a smiley face for any kind of literary devices. Because we were reading *The Pinballs*. I was using the opening of that in a lesson about leads because the story starts out telling about three kids who were are in a foster home, and it tells about how the first kid's father ran over his legs. So now

> they are interested, and I read the book as a read aloud whenever we have time, and it would be nice to have them mark whenever there is some sort of literary device because there was this one scene where it ways the guys ears turned as green as the grass overt there. And Shilpa said, 'Mrs. Battista, that's a simile.' It would be nice that whenever the kids catch that that they can put a post-it note next to it and maybe go back and do another lesson on similes and metaphors (PD3L, lines 199-206).

Post-session reflection.

On reviewing the video data from this session, I realized that the most notable change to emerge from this session was Georgia's increased interest in the work of the group. This was reflected by her discussion of how the think aloud templates could support her instruction of the Africa unit, her helping Nancy recognize an applicable use on this approach in her room, and her sharing of the positive encounter with Carlos. I surmised that my use of examples from her social studies units helped integrate her into the group. The fact that she again chose to bring up Carlos suggested that she was broadening her understanding of ELL language learning. Overall, our groups' repertoire of ELL-oriented resources was demonstratively expanded during this session as teachers not only discussed the applicability of the presented tools but also developed ways that they could be extended and customized for their own and for one another's classroom use.

With these encouraging outcomes, I planned to revisit the concept of ELL-native English student interaction at our next session. I reasoned that if I could tie this concept to discrete teaching strategies as I effectively did here, I could capitalize on the group's enthusiasm for such approaches in order to enhance their receptiveness to ELL – non-ELL collaboration.

October 23, 2009 --

Professional Learning Session #5

Objectives.

The objectives of this session were for participants: (a) to learn about and identify classroom-specific applications for two structures that support collaborative dialogue: *Say Something* cards and *Conversation Spinner* and (b) to discuss Yuri's progress and to brainstorm approaches to support his learning.

Activities and professional learning.

Reunited, the group returned to Devon and Jean's classroom for this session. Georgia informed me via email that she was sick with a stomach virus and would be absent. By 8:20, Eris had not yet arrived, and I began the session by explaining *Say Something* cards and *Conversation Spinner*. *Say Something* cards (Appendix F, p. 281) support ELLs' participation in student discussions by providing linguistic scaffolding. For example, the card, "I think ___ because ___." furnishes students with the syntactical scaffolding needed to make inferences. *Conversation Spinner* (Appendix F. pp. 282 - 283) similarly supports student's dialogue with six separate speaking tasks that students may engage in. In describing *Say Something* cards, I stressed how the *Summarize* and *Predict* prompts could be particularly useful in science and social studies classes, and Devon further expanded on this idea with her science example.

Mary: But, I wanted to share these conversation supports with you [calling their attention to their handouts]. I like the conversation cards because they have the sentence starters right there for the students. You can see..."This reminds me of___", "I am wondering___" and so on. The conversation spinner has the same prompts, just the format is different. They would really work well with lab activities or for discussing the different civilizations that the students learn about in Georgia's class.

Deena: I use these on a bookmark. And then I use Bloom's Taxonomy, and they have to then figure out where it fits on Bloom's taxonomy.

Mary: But these are more ideas about how to promote that language use and to encourage kids to interact with text. And, too, I felt that they fit well with informational text like in science and social studies, particularly the summarize and the predict prompts.

Devon: Even asking a question. "I am wondering...what the word photosynthesis means because I didn't understand it in the text" or something like that (PD4, lines 38 – 45).

At this moment, Eris arrived and stated that she would need to leave in ten minutes in order to help a colleague. Nancy then shared her belief that beginning ELLs would have a difficult time with the "I wonder" prompt because it is such a difficult concept to explain. She suggested that perhaps "I am thinking" would be easier for them to understand. Jean, Deena and Devon then offered suggestions about how Nancy could teach "I wonder" to ELLs.

Nancy: So, for them to sit down and say I wonder...because they can't verbalize what they are wondering. You know what I'm saying? Even if they knew what that word meant. I think higher level ESL kids could do this. They have some grasp of the language so they can... you know, so they can talk about these things. You can interchange "I wonder" with "I think about" or "I'm questioning" or something like that, but it is not really the same meaning as "I wonder."

Jean: Put them in groups.

Deena: Well, I think that is a teaching point.

Devon: Well, I would model all this anyway.

Deena: Spend two weeks figuring out exactly what "wonder" is, especially for the ELL kids, and THEN you have done something. Then you can use it (PD4, lines 106 – 119).

When the language arts teachers promptly supplied her with suggestions as to how she might teach "I wonder," she offered no response. Nancy's limited participation in this matter of pedagogical concern led to the correspondingly limited shared resources that

resulted from the meeting because her voice played such a small role in the discussion. However, this was not a concern that I could fully evaluate and address in the moment. Therefore, I focused on promoting the active exchange of ideas that was underway, and when Jean and Devon explained how students could be grouped in such a manner to support critical analysis of ideas, Eris replied in a pointed manner.

Eris:	This would be easy for you right? Because your class is all ESL students.
Devon:	No, I have a mix.
Eris:	You have a mix, but are the majority all ESL students?
Devon:	No.
Jean:	I only have two (PD4, lines 169 – 177).

Here Eris's remarks reflected a lack of understanding of her colleagues' teaching circumstances, and her use of the word "easy" minimized their instructional skill and efforts. This set an unfortunate tone that persisted as they continued to discuss instruction in mixed ability classes.

Eris:	Well that's what I am saying. In science, I have all levels. I have REACH students (G&T designation). I have advanced math students. Advanced reading students. And I have the on-level and I have below students and then I have ESL. They are all mixed. So, this is very difficult to do in science.
Jean:	Then you would group them heterogeneously. Put a high student with on-level students and one ESL kid and even if the ESL kid doesn't say anything, they are listening to what's going on.
Devon:	Yeah. Put them in groups of four and you have your high, your low and two middles. And do it that way.
Eris:	I think the key is ...
Jean:	Because the Proficient literacy class (on-level designation) is even grouped to some extent because even though it is a proficient class, you still have high kids, low kids and middle kids.
Deena:	We all have that. Even though the cross over is different for you than for us, we all have those varying levels. But I think the key is engagement. If they are engaged. And it is hard. It's real difficult. I think the main question is how do we get them to be motivated to do...

Jean:	And science. It's like the perfect place. There is so much cool stuff going on, you know. You can really have them wonder.
Devon:	You can have the high end kids go for summarize. The high end kid is going to say, "The main idea is..." and might be able to tell you. And those low end kids may be there writing it down. And the next person...maybe they would read a little bit more and then make a prediction and then read a little bit more. So, maybe one of the middle kids can then write it down.
Eris:	[laughter] Easy to say (PD4, lines 192 – 219).

Overall the tone of this exchange was confrontational, and Eris's early departure from the meeting precluded the opportunity to establish a unifying, common ground upon which all participants could agree. Indeed, Eris's insensitive comment was met in kind by Devon and Jean's explicit recommendations about how she should conduct her science class to better address the broader range of ability levels present. Notably, none of the teachers attempted to phrase their comments as questions or with greater delicacy. In short, Eris came late, left early, and made remarks during her ten minutes in the room that reflected a lack of openness toward alternative instructional methods for addressing wide student ability ranges in her classes. This lack of openness was exacerbated by the language arts teachers' detailed directives on how she should teach.

Again, as the session was unfolding, it was not feasible for me to fully analyze the impact of this interaction, yet Eris's early departure effectively ended the ambient tension in the room. I, therefore, changed the topic of conversation to Yuri, an ELL from the Ukraine. Here, Nancy was able to take the lead in providing the others with important background information pertaining to Yuri. The discussion was just beginning when the homeroom bell rang, and I suggested that we continue our discussion of this student at our next meeting.

Post-session reflection.

I immediately sought to understand the events of this session in light of my goal to foster professional learning in our communities of practice. I realized that, as in session #4, Nancy did not discuss any instructional strategies that she herself used to support ELLs. However, instead of making vague references to her teaching, this time, she expressed a deficit-oriented belief that ELLs' limited English proficiency could prevent them from engaging in critical speculation. Evaluating this episode in terms of the professional learning opportunities that her colleagues presented her, I decided that Nancy was, in fact, well served by language arts teachers' elaboration on how they would teach "wonder," even if it did expose her weaker pedagogical knowledge base on this matter. Based on my evaluation of Nancy's participation at this point in the study, I surmised she might not be able to discuss instructional specifics, yet I felt certain that she could provide other participants with helpful background information about individual ELL students. To encourage her continued engagement in our sessions, I decided to ask her to take the lead when we discussed individual ELL students at all future meetings as this would highlight her particular expertise.

To approach the task of understanding the conflict that arose in this session, I turned back to Lave and Wenger's text (1991). They describe intra-community conflict in the following manner,

> Shared participation is the stage on which the old and the new, the known and the unknown, the established and the hopeful, act out their differences and discover their commonalities... Conflict is experienced and worked out through a shared everyday practice in which differing viewpoints and common stakes are in interplay" (p. 116).

So, when I viewed the conflict that arose during this session as a valid form of "shared participation" it was possible for me to identify commonalities. These commonalities were the shared resources that Eris, Jean, Devon and Deena produced through their dialogue. First, differing stances were voiced for all to consider, process and respond to. For instance, Eris's supposition that collaborative dialogue is "easy" in language arts classes forced the language arts teachers to create and share viable means of implementing collaborative dialogue with an even greater ability spread (gifted to special education) in a discipline that is not their own (science). Although no consensus was reached this day, these teaching possibilities were created and placed onto the table for consideration. Additionally, teachers' opinions regarding collaborative dialogue were evaluated, challenged and justified, and the dissonance created through this discussion necessitated active listening to the perspectives presented. Overall, the learning opportunities that came forth from this tense exchange were meaningful, and I determined that my emphasis should remain on sustaining the teachers' engagement. That, according to Lave and Wenger, would best promote their appreciation of the most significant commonality they shared: the goal of effectively teaching their ELL students. Before our next session, I would be visiting Eris's class and holding a post-lesson discussion with her. I decided to use that opportunity to individually seek her input about the progress of our sessions and to encourage her continued engagement in our work.

Mid-Study Progress Assessment

At this point in our professional learning experience, I had completed mid-study interviews and lesson observations which informed my planning of the subsequent sessions. In short, these visits were fully consistent with the participants' views about the

second language acquisition approaches we discussed so far. For instance, by the third session I knew that Georgia was not opened to exploring ELL-native English student collaborative activities in her classroom. Therefore, it came as no surprise that when I visited her class, I saw a teacher- directed, whole group lesson with minimal opportunities for student interaction. Conversely, consistent with her interest in cultural influences on learning, I observed Jean incorporate her students' knowledge of urban life in their native countries during her instruction of a unit on the Harlem Renaissance.

The one revelation that these visits provided had to do with Nancy's limited and vague input during our sessions. After spending sixteen lunchtime tutorials with her to this point, I had come to learn that she felt disenfranchised by a recent administrative decision that limited her time with ELLs to one instructional period per day. My end-of-study analysis of session, interview and classroom observation data allowed me to thoroughly examine each participant's unique circumstances and interactions, and these are treated in the following chapter. However, for the purposes of informing my planning and conducting of the remaining three sessions, this mid-study data confirmed my earlier decision to keep all participants together so that they could benefit from one another's perspectives. To adjust for the fact that the language arts teachers were more disposed to considering the strategies and approaches we discussed than were the others, I planned to ensure that Georgia, Eris and Nancy's input about individual ELL students was well-edified during the remaining meetings. Additionally, I would continue to highlight science and social studies applications wherever possible. I reasoned that these steps would communicate my commitment to addressing their needs, and I anticipated that they would remain engaged in professional learning for our remaining sessions.

November 13, 2009 --

Professional Learning Session #6

Objectives.

The objective of this session was for participants to apply topics of previous sessions in relation to Ukrainian ELL, Yuri.

Activities and professional learning.

I began the meeting by distributing a student reflection sheet (Appendix F, p. 284) which included spaces for teachers to record Yuri's strengths and challenges as well as a space where they could record promising ideas or interventions to arise from our meeting. I then turned the meeting over the Nancy, who provided a brief overview of Yuri's situation; he and his two sisters were adopted by a US couple last February. He arrived as a sixth grader with no knowledge of English. The learning challenges Nancy then outlined included that Yuri is immature and inattentive. She shared that he does sit quietly in science class and on one instance, she noticed him coloring in the o's and a's on his worksheet, not paying attention to the lesson. She did allow that Yuri was then able to perform the hands-on activity in which students simulated the cell division process using pipe cleaners. However, Nancy said that Yuri could not explain what the actions meant.

Deena suggested he could likely learn some aspect of the process, such as understanding what a cell is. Jean then suggested more hands-on activities or the addition of more visual aides to support his conceptual learning about cell division.

Deena:	This thing is he can do some stuff. What's important? He could learn what a cell is.
Jean:	Or visually. See a cell split or pictures.

Nancy: I'm not saying that he doesn't have it because back when I have them in my room we are actually doing a hands on and Eris has done that in her class too where she uses the pipe cleaners and we split the cells. So in my room he was able to do the hands on with the pipe cleaners, but if you ask him to explain, he can't. He has no idea. He is not understanding. You can't blame him for losing interest. (PD5, lines 374 – 383)

By contrast Jean and Deena suggested modifications that would enable Yuri to learn concepts related to cell division. Jean's recommendation that visual supports be included was an example of how scaffolding tools (Calderon, 2007) can bolster learning. Together with Deena's suggestion that she strategically select concepts to focus on (Calderon, 2007), Nancy was provided with viable approaches and perspectives for her professional learning and for Yuri's instructional benefit. While Nancy said very little about these suggestions as they were being offered, she did nod appreciatively.

Lastly, Deena offered her thoughts about special education and how easy it is for ELLs to be mistakenly classified. Her thoughts regarding the tendency to classify ELL students because of language barriers sparked an exchange about the need to differentiate instruction for learners.

Deena: I'm wondering now that in the past, of all of the ELL students whom were thought to have had learning disabilities.

Devon: But my class is such a mish mash of all that kind of stuff that I automatically give everybody the attention they need.

Deena: We were talking about that before. We all diversify for the needs of our population. I always did that so all the label does is make it official. It does not change the need or what I always do.

Devon: Exactly. It makes other people accountable for them with an IEP, but like we already have them all. We already know what we do for them to be successful. So, for me to bring him up to the I&RS (committee that initiates the special education classification process) would be a waste of time because they will say, "it's the language." I already know that, but I have been doing this long enough to know when there is something more than just the language there (PD5, lines 444 - 455).

Here, Deena and Devon provided the group with possibilities that reflect greater accountability and more responsive teaching, and based on nods and other positive non verbal gestures offered by their colleagues, their thoughts were well received.

Post-session reflection.

Generally this was a straight forward session which highlighted the use of scaffolding tools and the need to accommodate unique instructional needs. Georgia was understandably quiet since she would not have Yuri as a student until the following year, and although I hoped that Eris would have said more, her overall demeanor during the meeting reflected openness to the ideas raised. Significantly, Nancy's introduction of Yuri enabled her to share her more thorough knowledge of his circumstances. While Nancy's pedagogical knowledge was not as developed as that of the language arts teachers, I was very concerned that she not be reduced to the role of a tutee during our sessions. This gave her the opportunity to offer specialized insights and background that guided the discussion and framed the suggestions that others' feedback provided.

December 4, 2009 --

Professional Learning Session #7

Objectives.

Objectives for today's session were: (1) for participants to explore culturally responsive pedagogy in a distant setting with a dissimilar student population to better facilitate objective reflection on the concept, and (2) for participants to apply topics of previous sessions in relation to ELL Gianna's progress.

Activities and professional learning.

All six teachers were gathered in Jean and Devon's room on time, and after a brief discussion about Thanksgiving, I started our meeting by showing a video clip of a Nigerian author's talk on the topic of single-mindedness and deficit-oriented assumptions (http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html). I then outlined Luis Moll's (1992) research and the curricular units that derived from his *Funds of Knowledge* concept. From the beginning I stated that Moll's work with a class of Mexican-American students in Arizona could not directly apply to their suburban New Jersey town, but that the value of the session would be to broaden our perspective by considering ELL language and literacy development from a more removed position. So, with no self-imposed pressure to discuss what they were doing, the teachers did engage in speculative inquiry, problematizing and possibility-raising. The exchange between Deena, Devon, Georgia and Jean reflected this level of inquiry.

Deena:	But we have seen this *here* because our library is filled with books that are above the kids' levels and I remember, Georgia, when we worked together, and we had kids in your class. They went in there and they created projects because that's what they had and they were able. Any of us that use it when we go to do our research paper, we don't take the entire source. No, we find one piece of it. It is a skill that everybody needs, so differentiation and summarizing. So, we've seen it. It works. Very good....
Mary:	So, you can see how the teachers he [Moll] worked with tied-in content area standards, infused grade level math, science and social studies and basically ended up with full student and community engagement. The results in terms of academic achievement were well documented.
Georgia:	It is a paradigm shift, though.
Devon:	Right.
Deena:	I mean, we could do this for all of our students and all of our students would vastly improve in what they do.
Devon:	Right.
Deena:	We can all do this...It is just this paradigm shift. It is a lot of work and though it may be that it is really wonderful and powerful for our kids, not everybody does and it is hard to get the message across to everybody else (PD6, lines 76–81 & 96- 106).

Devon, Jean and Deena further connected this to an article that they read as members of the school's instruction committee. The article highlighted a school in which the curriculum centered entirely on the individual interests of students, and by linking their emerging understanding of Moll's work to this article, our discussion led to a possible way that culturally responsive projects such as Moll's could realistically be implemented at Harding. Deena's elaboration on one of the students profiled in the article illustrated this.

Deena:	But there was that specialized aspect...the boy could do anything he wanted so he studied the war, and he studied the effects of the war. He studied all of his father's experiences there, and they eventually went back to Vietnam and went to his father's places. And the father and son shared and the father learned from the son and the son learned from the father and it was all very powerful.
Devon:	Yeah, that was a good piece from that article.
Deena:	Fallen through the cracks everywhere else.
Devon:	Yeah they have fallen through the cracks, so this is like their last hope kind of a thing. Also their advisors-- they are called advisors, not teachers-- helped every student pick their own path of how they are going to learn. Like this kid picked Vietnam, and the other girl picked death...and everything revolved around their choice of what that kid is going to study. It's very child-centered...the problem is it is not practical for 1200 students and only 165 staff members. And so to actually apply this concept to a greater population...
Jean:	It would be practical for a unit, you know like if...
Devon:	Right.
Deena:	Exactly!
Jean:	You know... you tell the kids, you pick the research topic...
Devon:	And some schools do that ...they have their senior projects or their sixth grade projects.
Deena:	And that's powerful because it is a much stronger connection to the real world than the way we are teaching them now which is "We learn this. We learn this. We learn this."
Georgia:	Yes. Right (PD6, lines 141 - 177).

During this session, Eris did not comment, but, her head nods, consistent eye contact with the speakers and other gestures indicated that she was engaged in the topic. Overall, this discussion was so engaging that I thought it best not to end it early in order to discuss Gianna. Indeed, when the homeroom bell rang and Georgia did not jump up immediately to leave, I was reassured that extending the discussion of this topic was the best decision.

After our meeting ended, Nancy remained behind to tell me about a related, concerning incident that occurred in Eris's science class.

Mary: What did you think of the clip?

Nancy: I thought it was great. I loved the video of the woman speaking. This was all wonderful too, (referring to death and Vietnam project discussion), but I think what she was saying was that if we invite these parents into our rooms, that our kids...that American kids will actually see these people as people who are functioning in our society...and not just...

[Pauses, then changes subject]

Eris told me a story the other day. She said one of her kids was working with Yuri...I guess in small groups and the mother called or emailed and said something about, "My son was working with some retard." ...Yeah, some retarded kid! I mean that kid is not retarded, the kid is ESL and Eris wrote back that the kid is ESL and it had nothing to do with.....but this is the society we live in.

Mrs. Cole: (A teacher who happened to be in the room during homeroom and joined our discussion) – But how many people wind up in special ed because of the language?

Nancy: That's right...and that. Too, because we think of them as retarded and they can't speak English. Excuse me...how many of you can speak Russian and you know? But this is what I am saying, so bringing these people in with their broken English, possibly, but showing them that they actually have abilities that the can share with these children with other people...to me that would be the biggest lesson of all because especially *here*. Because in Arizona, they are used to having Mexicans around. They are used to that. But here these Harding students are not used to this, and so they are retarded. That really broke my heart when I heard that (PD6, lines 266 – 270).

Nancy's commentary would have contributed to the group discussion because it portrayed the issue of culturally responsive instruction as a means of addressing local bigotry and ignorance. By casting this issue as broader than one of professional development or pedagogy alone, Nancy highlighted its transformative aspects by indicating how it can empower teachers to affect change on a societal scale. This was a valuable perspective that I was thrilled to hear Nancy share. Simultaneously, I was disappointed that the others were not present to learn from Nancy's insights.

Post-session reflection.

Due to the numerous school holidays in November, three weeks had passed since our last meeting. I knew that our remaining topic, culturally responsive pedagogy, departed appreciably from Georgia's and Eris's pedagogical orientations, and since so much time elapsed since our last meeting, I was concerned that the collegial tone achieved during our last session might be jeopardized as we explored this topic. Attempting to avoid this possibility, I located exemplars that were geographically and demographically distant from Harding, New Jersey. This proved to be highly successful as the teachers readily connected this topic to the Harding Middle School context without any prompting from me. While Nancy's significant observation occurred after everyone had left, it was still a noteworthy increase in her level of participation since the start of these sessions. When considered with her sharing of Yuri's background information at our previous meeting, this appeared to be the start of a pattern that made me sorry to see our sessions winding to a close.

December 11, 2009 --

Professional Learning Session #8

Objectives.

The aims of our closing session were: (1) for teachers to explore needs and possible approaches to future ELL-oriented professional development opportunities, and (2) to apply knowledge of ELL strategies and approaches discussing the progress of Gianna, an Italian America ELL.

Activities and professional learning.

All teachers except for Eris were present for our final session, and as always, we gathered around the reading table in Devon and Jean's room. I began right at 8:15 and explained that our closing session would be more of a "looking forward" session as we considered future possibilities for professional learning about ELLs and then brought together what we had discussed so far as we brainstorm ways of helping Gianna, an eighth grade ELL whom Nancy had recent expressed concerns about. Jean shared,

Jean:	Well, there is actually some good news on that front. Nancy and I met with the parents....but we'll get to that. I'm sorry. Go ahead."
Mary:	Sounds good. Okay (PD7, lines 42-45)!

With that positive foreshadowing of their progress update on Gianna, I began sharing the information I prepared about ELL demographics. I displayed a PowerPoint slide of a US map that reflected dramatic increases in ELL enrollment in nonurban areas. I then showed the teachers New Jersey Department of Education statistics reflecting ELL enrollment increases in rural and suburban areas (Appendix F, pp. 288 - 289). I shared findings from an earlier study I conducted that highlighted the inadequate manner in which ELL students in these areas were being serviced. I focused on ELL education in nonurban areas in order to offer teachers national and state level contexts in which to

consider the immediacy of this concern. By discussing enrollment trends and inadequate teacher preparation, I also sought to encourage them to further develop their understanding of the importance of professional learning in order to address ELL needs.

Mary:	But the idea is there is a shift, and right next door in Huntington County, these one-building school districts that they have there, it is usually the speech teacher who is dealing with ELLs.
Deena:	It is a shame.
Mary:	At South Huntington, the kids are riding on a bus to Huntington Central to get their ESL instruction. That is a 20 minute ride. People are using what they have got and making it work the best they can, but it is not ideal. It is not the best at all.
Jean:	I have one question. Do you think these schools are reluctant to put resources into an area where people can be so transient? I had a teacher email me that a girl who has to make up a timed writing is gone. They think she left the country. Just gone.
Mary:	Well, yes ,I do believe there is that reticence because it is not like there is more money. This is their budget. I interviewed a principal in nearby town for another class I took. She is no longer there, so I have no problem sharing. From her perspective, when a school gets close to a threshold where they have to hire an ESL teacher... I think the number is 10 kids...you see that 10th kid classified as something else. He is found eligible for speech, or he gets classified special ed, and they avoid hiring that way. And the reason for it is not that anyone wants to shortchange kids; the problem is that there is a finite amount of dollars. And, yes, it happens wherever there are these one-building districts.
Devon:	That has to change! In NJ, there is a huge amount of districts and there has to be a sharing of services.
Deena:	Well there is an excuse, but there is no reason, because we are not doing our best by these kids (PD7, lines 45 – 67 & 80).

Jean's question permitted me to share even more information with the group about how ELL students often do not receive sufficient support in neighboring districts. This elicited strong responses from Devon and Deena, and it offered me an ideal opportunity to segue into a discussion of what continued professional learning about ELL needs could look like at Harding Middle School.

Mary: So, when we're thinking about professional development and how we can adjust for these kinds of changes, or any others that come along, I just wanted to share this. Everyone has this [referring to handout. This is called a Tuning Protocol (Appendix F. p. 290 - 292, and it is a way to focus your discussion on one students' progress by looking at work samples. There are time limits like you see here. A moderator introduces the teacher presenting the student work. The teacher then gives a 15 minute summary that ends with a specific focus question. The rest of the teachers then have time to ask questions, look at the student's work and make suggestions. The time element is important because that allows this to work over a prep period or a morning meeting.

Georgia: That would be important because we do something like this in our team meetings, but not as ordered. This would help us cover more kids. We can get talking and run out of time.

Devon: I like that there is a time keeper, too.

Georgia: It would be nice to have a common planning time, too.

Nancy: Yes I know. I am not in there to ...

Georgia: You know I was going to propose...this may not be the most appropriate time but you [Nancy] know how you have that office duty second period? That is our team planning time, and if you are ok with it, I was going to make a plea to start at least twice a month and then roll it over to once a week that they let you out of that office duty to meet with me..... It would help us to recognize patterns (PD7, lines 181-194 & 202).

While the group was receptive to the protocol I shared, I was even more gratified to hear Georgia personally express interest in continuing to focus on ELL instruction via her team planning period. Her interest in working with Nancy at "recognizing patterns" suggested an acknowledgement of the complexities inherent in ELL instruction, and it signified a departure from her earlier stance that ELL students' poor academic achievement was primarily due to a nonexistent work ethic.

While we had intended to bring Gianna up for discussion in order to solicit further suggestions about her disaffection and poor academic progress, a positive development had since transpired, and Gianna was now demonstrating greater motivation and overall interest in her work. Jean shared this encouraging update with the rest of our group.

Jean: I have seen a very major positive change in Gianna in my class. She is more focused and happier. And the turning point was the day that she went to visit the vo-tech school [county vocational school]. I hoped that she would come back with an interest...see something that sparked an interest. So, I was her 9th period when she came back from the trip and I said, "How did it go?" And she said, "I loved it." And I said, "What did you see that you liked? And she said, "Cooking and dance." And the cooking was what we thought might catch her interest because she is interested in food, and she is always talking about how her dad is such as good cook. She has a dream to own her own business one day. The writing sample she gave me said she would like to own a spa or a circus for underwater creatures.[laughter] I 'm not sure how to take that part of it, but anyway, she is very creative and artistic, and we were trying to tell her, use that. Don't sit there and say, "I don't want to do anything," because you can't do that in life. You know you have to have a goal somewhere, and it looks like she found something that she is happy about because the smile on her face has been like, everyday she comes in...

Deena: Do they talk about the requirements to get in because that can be a problem?

Jean: Yes, and that's the other thing. What I have seen is that she is more focused on doing well because she wants to get in.

Georgia: That's what I was thinking, that now there is a goal.

Jean: Yes...she has a goal now and before it was nothing (PD7, lines 94 – 115).

Although unanticipated, this discussion of Gianna's success provided our group with a highly positive note on which to end our journey. As the homeroom bell rang, we exchanged holiday greetings.

Post-session reflection.

As I rose with the rest of the teachers and went to turn off my video camera, I was struck by the sense of cohesion that had developed within our group over our four months of meeting together. While I knew from the outset that time would be a limitation in this study, I was still impressed with the breadth of learning we had accomplished in just eight meetings, and I noted just how valuable and powerful a commodity time can be in

teacher learning communities. Without time, mutual engagement cannot unfold, shared commitment to the goals of the group cannot be cultivated and learning cannot be optimized. As a learning community, our time was limited and had just come to an end. However, I hoped that the interests sparked and the knowledge created during our meetings would provide participants with a foundation on which they could continue the work we had begun.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I offered a session-by-session portrayal of the activities, interactions and resultant learning that occurred in this professional development experience. The six teachers that volunteered to take part in this enterprise represented different academic disciplines, different grade levels and different pedagogical orientations within the greater Harding Middle School community. Such a widely disparate group of volunteers presented an equally wide range of possible outcomes. Yet the fact that our group successfully emerged with a distinct repertoire of shared knowledge and resources demonstrates the fact that moment-by-moment planning and facilitation played a significant role in ushering forth a positive learning result.

By framing this experience according to Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice model, I maintained the goal of optimizing the participants' mutual engagement in our professional learning activities, and I was able to identify distinct resources that we collectively generated over our eight meetings together. These resources included collaboratively developed understandings about how to use new and appealing scaffolding tools to support ELLs' ability to comprehend and respond to text. Our shared resources also included knowledge of concepts such as identity loss and

cultural responsiveness. Unlike comprehension scaffolding tools, however, these were subjects that were less congruent with Harding's middle class, suburban beliefs and practices. Therefore, studying them in a removed fashion, through the experiences of a Korean picture book character and a Nigerian author allowed participants to explore these topics in relation to schooling without feeling obligated to share what they were or were not doing to support their own students in these areas.

Lastly, I use this chapter to call attention to my learning as I managed challenges as they arose, continually weighed issues of relevance and substance, and made decisions that sought to maximize the mutual engagement of all six teachers who joined me in this endeavor. My reflections highlight successes, scrutinize failures, and hopefully inform the efforts of others who will lead professional learning efforts related to ELLs. Overall, this in-study account of ELL-focused teacher learning complements the post-study analysis of each teacher's participation and professional learning which immediately follows this chapter. Together they create a rich and multidimensional portrait of how six Harding Middle School teachers engaged in professional learning to better support their English language learners.

CHAPTER 5

Findings: Teachers' Participation

> "I talk to the kids a lot about their culture to find out. And then so it would help me kind of interpreting why the child reacted a certain way…why the parents reacted in a certain way…what I was seeing in their writing that reflected the lens through which they think" (Jean 8/27/09).

> "Actually my first year here she recommended me for the Disney teacher award because she said she was so inspired by my literature circles... by my study guides... by what I did because I was very fluid and reading oriented" (Deena 10/27/09).

> "I'm telling you, that would never work in my class" (Georgia 8/9/09).

> "I don't know where I fit in sometimes. I want to help but I don't know exactly how to do it" (Nancy 8/21/09).

Taken together, Jean's, Deena's, Georgia's and Nancy's statements represent the study participants' diverse points of entry and different orientations toward professional learning about English language learners. Ultimately, too, these comments point to the commensurately different professional learning experiences of the six teacher participants.

In this chapter I examine how the different teacher participants took part in the interviews, sessions and classroom observations within this investigation to describe the experience from their differing points of orientation and, therefore, provide a fuller picture of the overall professional learning experience. The teachers who took part in this inquiry each assumed one of three participatory roles over the course of the professional learning experience. Some acted as team teachers, and others enacted the role of teacher leader during the study. These roles were well defined and commonly understood within the Harding organizational structure. By contrast, the last role of

participation, ESL Teacher, stood apart from the other roles for it seemed to have no place within the overall structure of the school. In most instances, these participatory roles were consistent with the teachers' official positions in the school. However, as will be fully explicated, these findings do include one particularly noteworthy instance in which a participant assumed the role of a teacher leader even though that role differed from her official position of remedial language arts teacher.

As explicitly described in my review of literature, this study is framed around the communities of practice concept (Lave & Wenger, 1991) because it effectively supports an examination of collaborative work and the learning that results from such work. However, to better interpret and refine my understanding of the more complex aspects of their participation, I turned to Gee's identity model (2001), which holds that an individual's identity stems from his/her being recognized as a "certain type of person" within a given setting. Gee's model includes the assertion that nature, institutions, discourses and affinity groups provide the sources of legitimization and authority that enable participants to be recognized by others in a specific manner. This model provided a framework that enabled me to pinpoint and fully explore the specific aspects of teachers' respective identities that led them to assume the participatory roles that they did. Put another way, each teacher who participated in this inquiry was known as "a certain kind of teacher", and the certain kind of teacher she was known as was determined by Harding's institutional structures, by the discourses in which she took participated and/or by the affinity-based practices in which she engaged. What follows is a detailed illustration of these teachers' participation. Treating each position in turn, I first describe what it meant to be recognized in this role at Harding Middle School, and I

discuss the participants' underlying institution-, discourse- and/or affinity-based identities that enabled them to be recognized in this manner. From there I move on to describe *how* they participated in the ELL-oriented professional learning experience that was the central focus of this inquiry.

The Team Teacher

Seventh grade science teacher, Eris, and eighth grade social studies teacher, Georgia, were commonly recognized as team teachers at Harding Middle School, and there were several important indicators that signified such recognition. Being recognized as a team teacher at Harding meant being directly associated with an integral part of the school's instructional design. On the school's website, the principal's message of introduction opens with

> At Harding Middle School, student life centers on interdisciplinary teams of teachers for literacy, math, science and social studies. A special education teacher serves each team as a learning specialist supporting students in and out of class. The team structure is central to a middle school design. It brings together the best of both worlds - content specialty and expertise with a common planning time for better communication among the team teachers (www.schoolwebsite/principal_message).

Consistent with this core role at Harding Middle School, being a team teacher meant planning instruction according to a standard set of curricula. It meant planning and delivering lessons according to a firm pacing guide that was developed based on the background knowledge, skills and resources of the prototypical upper middle class Harding student. Being a team teacher at Harding Middle School meant emphasizing grades, individual achievement, and competition. For example, an important component of a team teacher's job was making student recommendations for the limited number of slots in the school's advanced level math and language arts classes. Team teachers' daily

assignments and performance expectations for their students were informed by their experience with the rank and file Harding pre-adolescent. As noted in the principal's message, the "learning specialist" assigned to every team carried out the function of addressing extraordinary learning needs; team teachers, therefore, remained focused on their central role within the school's instructional design. Being a team teacher at Harding meant having daily interaction with interdisciplinary teammates—similarly focused teachers who delivered other content to the same complement of students. Such frequent contact reinforced teachers' understanding and enactment of their team teacher role within the school.

Team Teachers' Underlying Identities

As team teachers, Eris and Georgia possessed institution-based identities (Gee, 2001); that is, as a public school institution, Harding possessed integral structures and norms that empowered these teachers in acting out the role of team teacher. First, common planning time was an institutional feature that team teachers alone benefited from. Daily, team teachers received one non-instructional period in which to discuss student progress, plan team events, and brief one another on their current units of study and upcoming tests so that students' homework loads could be balanced. Additionally, Harding had the practice of scheduling students for related arts classes, gym and lunch classes by team. This meant that the related arts and physical education department teachers came to associate team teachers with a specific group of students. When conduct concerns arose in one of these classes, they reflected on the team as a whole, and department teachers frequently voiced their concerns to the team teachers. Harding's scheduling practices also provided team teachers with the same scheduled lunch period, it

was not uncommon for them to eat lunch together in the staff lunch room. This provided another opportunity for other staff members to associate individual teachers with one another and to recognize them collectively as teammates. It was Harding Middle School's practice that teams should maintain team web pages bearing information such as the team motto, team conduct expectations, team supply lists and homework postings. Parents and students consulted these web pages regularly; therefore, this web page provided another institutional feature that permitted them to become known as team teachers. With this broad complement of institutional measures in place to define and validate the role of team teacher, it was a natural consequence that the dialogue associated with each of these features would further reify team teacher's institution-based identities. Guidance and administrative staff talked about individual teachers as being members of teams when they developed the master schedule and reviewed individual student schedules. All staff members talked about which teachers had the best behaved teams. Parents and students regularly talked about individual teachers as being members of specific interdisciplinary teams. So, in this manner, Harding's institutional structures not only legitimized team teachers, but they also created sources of dialogue which strengthened teachers' ability to identify themselves as team teachers. During our study, both Georgia and Eris drew upon these institutionally-rooted resources as they assumed the stance of team teachers and behaved in ways that allowed them to be recognized as such.

Eris possessed an affinity-based identity that also fueled her enactment of the team teacher role. Gee (2001) states that individuals may be recognized as "a certain kind of person" based on affinity group practices or experiences that they voluntarily take

part in. Eris was a Greek American and an active member of a Greek heritage school community, and her engagement in the practices of this particular affinity group provided another source of authorization, a source that she readily drew upon in acting out her role as a team teacher. On the surface, however, the connection between Eris's practices as a Greek American and her role as a team teacher may not be immediately apparent. Therefore, I will first illustrate how these practices caused the other study participants and other Harding Middle School staff members to recognize Eris as a Greek American. I will then demonstrate how Eris drew upon this affinity-based identity in her enactment of the team teacher role.

Eris's Greek heritage practices included activities she engaged in with her family. She spoke of these specific activities as well as other general observations regarding her Greek heritage frequently during the course of this study. (Given Eris's infrequent attendance at study-related events, the fact that these statements arose as a consistent pattern is notable). For instance, during one exchange, Eris spoke of her children's Greek education by sharing that for the past ten years she has driven them into New York for weekly, two-hour classes in Greek language, literacy and culture. She shared,

> It is a commitment both for the kids as well as us as parents. I bring my boys once a week. They sit in a class for two hours with constant instruction. They get homework every week in which it may take them 1-2 hours on a Saturday to complete My husband then sits with them to go over the homework to make sure they understand it. The time parents put into this is a commitment. Also, an end of the year program is put into place by all grade levels. It is usually a poem that each student must memorize in Greek to say to say out loud to an audience. Greek school begins at 1st grade until 7th. Then in 8th grade there is a year of review for preparation for the New York State Regents in Greek language (PI2EC, lines 3 – 12).

On a different occasion, Eris noted her family's practice of speaking Greek at home. "I was born here, but I learned how to speak English and Greek at the same time. The same

with my children. We speak Greek at home," (MIEC, lines 135 – 136). In two other sessions, Eris shared her knowledge of Greek language and culture in relation to our topic of discussion at the time. When discussing scientific vocabulary she stated,

> A lot of the scientific words are world-wide known. Like chromosome...they might say it in a different language, but it might be very similar. A lot of these scientific words are based from the Greek language, too, which is worldwide. I know Greek, myself, so I know that is, and in Spanish, it may be similar (PD3C, lines 251 – 255).

Also when discussing ELL Gianna's summer experiences in Italy, Eris made the following observation about how teenagers socialize in Greece. "Don't forget in Europe they have more freedom than they do here. In Greece 12 year olds, they go out. They go out and come home late. Twelve years old," (PD5, lines 212 – 217). In this manner, Eris commonly mentioned information regarding her practices and knowledge of Greek culture, and this facilitated Harding staff members' also coming to identify Eris according to these ties. Her recognition as a Greek American was also aided by the fact that her older children attended Harding Middle School. Demetria and Kiriakos (children with obvious Greek first names) were students at the Greek school during their years at Harding Middle School, and so their teachers' were aware of Eris's affiliation through interaction with her children. Most notably, the school principal shared with me that he selected Eris to teach the school's ELL population specifically because he was aware of her Greek/English bilingual background and felt that she would serve as an ideal teacher for students who were themselves learning English as a second language (field notes, 8/17/2009).

Eris's engagement in the Greek American affinity-based practices supported her enactment of the team teacher role during the study. Her involvement with the Greek

heritage school in New York was a time-consuming endeavor, and by prioritizing the tasks and responsibilities of her position as team science teacher, she got as much job-related work done as possible during the school day. Since our professional learning within this study was not immediately connected to the discrete, daily tasks connected to being a team teacher within the Harding suburban setting, Eris did not prioritize her participation in this study. This was reflected by her pattern of regular absences, late arrivals or early departures from sessions and scheduled interviews. For example, Eris did not attend our first scheduled session, and she sent the following email in explanation.

> 9/18/09
> Email from Eris
> Hi Mary,
> I apologize for not showing up this morning. I realized late last night that I had to complete a take home quiz that I was going to give to the students today. I had no time last night when I got back [from Greek school] with the boys and I only had this morning to complete it. Jan filled me in and I received your binder. Next time I have to plan better.....
>
> Talk to you soon.
> Eris

Additionally, Eris arrived seven minutes late and was present for only ten minutes of our fourth session. On arriving, she expressed the need to help a novice team teacher as the reason for her brief appearance.

> I have about 10 minutes. My mentee just came to me. She is having problems with one of the parents [referring to the parent of a student on her team]. I have her waiting in my room and I told her I would be right back. I wanted to see what was going on here first (PD4, lines 86 – 66).

Eris was present for our fifth session; however, she complied and stapled worksheets during the entire meeting, and she did not attend our final meeting at all. She did not offer an explanation for this absence; however, I was informed by Nancy that she was not

there because of a team-related conference. Her attendance at our interviews had a similar pattern. Eris was late for our scheduled October interview because she was photocopying worksheets (field notes, 10/ 27/ 09), and our December interview was held standing up. When I sat down, she remained standing, and when I asked her if she would prefer to reschedule our meeting, she replied, "This won't take long, right? I have to get ready for next week, but that's ok" (PIEC, lines 16 – 17). Overall, Eris's attendance and behaviors during study-related meetings reflected her overriding emphasis on completing tasks and meetings connected to her team position during school hours, and completing this work during school hours did not leave much added time for her to earnestly take part in the ELL-oriented professional learning, which she viewed as unconnected to her in-the-moment, job-related responsibilities. When combined with her observations about Greek language and culture, and with her involvement with the Greek school in New York, this suggests that Eris focused on completing her non-instructional team teaching duties during her free periods precisely because this facilitated her ability to engage in the practices she chose to be involved with as a Greek American.

Lastly, as a Greek American who learned English in school while speaking Greek at home, Eris's personal experience as an English learner enabled her to embrace the Harding team teacher practice of focusing intently on the needs of the typical middle class suburban students that comprised the majority of Harding's student population. As a learner of English, Eris did not require extraordinary instructional measures, and this experience aligned with the Harding team teacher practice of relegating the accommodation of special learning needs to the team "learning specialist" as Haring web

site states. To illustrate this point, Eris recalled how her brother's friend learned English without the need for any extraordinary measures.

Eris:	When my brother was in the middle school they called him down to the office. And he was thinking what is the matter. But there was a new student that came directly from Greece. He did not know a word of English, and so they paired him up with my brother who was bilingual to help him out. And since then my brother who is in his forties, since then they have been best friends. But at that time, they might not have even had an ESL class.
Mary:	Yeah, they might not have.
Eris:	They just put him in the school. He was fine and they are still best friends.
Mary:	That was here in New Jersey?
Eris:	Long Island
Mary:	Okay. So that's good. It worked, and they stayed friends.
Eris:	Eventually everyone who comes here will eventually learn the language (MIEC, lines 171 – 187).

This discussion helped to clarify Eris's stance on ELL instruction. Greek English language learners successfully learned English when teachers took no added measures to support the process. This provides another example of how Eris's experience as a Greek American further enabled her to enact a team teacher role at Harding Middle School. Applying Gee's identity model to the role of team teacher illustrates how institutional structures and norms at Harding authorized participants Georgia and Eris to participate in this study in a manner that reflected the merit based, upper middle class orientation of the Harding school community. In addition, it also demonstrates how seemingly unlikely, affinity-based experiences and practices also powered this same type of participation. Having described what it meant to be a team teacher and having described the institution-based and affinity-based identities that enabled Eris and Georgia to behave as team teachers during this study, I now illustrate how these team teachers took part in our professional learning endeavor.

Team Teachers' Participation in the Professional Learning Sessions

Harding Middle School was a school whose interdisciplinary team framework heavily influenced how students and teachers made sense of their work. Set in an upper middle class community, curricular and instructional practices reflected an emphasis on grades, ability level placements and other measures of individual merit. Within this framework, Eris and Georgia enjoyed a role that was central to the school's institutional structures and norms, and they took part in this professional learning experience in ways that, while individual, revealed a consistent orientation toward the conventional norms and structures of Harding. The concerns and topics for professional learning they expressed interest in reflected this orientation as did the ways they engaged with other participants over the course of our meetings. Their professional learning that resulted from our sessions can also be best understood through this interpretive lens.

Team teachers' professional learning interests and needs.

I held an initial interview with Eris, Georgia and Nancy in late August in order to identify particular interests or concerns they would like to explore during the course of our professional learning sessions. The fact that they prioritized team teacher needs and mainstream indicators of academic achievement was clear in the interview, both through their stated observations and by what was left unsaid. For example, Georgia plainly expressed a fundamental concern about the tenability of attempting to teach ELLs very unfamiliar topics when they lack prerequisite knowledge that would have come from being in seventh grade social studies class and when they lack the work ethic to engage in the tasks connected with social studies learning as Georgia perceived them. The

following excerpt from our pre-study interview succinctly represents Georgia's prime points of concern regarding her ELL students:

> Georgia: They didn't have 7th grade social studies. So it is a problem when I'm throwing that up as a review…and it's not modern civilizations, it's ancient. So, it's beyond belief what we're asking them to do…stepping back in time and absorbing all these words. It's like I'm speaking another language. And there's no gear shift to slow it down because we are obliged to cover so much and while I can repeat things and go through them, you just never get caught up once we start moving. And I look at it that they need to be comfortable first and foremost in all my classes. That is the only way I am going to get them to move along. We start with Islam which is supposed to be review from 7th grade.
>
> Mary: And they never had seventh grade social studies…
>
> Georgia: …which is brand new to them, but it is short and sweet and then we move into China. So each marking period is a new chance to talk about something new. We're going to talk about Africa and those civilizations and move into that. But in some ways it is almost like that defeatist attitude is established and it doesn't matter. And I place so much emphasis on culture and on current things sometimes just to keep them afloat. Very difficult.
>
> Mary: What about paring down the objectives ...to what is really essential for the kids?
>
> Georgia: We've done that.
>
> Mary: With greater success? Because if they were not in seventh grade social studies, never mind the language piece, they are not going to come in with the background that the other kids have had who were here for seventh grade social studies.
>
> Georgia: With several students, and I touched upon this with you in our phone conversation…homework...work ethic can be a problem. ….nonexistent. ...no matter what you are doing (CCC, lines 151-189).

In this exchange, Georgia touched upon the contextual challenge posed by the fact that ELLs do not have social studies in seventh grade and this deprives them of vital prerequisite knowledge of vocabulary and concepts. However, there is an irony in Georgia's observations that revealed the narrow, suburban lens through which she assessed student learning and aptitude. In turn one of this exchange, Georgia

characterized the study of ancient civilizations as asking students to step into a different time and take in the accompanying language of that setting. Here Georgia's description of the change in context and accompanying change in language is exactly what ELLs experience at Harding, and within the context of her social studies content, she recognized the task as "beyond belief." However, when considering some ELLs' inadequate homework completion, she did not recognize this same concept at hand. Rather she attributed this to a character defect, to a lack of work ethic which persisted in spite of all of her instructional efforts. It is also notable that she expressed a desire that ELLs feel comfortable in her classroom because this enables her to "move them along." This exchange illustrates the fact that Georgia paced her instruction and evaluated her students according to one set of standards, those determined by the upper middle class norms that were prevalent in Harding.

Although Eris was only present for ten minutes of this interview due to a family commitment, I did successfully prompt her to share one professional learning interest she had with regard to her ELL students, and this statement also reflected a focus on the suburban norms that pervaded the Harding school community.

> Mary: How about the vocabulary and the concepts?
> Eris: The terms can be difficult, but also for the American students. The vocabulary is difficult in science. I try to relate it to other things so they can make meaning out of it, but it can be a struggle (CCC, lines 26 – 28).

Eris noted that science terms pose a challenge for ELL students; however, she quickly added that this is also the case for US born students. In fact, the challenges of learning content area vocabulary can be enormously different for ELLs, depending on the amount of context embedded in their learning materials (Calderon, 2007), depending on each

ELL's level of English proficiency (New Jersey Department of Education, 2006), and depending on the congruence of their prior schooling norms with those at Harding (Au, 2000; Moll, 1992). However, rather than consider any of these possibilities, her first inclination was to reorient herself toward a focus on the majority population she taught. Georgia's and Eris's comments demonstrated an unwillingness or inability to depart from their existing paradigms for lesson pacing and content, for indicators of student work ethic, or for indictors of what constitutes an academic challenge, and these paradigms were determined based on the majority population these teachers served.

During our interview, I needed to prompt Eris in order for her to share the above comment about ELL (and American) students' vocabulary challenges. Likewise, Georgia also required prompting in order for her to shift from a discussion of ELL deficits as she saw them and to instead identify a professional learning interest of hers.

Mary:	Based on what we've talked about what would you like to see covered? When I start planning, I could focus on concept learning tools...concept maps, graphic organizers? You tell me what would be a good starting point.
Georgia:	That's the thing. The mystery is I don't know them yet. Their needs really depend.
Mary:	Then what about if I start with just a general overview of the language learning process and how that impacts kids at this age. Then as specific topics come up I can link into those. Or maybe we can start with strategies for integrating them with the other kids.
Georgia:	The strategies for integrating them with the others (CCC, lines 404 -413).

Through introductory emails and phone conversations, Eris, Georgia and I agreed that the aim of our initial meeting would be to identify professional learning interests that I could incorporate into our upcoming sessions. The fact that neither could do this without my explicit prompting suggests that they had not critically considered how they might meet

ELLs' needs through their own teaching. The fact that the majority of our discussion centered on their perceptions of ELL challenges as measured by Harding norms indicated that culturally responsive pedagogy would be a topic they could benefit from. Based on both teachers' input, I included vocabulary building strategies as a topic to be studied during our upcoming sessions, and based on Georgia's interest in ELL/native English student interaction, I planned to include these topics during our sessions. I also recognized that they would need to be presented in a manner that these team teachers would be receptive to.

Overall, this initial needs-assessment meeting enabled me to gather and infer beneficial information regarding Eris and Georgia as a professional learners. I learned that their roles as team teachers mediated how they viewed ELLs' academic performance, and it also impacted how they prioritized the need to accommodate ELLs' learning needs within the broader scope of their teaching responsibilities. Georgia's pointed observations regarding ELLs' "nonexistent" work ethic and Eris's limited participation and early departure from this meeting suggested that the team teachers would be entering our professional learning endeavor from a position in which they were not as concerned with how *they* can promote ELLs' learning so much as how ELLs can move into alignment with the learning styles and practices of their suburban, US born classmates. With this team teacher "point of entry" in mind, I now describe how Eris and Georgia interacted with the teacher leaders and ESL teacher who joined our study from different points of entry.

Team teachers' interactions in professional learning sessions.

Broadly, team teachers' observable participation in our before-school professional development meetings was limited. Quantitatively, they made significantly fewer statements than did the teacher leaders. However, while little overt speculation or reflection was noted, Eris and Georgia did engage in a limited amount of reflection when the topic and manner of presentation were congruent with their team teacher priorities. As will be described in this section, Georgia's and Eris's manners of participation reflected their orientation toward mainstream, suburban learners, and this was consistent with the team teacher role at Harding given the fact that "learning specialists" were assigned the task of accommodating extraordinary student needs. During our session, this orientation manifested itself through silence during or absence from group meetings, through conflicts or refusal to entertain the ideas raised for discussion, or by adapting session content so that it aligned with their team teacher role and underlying institution- or affinity-based identities.

Silence and Absence. Consistent with the communities of practice concept (Wenger, 1998), every professional development session was designed to cultivate active engagement and to foster authentic, dynamic dialogue and reflection around ELL instruction. Team teacher silence was a common response that limited this type of engagement. For example, Georgia did not express any noticeable form of inquiry or reflection in any of our sessions, and this contrasted with the speculation, connection-making and evaluative thinking that other participants engaged in. During the first session, the group was discussing the culturally-rooted nature of words. In one activity the group members were to think of labels they would use to identify themselves, such as

mother or teacher, and in the discussion that followed, participants brainstormed examples of how these terms carry different connotations depending upon one's culture. As participants were writing their labels, Georgia stated, "I have an aversion to labels…former military." (PD1, line 178). She watched silently as participants such as Deena filled her label with multiple words. As other participants discussed ways they observed members of different cultures enact the roles of grandchild and wife, Georgia listened in silence. Unlike the other participants, Georgia declined to record a question for reflection, which was the closing activity during this session. Additionally, in session #2, the participants were analyzing an illustration of a Korean ELL that was drawn in a shocking manner to depict the character's foundationless position as she struggled to understand the word *cat* while she simultaneously struggled to shape an identity for herself within her new cultural surroundings. Given that Georgia's exposure to different cultures was quite broad as she had lived in thirteen different locations in the US and in Germany during her husband's military career, she might have added helpful perspectives and experiences to further the group's study of this illustration. However, she chose to listen in silence and to overtly refrain from writing any reflections or questions about the illustration. Although Eris lifted her pen and appeared to think about possible questions or observations about the illustration, ultimately, she did not write anything on her paper either. Since English is Eris's second language, and since she learned it in school, just as the main character in this story was doing, she could have offered any number of observations from personal experiences. However, like Georgia, she did not add her voice to the groups' efforts to construct meaning of this concept in their own practice.

These sessions' activities aimed to provide participants with a basic understanding of why ELL participation alongside native English speakers is so critical to their language learning, and both sessions offered concrete techniques for fostering such ELL – non-ELL interaction, which was one of the topics team teachers expressed interest in during our initial meeting. The apparent contradiction between this stated interest and the disengagement that team teachers displayed during the discussion demonstrates the overriding meditative power of the team teacher role at Harding. Adapting teaching in any way to accommodate learner-specific needs was not among the responsibilities of a team teacher at Harding; the Harding practice was that a learning specialist was placed on each team for this purpose. Additionally, the fact that Nancy attended science and social studies classes with ELL students further reinforced the idea that it was not a team teacher's job to differentiate instruction for specific learner needs. Moreover, the processes we used during these sessions departed from what these team teachers were accustomed to. The prevailing behaviors among our group members were dialogic and reflective, yet student collaborative reflection was not an instructional practice that I observed Georgia or Eris use in their classrooms during my visits. Therefore, the content and processes used during our early sessions did not appear to be part of the team teacher participants' professional make–up. There was a notable gap between the practices going on around them and the practices they linked to their role as a team teacher.

In addition to not speaking during our discussions, team teachers' nonparticipation in our professional learning activities also took the form of absences from meetings, and this also limited the collaborative learning opportunities of all teachers, regardless of their role. While Georgia missed two sessions, Eris's pattern of

attendance at group meetings and individual interviews with me was extraordinarily limited. She did not attend the first session because she needed to prepare a class quiz for use during her lessons that day. She was present for only ten minutes of the fifth session, and she did not attend the final session. Eris left our initial interview after only ten minutes because she needed to drive her sons to school. She was ten minutes late for a mid-study interview which was scheduled during her prep period; she was copying worksheets for her class while I waited outside of her door. In addition, our *scheduled* final interview lasted only eight minutes and was held standing; she explained that she needed her prep period to prepare for upcoming lessons, and sitting might prolong our meeting and further limit her preparation time. Generally, Eris's record of participation in study related activities up to this point suggested a general lack of commitment to the professional learning aims of the undertaking. Of greater concern, Eris's intermittent appearances at professional learning sessions limited her access to the resources generated through our dialogue. In a learning community, a sense of joint enterprise or mutually shared commitment to central goals fuels the efforts of individual members and enhances the professional learning that results (Wenger, 1998). Eris's demonstrated lack of commitment to the group's study of ELL language and literacy needs, therefore, detracted from the overall professional learning that could have resulted from her attentive, regular engagement in group activities.

Conflict and Refusal. Other participants acted in different teaching roles, and they came to our professional learning experience with different orientations regarding instruction for ELL students. At points over the course of our sessions together, team teachers' views and perceptions regarding appropriate instructional methods for ELLs

conflicted with those of other participants, including my own. Since I did not attempt to counter what were, at times, pointed dismissals of evidence-based instructional methods, no conflicts arose from these particular encounters. However, there were episodes in which other participants took issue with team teachers' observations, and tense verbal exchanges occurred.

Following our second session, Georgia sent me an email stating that the approaches we had been discussing to better promote ELL – native English student collaboration were irrelevant for science and social studies instruction.

> Email from Georgia
> 10-7-09
>
> Good Morning, Mary,
> I am trying to remain open minded about the techniques you offer to us in our sessions... Each time we have met, I walk away feeling that your sessions are more geared toward the literacy teachers. Science and Social Studies classes are not really the place where we can stop and spend much one on one time with the ELL students. There are often 20+ additional students in a class with maybe 4 ELL students. That is the reason Nancy is in our classrooms. And I believe Nancy has been working with ESL for twenty years now.

While Georgia's general discontent with the two sessions was unmistakable, there are three separate aspects to this email that are confusing or contradictory, and taken together, they make the exact nature of Georgia's grievances difficult to pinpoint. First, Georgia begins her concern with, "Each time we have met...", which suggests that sessions had been in progress for more than two weeks. In fact, while this email was written following our second session, Georgia was only in attendance for half of the first session. Therefore, her phrasing conveyed a level of grievance that exceeded that which her attendance at 1 ½ sessions would warrant. Next, Georgia shared her perception that it is not appropriate to interrupt the course of social studies instruction in order to provide

individual support to ELL students. In fact, the cooperative learning structure that was modeled during session two (Numbered Heads Together, Appendix F, p. 275) is an activity geared to promoting ELL – non-ELL *student* interaction around content. Neither procedure called for any special teacher interaction. As such, it is not possible to trace her claim about calls for individual ELL support back to any session activity or topic. Third, as it appears above, Georgia's email proceeded to contrast her teaching circumstances with those of the teacher leader participants by stating that she has 20+ students (student support language arts classes are capped at 15 students) and that Nancy's role in her classroom is to address ELL needs. Here Georgia's gravitation toward the dissimilarities between her class and language arts classes seems to underscore her initial concern that the sessions appeared to lean toward the interests of literacy teachers. On the whole, the contradictory and illogical aspects of this message fail to validly identify a particular weakness(es) in session content or processes. Instead the whole of the email suggests a more generalized, yet significant, dissatisfaction with the first two sessions. Like Hodges (1998), Georgia's imprecise disconnectedness from the very professional learning process she was a part of hindered her ability to engage in session activities.

These two sessions relied upon interactive dialogue, open speculation and participant construction of knowledge around language, culture and ELL/non-ELL classroom interaction – approaches that contrasted sharply with Georgia's non-differentiated, assignment-intensive method of transmitting social studies content to her students. Therefore, it would appear that Georgia's team teacher role collided with the

methods she was being asked to engage in. And the negative nature of this collision was expressed through her negatively-toned email.

During another session in which I met separately with Georgia, Eris and Nancy, their language specialist who accompanied ELLs to science and social studies class, the team teachers adamantly dismissed the notion that ELL-friendly instructional approaches could be implemented in their classrooms. In this instance, I open the session by explaining how schema-building photo displays, Merriam's online dictionary's word pronunciation feature, illustrated vocabulary cards, and metacognitive strategies for promoting reading comprehension (Appendix F. pp. 276 - 278) could all support content area learning. I suggested that, in addition to Eris's and Georgia's whole group lessons, these activities could be set up as separate stations during ESL class where pairs of ELLs could review terms and concepts while Nancy worked with another small groups on different skills. At this moment, Georgia clarified the fact that I was referring to Nancy's class and not to her classroom instructional time. She and Eris then reiterated their position that such instructional measures could not be implemented in their classrooms.

Georgia:	I have a question about what you just said...about these activities ...you were talking more when Nancy sees them at lunch?
Mary:	Yes...with Nancy, but I would be at lunches to help, too.
Georgia:	Because I'm telling you, that would never work in my class.
Eris:	No. You mean for them to help each other out? That's like the blind leading the blind.
Nancy:	[to Mary] but they do a lot of great stuff in their classes
Georgia:	With you [indicating Nancy], yes. But we can't do a lot of that stuff the way we run our classroom.
Mary:	That's why I'm saying it is the carryover that you should see. What we are looking for is greater confidence in the kids when they get to you. We're looking for them to be willing to take more risks and being able to participate with more confidence. And so if we are able to work on that vocabulary, let's see what works, what doesn't and where we need to go from there. So, that's what I'm talking about.

Georgia: Because I was thinking...you know what I'm like when I am talking...When I'm talking, you're not (PD3C, lines 146 – 169).

Here Georgia and Eris's preference for teacher-directed instructional approaches is as clear as their refusal to entertain student-centered forms of instruction that more readily enable ELL authentic participation. So, although this session was aimed specifically at the interests of the team teachers, the types of instructional approaches I shared were inconsistent with their orientation to teaching at the aggregate level without consideration learner-specific needs. Georgia's comment to Nancy, "With you, yes. But we can't do a lot of that stuff the way we run our classroom," further reflects the Harding team norm that learning specialists, not team teachers, exist to attend to extraordinary learning needs.

An example of teacher-to-teacher conflict took place during our fourth session. Here Eris arrived late and missed my modeling of sentence frames to scaffold ELLs' comprehension of text (Appendix F, p. 281). Eris arrived while the teacher leaders were discussing how they could apply this strategy in small discussion groups. She joined the discussion in the following manner:

Devon: I'd model them first. I would model them a couple of times and then maybe I'd give everybody one. And we would work through each kid, "The main idea is___, and I would help them along.
Eris: This would be easy for you right? Because your class is all ESL students.
Devon: No, I have a mix.
Eris: You have a mix, but are the majority all ESL students?
Devon: No.
Jean: I only have two.
Eris: So, how would you do that when you are teaching a class of English students, too?
Devon: Well, I'm thinking about my English students, as well. I would do the same thing with them.
Eris: Well that's what I am saying. In science, I have all levels. I have REACH students (G&T designation). I have advanced math students. Advanced reading students. And I have the on-level and

	I have below students and then I have ESL. They are all mixed. So, this is very difficult to do in science.
Jean:	Then you would group them heterogeneously. Put a high student with on level students and one ESL kids and even if the ESL kid doesn't say anything, they are listening to what's going on.
Devon:	Yeah. Put them in groups of four and you have your high, your low and two middles. And do it that way.
Eris:	I think the key is...
Jean:	Because the Proficient literacy class is even groups so some extent because even though it is a proficient class, you still have high kids, low kids and middle kids.
Deena:	We all have that. Even though the cross over is different for you than for us, we all have those varying levels. But I think the key is engagement. If they are engaged. And it is hard. It's real difficult. I think the main question is how we get them to be motivated to do...
Jean:	And science. It's like the perfect place. There is so much cool stuff going on, you know. You can really have them wonder.
Devon:	You can have the high end kids go for summarize. The high end kid is going to say, "The main idea is..." and might be able to tell you. And those low end kids may be there writing it down. And the next person...maybe they would read a little bit more and then make a prediction and them read a little bit more. So, maybe one of the middle kids and then they write it down.
Eris:	[laughter] Easy to say (PD4, lines 169 – 222).

While Eris's position was overpowered by those acting in the teacher leader role, it is critical to note, that Eris's assertion was based on the fallacious assumption that each of these three teachers taught language arts classes only for ELL students. The diverse makeup of language arts classes was noted both pointedly and tangentially at several points during the second whole-group session, yet she either did not recall or did not critically consider this before making her comment. Additionally, as the sole science teacher of ELLs, it follows that Eris should have been aware of the total number of ELLs at Harding Middle School would not justify dedication of three separate classes for their language arts instruction. Again she did not consider information that she had prior knowledge of, information that should have prevented her from making a remark that

minimized the instructional demands and pedagogical skill of these teachers. Following this tension-filled episode, Eris left to assist another teacher on her team, and this further limited the opportunities for professional learning within the group since only through continued mutual engagement can conflict give way to new understandings and increased knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Little, 2002).

Overall, instructional approaches we discussed to support second language and literacy development did not require measures that were so targeted as to not support the learning of all students. However, these measures do require that teachers *think* about their instruction from the language learner's perspective and this represented a paradigm shift that Eris and Georgia refused to take on during our sessions. Other teaching roles at Harding do inherently call for such learner-specific reflection, and when the team teacher's perspective collided with these differing orientations, moments of conflict arose. Fortunately, not all methods for prompting second language acquisition fell outside of the team teachers' instructional paradigm, and it was these approaches that Georgia and Eris did actively reflect upon during our study.

Reflective Inquiry. While team teachers were generally unreceptive to instructional approaches that scaffolded ELL participation in classroom activities alongside native English speakers, they did engage in some reflective inquiry around strategies that were consistent with their team teacher orientation. This occurred during our content-focused session referenced above, the separate session that I held in response to Georgia's concern that the sessions were more geared to language arts than to science or social studies. The only participants present were Georgia, Eris and Nancy, and while the team teachers again dismissed any instructional activity I shared that would involve

differentiating their instruction for ELL students, there were two instances in this session in which they did reflect positively on teaching approaches.

During this session, I introduced a variety of discrete strategies for background and vocabulary building (Schema Building Walk, Merriam's Online Pronunciation feature and syllabicated, illustrated vocabulary cards, Appendix F, pp. 276 - 278) using examples I prepared from Georgia's current unit on Islam and from Eris's current unit on genetics. Eris watched attentively during my explanation of these tools, and following my explanation of vocabulary cards, she speculated,

> Eris : A lot of the scientific words are world-wide known. Like chromosome...they might say it in a different language, but it might be very similar. A lot of these scientific words are based from the Greek language, too, which is worldwide. I know Greek, myself, so I know that is, and in Spanish, it may be similar.
>
> Mary: Cognates. I know that was true from Latin words. Greek, too?
>
> Eris: A lot of these scientific words are based from the Greek language, too, which is worldwide, and I guarantee you that they probably know chromosome in their language.
>
> Mary: That's important. Then that gives them prior knowledge to tap into.
>
> [bell rings]
>
> Eris: We have homeroom. [Rises to leave.] I wonder how they think, these ESL students. When they do see a word, do they think to themselves, "Oh, how do I say chromosome in my language." And I wonder if they make that connection (PD3C, lines 251 – 267 & 297).

Eris's reflection about ELLs' ability to recognize scientific terms based on their Greek origin is significant because it reveals how she calls upon the aspects of her Greek American identity that undergird her enactment of the team teacher role. First, she guarantees that ELLs are likely to already know chromosome since many scientific terms originate from the Greek language, a language that, Eris asserts, is "worldwide known." This assumes that across the globe, twelve-year-old students commonly have access to

schooling that includes Greek and/or genetics. In fact, Harding's own word study curriculum does not address word origins until sixth grade, and Harding students' first exposure to genetics occurs in seventh grade. So, it is a stretch to blanketly assume that ELLs would have been exposed to these concepts in their native countries when Harding students have not. Here, Eris's identity as a Greek-American colors her view of what ELLs should know, and she appears to assume that their knowledge base is akin to her own. This position also reflects Eris's absence from our first session, during which we began our discussion of the culturally mediated nature of words. Were Eris present for that session, she would have, at a minimum, been exposed to the idea that our cultural ties determine the values and meanings we ascribe to words. Her attendance at this session might have given Eris the impetus to evaluate her own assumptions about the universality of Greek and/or scientific terms.

During this brief exchange, however, Eris did wonder about whether ELLs consider how science vocabulary would translate into their native languages. Up until this point in the study, this was the only time that Eris openly speculated about any ELL-related topic, and it was significant that this question-raising was spurred by a discussion of the term chromosome, a scientific term with a Greek root. In an effort to encourage Eris's further inquiry into ELL science learning, I sent her and Nancy a link to an online multilingual glossary of scientific terms that was categorized according to specific science disciples (http://newyorkscienceteacher.com/sci/esl/index.php). Unfortunately, Eris did not respond to the email, and during a subsequent discussion I learned that she did not open the file.

Mary: How did you find that glossary I sent? It covered so many languages. Was it helpful with your genetics unit?

Eris: Oh. I think I remember seeing an email from you about something like that. I'm not sure, though (MIEC, lines 59 – 61).

So, while her interest in cognates appeared to be fleeting, she was, at a minimum, introduced to a tool that will enable her to strategically use ELLs' native language to support their science vocabulary learning, should she choose to use it in the future. During this session Georgia also actively reflected about a tool I introduced to support vocabulary instruction: illustrated vocabulary cards. The discussion around this tool occurred as follows,

Mary: And then I wanted to share this – *nucleus* -- it's a vocabulary flash card. I used the illustrations from Eris's book, and you can use any color printer for this. So the diagram or picture would go on this side with the syllabicated term to help with pronunciation. Then on the reverse side, it's the definition. I put the term on this side, too, but without the syllable breakdown, so they can get used to seeing it like it appears in the text. ..

Georgia: That honestly would be something we could do at the beginning of a unit with 40 words. " Here. You have a week to make these." And we [referring to Nancy] could do stuff with them during a warm up.

Eris: Yeah. That's nice....

Georgia: No, but I love that idea, not just for ELL kids but it is something that the others would benefit from too because all they do is copy down the word and say they are done. I teach pronunciation. Part of speech because I'm reinforcing literacy because I'm finding that with this group ...these students don't do anything until they are told to do it.
[To Nancy] I'll just pull out that blue chart and we'll start putting them on cards on the wall (PD3C, lines 239 -243 & 266 – 285).

While I presented the vocabulary cards as one of several activities that *together* support content area instruction, this was the only activity that Georgia expressed interest it. Syllabicated and illustrated terms provide important visual support for ELLs as they work

to construct understanding of words and ideas; however, when used in isolation, their advantage to ELLs is limited. Georgia's gravitation toward the illustrated vocabulary cards is very consistent with her inclination toward merit-based instructional approaches. Defining terms, separating words into syllables and selecting relevant graphics are all closed-ended activities that can readily be assessed with quantitative measures. In addition, preparing vocabulary cards is an activity that aligns with Georgia's role as a team teacher because, as Georgia herself observed, it is an assignment that benefits all of her students, not only those learning English. As Georgia described utilizing this activity in her teaching, the vocabulary cards would actually constrain ELLs' language acquisition by further limiting their opportunities to take part in collaborative activities with their native English speaking classmates. In addition to these limitations, a further complicating factor was that Georgia announced that she would be using the activity as an introductory one. Despite the added scaffolding that graphics provide, it is nevertheless counterproductive to assign ELLs a full unit's worth of vocabulary words as introductory activity, without schema activation or opportunities for ELLs to build background related to the topic through other instructional means.

Generally, the team teachers' expressed an interest in a specific topic or concept when I could quickly and apparently demonstrate how it would serve their interests as team teachers. In Eris's case, the link to her role as team teacher extended to included connections to her identity as a Greek American. However, in both cases, Georgia and Eris viewed themselves foremost as content area team teachers, and this incorporated many practices that were inconsistent with the substance of our professional learning experience. Although they were both team teachers, Georgia and Eris differed in how

they experienced this disjuncture. Eris's participation was best characterized by inconsistent attendance which led her to make conflictual assertions based on misinformation. Georgia's attendance at sessions was regular, and while she frankly discussed her disinterest in making accommodations for ELLs, she was still present to hear other participants discuss their perspectives about ELL instruction. This difference contributed to a notable difference in how our professional learning experience played itself out in these teachers' practice.

Team Teachers' Professional Learning in Practice

Based on their manner of participation, it was not surprising that Eris included few instructional provisions to scaffold ELLs' learning of science content. Except for the fact that all four ELL students sat together in the front row, there was no evidence that Eris gave any thought at all to how she might accommodate their learning needs. No aspect of our group's study of participation, student dialogue, comprehension and vocabulary learning tools or culturally responsive pedagogy was reflected during the three lessons of Eris's that I observed. For example, midway through the study I observed a lesson in which students needed to determine how many drops of water would fit on a penny. They were then to identify variables that would potentially change this number of drops. The following excerpt taken from that lesson captures the lack of distinct consideration that Eris offered her ELL students during science instruction. In this excerpt, Eris was speaking with ELL, Pilar, who was a Costa Rican student that recently moved to Harding. Pilar was attempting to answer questions that Eris posed to the entire class about independent and dependent variables.

Eris: Okay, now in this experiment, tell me which is the independent variable and which is the dependent variable.

[No student responds.]

Eris: Independent variable is something that we can we can change. You as the experimenter can change it and still get an outcome. And still answer this question. The dependent variable depends on the independent variable. That changes too, but according to the independent variable. It depends on the independent variable; it depends on what you change. Now, we can change many things in this experiment. We are going to change independent variables. What can we change in this experiment to still answer the question, "How many drops of water can fit on a penny?" What can we change in this experiment...you as the experimenter...what can we change?

[A student lifts pipette.]

Eris: I don't want anyone touching anything. Hands off. What can we change?
Pilar?

Pilar: Change the money.

Eris: You mean, go from a penny to a quarter? But, look at the question. It says: How many drops of water can fit on a *penny*, not a quarter. So we can't change the coin. Want to try again?

Pilar: Juice

Eris: Oh. Can we change the type of liquid we use? No, because then we are going to change the question. It says how many drops of *water* will fit on a penny. So, we can't change the coin and we can't change the water. Can we change something else? Jillian?

Jillian: I'm not sure but maybe which side of the penny you use.

Eris: Excellent! Good. Which side of the penny? We can flip it to the other side. If you started with heads, how about flip it and try tails? Do you think that might have an effect on the number of drops of water can fit on the penny?

Several students respond – Sure (POEC, lines 176-210)!

In this sequence, Pilar attempted to answer a question that no other student initially attempted. Eris correctly pointed out why Pilar could not switch coins or types of liquid used in the experiment. However, her response was deadpan and did not acknowledge the risk Pilar took in venturing a response. When native English speaker, Jillian then correctly identified an independent variable, Eris's exuberant reply of, "excellent", was disproportionate to the level of challenge and risk Jillian assumed as compared to Pilar. Following this introduction, students broke into assigned small groups to actually count

the drops of water that will fit on a penny. Once complete, students were to return to their desks to individually complete worksheet questions requiring analysis and interpretation of information gathered during the hands-on portion of the lesson. ELLs were each placed in different small groups that each seemed to have a "take charge" student directing the group's activities. In each small group, the student leader either regulated the water drops or took charge of counting them. The remaining two students kept track of the counting with tally marks. In each instance, ELLs were either assigned the role of water drop regulator or tally mark keeper. Since assigned groups disbanded following completion of the activity, ELLs returned to their segregated table at the front of the room to attempt the questions. Nancy did not return to the table until the last small group containing an ELL completed counting water drops. Similarly, Eris remained with students who were still engaged in water drop counting, so she also did not help any student who had moved on to answering the questions.

In this lesson, Eris interacted with Pilar just as she might have with any native English speaking student. Despite the risks Pilar took in offering a response, her response was incorrect. Eris, corrected her and did not compliment her effort or take any further actions to leave Pilar feeling encouraged to take this risk again. Eris's structuring of the small group activity limited ELLs' ability to engage in analysis and inference around the data they collected. Since they had to return to their seats, they could no longer work with native English speakers to respond to the worksheet questions about the variables in this activity. Had this added scaffolding measure been in place, her ELLs could have profited from further linguistic modeling as students reviewed their data, discussed its meaning, and responded in writing to the worksheet questions. Again, Eris

failed to consider the particular language needs of her ELL students in planning and carrying out this lesson. While I intended to discuss these points with Eris during our planned post-lesson discussion, this meeting never took place. As noted above, when this class period ended, Eris informed me that she needed to help a novice teacher with some challenges, and she asked me if I would mind cancelling (not rescheduling) our appointment. Considering Eris's personal background as a bilingual who required no school-based interventions, Eris's minimal consideration for her ELLs appeared consistent with her identity and with the team teacher role she carried out at Harding Middle School.

Georgia's team teacher orientation reflected itself in a very different manner in her practice. Although she remained firm in her refusal to differentiate her instruction to accommodate ELLs, she did take steps to have Nancy included in the team planning period so that ELL learning might be accomplished through their enhanced planning and coordination. At our final meeting Georgia raised the encouraging possibility that Nancy could be excused from her office duty intermittently so that they could meet together.

Georgia:	It would be nice to have a common planning time, too.
Nancy:	Yes I know. I am not in there to ...
Georgia:	You know I was going to propose...this may not be the most appropriate time but you [Nancy] know how you have that office duty second period? That is our team planning time, and if you are ok with it, I was going to make a plea to start at least twice a month and then roll it over to once a week that they let you out of that office duty to meet with me.
Devon:	That's more important.
Jean:	That's more important than office duty.
Georgia:	because I didn't realize that that is where you were until I was there for an IEP meeting and saw you there, and Mary and I were talking about how frustrating it is to try and ...and this brought that up.

Mary: Yes, for when you are looking at student work or talking about a kid like we have been during these meetings, I think you should ask.

Georgia: It would help us to recognize patterns (PD7, lines 183-202).

An important organizational feature at Harding is that interdisciplinary team teachers have common planning time built into their schedules, so common planning time for curriculum articulation, discussing individual student progress and time for planning team activities is a concept that is well within Georgia's role as a team teacher. Georgia's suggestion that this particular Harding structure be applied to ELL learning by having Nancy released from her office duty for this intention is a significant sign of her applying her team teacher framework to the challenge of enhancing ELL learning. It suggests that the application of team practices overall may offer viable possibilities in addressing ELL learning needs at Harding.

Team Teacher Participation: Summary

Within this study, team teachers' engagement in and commitment to the process of ELL-oriented professional learning depended upon more than their stated interest in specific topics or even upon the fact that they joined our group as volunteers. Applying Gee's (2001) identity model to examine the ways that team teachers took part in our professional learning experience revealed that different elements—distinct institutional factors and affinity-based practices—provided legitimizing sources that enabled Georgia and Eris to act in the role of team teacher as it was defined within the Harding Middle School setting. Predictably, Harding's structures and norms validated these team teachers' interactions and reactions during the study; however, affinity group practices revealed themselves to be a sufficiently validating source, as well. Ultimately, their team

teacher role was a powerfully mediating force that determined what Georgia and Eris reflected upon, accepted or rejected among our topics of study. Moreover, since the effectiveness of our professional learning endeavor relied upon the collaborative efforts of all participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991), these team teachers impacted the learning of all participants, regardless of their role within the school.

The Teacher Leader

Two participants in this study took on the role of teacher leader during our sessions, during interviews and during classroom instruction. Devon and Jean actually held the titles of lead reading teacher and lead writing teacher respectively. As such, Harding's institutional framework ratified them in their positions, and Devon and Jean were commonly recognized as teacher leaders in Harding Middle School community. Based on my experience as a language arts teacher at Harding and based my observations of teacher leader tasks and responsibilities during this study, it was clear that being recognized as a teacher leader meant being recognized for possessing exceptional instructional skill and subject area knowledge. It also meant being recognized as having authority and responsibility for managing school-based aspects of the language arts curriculum. I describe these specific characteristics further while examining how institution-based measures validated Jean and Devon during the course of professional learning that this study entailed.

Teacher Leaders' Underlying Identities

As teacher leaders, Jean and Devon held identities that were predominantly based on specific institutional practices and structures at Harding. They described a number of these norms during our initial interview. For example, they controlled the school's novel supply. It was a standard procedure at Harding that team and remedial literacy teachers alike were obligated to submit to Devon and Jean schedules of when they planned to use which novels throughout the year. Jean and Devon would then approve each teacher's novel use schedule only after ensuring that novels were available in sufficient quantities to accommodate these requests. Next, team and remedial literacy teachers submitted their quarterly benchmark assessments to Jean and Devon for entry into the school's student assessment data base. As such, they were the only non administrators to possess information regarding student performance that could be traced to individual teachers. The fact that Jean and Devon had access to this type of individualized teacher information added to the authority inherent in their job descriptions. Another significant institution-based factor that served to uphold Devon and Jean in their positions as teacher leaders was the fact that it was their responsibility to coordinate monthly literacy meetings that were attended by team and remedial literacy teachers. While the district reading and language arts supervisors alternately attended these meetings, Devon and Jean regularly moderated the proceedings and took responsibility for the professional learning that occurred during them. They either modeled instructional strategies or sought others to do the same (I consented to model the use of multicultural picture books as mentor texts during their November 2009 staff meeting.) Outside of literacy meetings, Devon and Jean also played a leadership role in fostering the professional learning of

staff members by working to create an environment in which teachers felt comfortable coming to them with questions or concerns about their teaching. Devon shared,

> Over the past two years there has been a change, and teachers are more willing to open up when they need help. Being sure that when a teacher emails me that I get right back to her.... that kind of thing, and it's great that we see it starting to work and every now and then a teacher will stop by the office and say, "What would you do with a kid that has trouble with inferring? Do you have anything for teaching leads? How do I help this kid with this?" Really it's building trust, and one by one people are coming to us now (MIDC, lines 407 – 411).

Jean commented,

> I would find the resources for them. That is the hardest part too is that they will say, 'I don't have time to do this.' (In response) 'That is fine. I have more time than you do. I only have twelve kids, so that is my job is to go find these resources for you, put something together and have a very quick turn-around time where you can have the stuff the next day and start the ball rolling (PIJB, lines 182- 186).

Additionally, Jean and Devon acted to support the literacy-related professional development of other segments of the Harding Middle School staff by planning science and social studies department meeting presentations to address the wide range of literacy levels represented in their classes. Devon explained these efforts in the following manner:

> But in a content area class, like a science or a social studies where the groups are larger, how does that teacher manage the content and all that variety of students out there? That can be frustrating. I know we have talked about this so many times. We wanted to do professional development with those teachers. I have a whole PowerPoint. I actually did it for one of my grad courses and I expanded on it for what we needed here. Yes, I had this whole thing together and then it was cancelled. But, what we are hoping for is to get into department meetings and to share it with them there. Then maybe that will be like a jumping off point and they will ask us for something more…from individual teachers (PIBC, lines 659 – 674).

Broadly, Jean and Devon's support for literacy-related professional learning was a component of their jobs as teacher leaders that benefitted other staff members. As a result, it gave them added credibility in their roles as teacher leaders.

In addition to managing the literacy program at Haring, Devon and Jean spent half of their work days instructing students, and their classroom teaching also supported their ratification as teacher leaders. Harding Middle School adhered to an ability-based tracking system for language arts instruction in which remedial literacy students were taught reading and writing by one of the school's five remedial literacy teachers. Within this arrangement, Devon and Jean taught the fifteen lowest scoring seventh and eighth grade students, respectively. Yet, while team-based instruction was considered the cornerstone of Harding's design, their instruction of these bottom-most literacy students was not viewed as a peripheral task precisely because of the authority components and advanced pedagogical skills that Jean and Devon demonstrated in other aspects of their jobs.

Whether through data gathering and report preparation, through materials management, through running meetings, or through their leadership role in supporting professional learning, Devon and Jean carried out institutionally-defined job responsibilities that led teachers and administrators to recognize them as teacher leaders. As teacher leaders, Devon and Jean exhibited common patterns on behavior throughout this professional learning experience, and I now illustrate their manner of participation in this undertaking.

Teacher Leaders' Participation in Professional Learning Sessions

Each day at Harding Middle School teacher leaders enacted a role that emphasized advanced pedagogical knowledge and skills as well as a strong interest in promoting their colleagues' professional learning. Devon and Jean therefore engaged in this professional learning experience in ways that revealed a consistent orientation toward these priorities. The concerns and topics for professional learning they expressed interest in and their manner of interacting with others during meetings both strongly mirrored their role-specific foci.

Teacher leaders' professional learning interests and needs.

Promoting ELL – native English student collaboration, delivering academically rigorous instruction for ELLs, and exploring the effects of culture on learning were the three interests that the teacher leaders shared with me. Yet, during my earliest classroom observations, it was clear that these teachers had already implemented these measures to some degree. For instance, even before studying the potent language learning effects of ELL- non-ELL interaction, Devon and Jean recognized the value of this approach and took steps in their classrooms to promote such collaboration. During our initial meeting, they shared their efforts in this regard, and they noted the difficulty of balancing needs of ELL and non-ELL students while yet keeping groups integrated. Devon shared the following observation on this topic:

> When children with limited English proficiency are mixed with other children who don't have those needs, it's a matter of balancing that classroom to hit the children who don't need that help and the children who do. And in our program, we can group them into groups of five and do that but you can't keep the same five kids together the whole time because you want them to branch out. They are still going to learn from those other children, as well. So you want them to go with other kids who speak the language so they can hear what they're saying and share their ideas.... (PIBC, lines163-169).

Similarly, Jean stated,

> I was really struggling with these six kids because it was hard. You had a class of kids who were struggling readers. And then you had kids who were truly ESL and so a lot of times my class would lag because I had these six kids who needed way different instruction than the kids who were struggling. And then the kids who were struggling started to go like this [gesture of frustration] and they really wanted to move on, but I couldn't because I had these six kids who I'm explaining what the word *package* means (PIBC, lines 131-135).

In addition to prompting ELL-non-ELL shared participation in learning activities, the teacher leaders who participated in this professional learning experience also expressed interests regarding academic rigor and high expectations for their ELL students. During our initial interviews, Devon and Jean each spoke of their specific efforts to prepare ELL students for success in future academic experiences. They each planned and taught in a manner that sought to prepare their ELL students for increasingly rigorous learning opportunities and performance expectations. For instance, with an eye toward her students' future academic success, Devon ensured that her students take part in the practice of goal setting. She provided guided support to teach of her ELLs to evaluate their own progress and to identify specific learning targets to aim for. Devon explained,

> I will say to them "This is something you really need to work on. This is an area that you really need to focus on. This is your goal." I will set goals up for them or I will say, "What do you think your goals should be?" But for this kind of group, you cannot give them that much autonomy with goal setting because they are not sure what a goal is anyway. They need to be modeled first. For the first half of the year, like when I conference with them tomorrow, I will say, "Well, what do you want your goal to be for marking period two? What do you think you should work on?" And they kind of look at me and I was like "Well, let's look at your grades. How about this is what we work on?" Like for a kid who did not do their homework, "Your goal should be getting your homework in." Just something simple. Then when we go to the next marking period (I say),
> "What was your goal?"
> "To get my homework in."

> "Did you do it?"
> "Yes."
> "Great!"
> So they get an idea on how to go about it. It is the goal; it is the plan of attack, and then it is actually getting and doing it. And it is hard; because you can't teach it explicitly, you just have to keep working with them (MIDC, lines 466 - 483).

Importantly, Devon did not fail to address the fact that teaching goal setting is a slow, inexplicit process requiring persistence on her part. Rather, she described how she coached her students through the process by asking questions that guided their appraisal of their progress and that fostered their sense of investment in decision-making. This example illustrated the fact that high expectations were not merely lofty concepts to Devon; rather they were beliefs that she matched with patience, persistence and effective instructional support.

Jean's interest in being better able to promote ELL's academic achievement extended to include preparing all but the beginning ELL students to be successful in college preparatory track classes at Harding High School. She explained,

> They changed all the high school English to college prep. And so we have the beginning ESL kids going through that transition program that Caroline Burton [the Harding High School ESL teacher] teaches. But for the most part these guys are flying in a college prep class. So I spend a lot of time trying to be sure they get most of what they need, if not all of what they need (PIBC, lines 378 – 383).

As stated earlier, the Read 180 program was for the lowest fifteen language arts students on a grade level. The fact that Jean was actively engaged in equipping her ELL students with most, if not all of the prerequisite skills and knowledge for success in college preparatory English speaks to her views about their potential as learners.

A third focus that teacher leaders expressed interest in pursuing was that of culture; they wanted to explore the role of culture on ELL learning. In fact, as teacher

leaders who applied their notable skills to the instruction of struggling readers and writers, Devon and Jean already showed evidence of understanding culture as an element that pervaded all aspects of students' thinking, and they viewed cultural norms as important considerations for teachers (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Jean's comment on this subject accurately captured the importance that teacher leaders placed on understanding their students' respective cultural beliefs and practices. In discussing her views on this subject, Jean described her previous year's class in this manner,

> I had kids who were Mexican. Kids who were Colombian. Kids who were from Costa Rica. Indian kids. I had one from Mexico City, and I had one from Guatemala….completely different. And I talk to the kids a lot about their culture to find out. And then so it would help me kind of interpreting why the child reacted a certain way…why the parents reacted in a certain way…what I was seeing in their writing that reflected the lens through which they think. And I just don't think I was prepared for that. I wished I had more preparation before I tried to teach them because I think that's part of it. You know, it's teaching multicultural learners (PIBC, lines 17 – 20).

With the exception of the Indian student, all of the students to which Jean referred came from Spanish speaking countries. Yet instead of classifying the students in a singular manner as being "Spanish" because they happened to speak the same language, Jean took it upon herself to learn about distinctions between them so as to better inform her instruction. Jean's statements about feeling ill-prepared for multicultural education also reflected the enormity and significance with which she viewed this task.

In a similar vein, when discussing her ELLs' challenges with critical analysis of literature, Devon recognized the fact that students' interest and ability to participate in book discussions are influenced by culture, and she raised this as an interest for professional learning.

> They would get frustrated. I know I had one who would go, "Mrs. C, who cares?" And it's like okay, trying to make that connection to them. They would never have had a reason to think about why the main character did this or that. People's actions didn't get questioned and discussed in Taiwan. That's not how she approached reading. And it's tough for them and you're trying to get them motivated and get them involved. And they really have a hard time with it. And you have others who get it, and you lose them because you are spending that extra moment reinforcing (PIBC, lines 246 – 252).

In this statement, Devon was clear about the fact that her student was having difficulty analyzing character actions because this was a culturally unfamiliar practice. She stated this neutrally, as a plain matter of fact, and it did not lead her to make any negative assumptions regarding the student's ability or aptitude. Rather she framed the issues of participation and balance as the problems of practice, not the problems of students, and her overall specificity in describing this concern suggests that it was one that she actively grappled with.

Lastly, Jean directly requested that our session cover matters related to achievement gaps and cultural relevance.

> Jean: I think we need—forget about differentiation of instruction or learning styles—we all got that. It's this type of stuff. It's working with kids with different backgrounds. …socioeconomic status... Cultural and religious differences…that kind of differentiating. That is the wave of kids we are seeing, and I think the demographic of Harding is changing, and I don't think all people are there. They're still looking at it like these are all white suburban kids, and it's not like that anymore.
>
> Mary: That's a good point.
>
> Jean: Maybe looking at who makes it into advanced classes: who are not of a diverse background…why is that? Is there something that we are missing that they are not making it into these programs because of the tests we are giving them…that kind of stuff (PIBC, lines 738 – 750).

Having lived in Harding and having taught at Harding Middle School for four years, I was quite familiar with the suburban norms that pervaded the culture of the building, and with this understanding of the school, I found the teacher leaders' active, thoughtful engagement with issues of cultural diversity to stand out in contrast to many staff members' focus on individual merit as determined by letter grades and numeric averages. During my tenure in the building and through informal discussions I held with staff members while conducting this study, I noted that it was normal for teachers to form appraisals of students based on performance standards that were determined according to what would be considered average for middle class, suburban children. Jean's interest in the causes of achievement gaps indicated that her understanding of the factors that lead to student achievement in Harding was more comprehensive than that of many of her colleagues. Devon's observations about the strong meditational effect of culture on learning were also distinctive within this suburban school culture.

In summary, ELL-non-ELL interaction, achieving academic rigor and exploring the effects of culture on learning were the three interests brought forth by the teacher leaders at Harding. As such, it was clear that Devon and Jean would be entering into our professional learning sessions already having implemented effective instructional measures to support second language acquisition. It was equally clear that these interests differed markedly from those expressed by team teachers.

Teacher leaders' interactions in professional learning sessions.

Throughout our professional learning sessions, Devon and Jean interacted with one another and with those assuming other roles in a manner that reflected their positions of instructional leadership in the school. They were serious about their job of providing

struggling students with effective and cognitively rigorous instruction. As a result, they actively reflected on ideas shared during meetings, connecting and extending them to fit their own teaching situations and instructional needs. They consistently cultivated the professional learning of other participants by modeling reflection on their own practice and, at times, by plainly challenging their colleagues' practices and underlying assumptions. Throughout their participation, a focus on professional learning remained a constant theme; modeling and challenging were the means by which they sought to cultivate this learning in others.

Reflecting and Modeling. Devon and Jean actively engaged in the process of thinking about second language acquisition and the ways that they could promote it among their ELL students. Already sensitive to the meditational effects of culture, they listened to the concepts and strategies I shared and then critically evaluated them in light of their own teaching circumstances. Through their dialogue, they collaboratively developed their understanding of how specific teaching strategies and broader concepts related to ELL participation and cultural responsiveness could support ELLs' language and literacy development. For example, during one session the group explored an approach for scaffolding comprehension using illustrated think aloud prompts, which were sentence templates students could use to help them predict, use prior knowledge, visualize, formulate questions and self-monitor their understanding of text (Appendix F, p. 280). Devon verbally thought through the process of how she would fold this into her literacy instruction.

Devon: I'm actually thinking with this that I would put each one on an index card. I would hand out Predict—that would be before. And then I would have them predict about the story. And then give them a card with the "Question" one so that they would have to–

	maybe in pairs--come up with a question. So that during the lesson they are orally making a prediction...orally giving me a question. You call it monitor...I call it self-assessment. I would hand out that and we would stop reading after a certain point and discuss that. And maybe have visualizing somewhere in between...but have each one on a card. Especially I'm thinking of a couple of my students who need to be able to actually see and read it to do it.
Jean:	Prior knowledge.
Devon:	Yeah. The prior knowledge.
Georgia:	More concrete.
Devon:	Yeah. And for some of them they need the concrete. And I will do a think aloud as I do it because I model all of these because I do that I'll go..."Okay, why did Mrs. Ceranto do that? This is what I'm thinking..." and then all of a sudden they will pick up and they will understand what I'm talking about (PD4, lines 26 - 44).

In this case Devon explicitly demonstrated how this comprehension building strategy could be implemented in a way that applied specifically to her classroom instruction. By verbalizing her own thoughts, Devon made it possible for those participating in other roles to be exposed to the process of taking literacy-building strategies and adapting them to fit specific classroom needs. Jean's and Georgia's observations about the visual think aloud prompts then enabled Devon to further clarify her intentions to model the use of these comprehension strategies for her students. Devon's assertion that, "They will understand what I am talking about", made apparent for her colleagues the fact that she viewed this strategy as a viable means to support her ELLs' critical analysis of text.

In a different session, Jean assumed the position of a role model for reflective professional learning, and this enhanced the knowledge construction process of other participants. This was particularly important when topics of language and culture arose for discussion because, as previously described, these considerations were not commonly accepted as relevant in Harding's middle class, suburban context. However, Jean's comments served as exemplars in this regard, illustrating how active consideration of

ELLs' languages and cultures can enhance understanding of their actual abilities. The following exchange reflects how Jean carefully interpreted an ELL student's attempts to make and express relevant contributions during a prewriting/brainstorming activity.

> Jean: Like with Carlos last year, we were writing a story [about a disaster aftermath] and the prompt was "After escaping by boat, they found themselves shipwrecked on a desert island..." and they had to continue from there. So he was trying to describe to me what the hotel looked like afterwards and it was just the building frame, which I figured out afterwards because he said, um...*naranja*. And I said like an orange...like an orange peel? And he said, "Yeah," and he was going like this [gesturing to indicate just the peel] and he said, "Yeah." And so what he was trying to tell me was that the building was like an orange peel where the fruit had been taken out.
>
> Devon: like a skeleton
>
> Jean: and I was like, this is a language thing. This kid knows; he's smart (PD2, lines 264 - 275).

Here Jean "figured out afterward" that Carlos's comment about orange peels was, in fact, a valid means of describing how the interior of a building would appear following a disaster. This revealed for her colleagues how her follow-up reflection about the episode lead her to a broader consideration of Carlos's understanding of the topic. Jean's sharing of this episode aptly illustrated for the other participants the instructional benefits of critical reflection and openness to modes of expression that might initially appear disconnected. By listening to Jean relate what she learned from this episode with Carlos, they were presented with a view of student learning that they seldom had opportunities to encounter in their own team or departmental contexts.

The teacher leaders' critical reflection about how to best support their ELL students was also evident in our study of the culturally-mediated nature of language (Vygotsky, 1978), and in this instance it is also possible to note how a teacher leaders'

critical reflection carried over to support the professional learning of others. Following our group's discussion of how certain words varied in meaning depending upon one's culture, Jean shared how she took the initiative to learn about her ELLs' respective conceptualizations of school and schooling. In the following excerpt, she described how she refined her understanding of this topic during a conversation with her students.

Jean:	We were saying that after that meeting we had, I was telling these guys [Devon and Deena] we actually got into a discussion in my class based on something we had read about a kid who came from Taiwan...about their ideas of being a student. I thought, let me just ask them. And one of the Indian students – Shilpa—was telling me, "Well in my country if you got things wrong, the teachers hit you with a ruler on your hand and your parents hit you."
Deena:	All my ESL kids said that ...
Jean:	Yeah. And I think that they are expecting you to be really harsh on them if they get something wrong and I think we are a little more understanding here and that will throw them for a loop, too.
Georgia:	And I think sometimes they are so overwhelmed that they shut down. Just...off.
Jean:	Yes
Devon:	That boy last year. He would just put his head down. He'd want to go to the nurse all the time. Finally they just moved him into a tiny little group. Now he's with Jean, and he's better.
Georgia:	They have no one to talk to about it.
Devon:	Logistically we are much different than other countries, too. A lot of them tell me that the kids stay in their classroom and the teachers move. A lot of the time they are used to staying at one table the whole time.
Deena:	And they are not even used to moving so right off the bat, they are ...
Devon:	Especially out here [gesturing to the hallway]. It is so overwhelming. It's scary. So like with Emanuel, he was coming from a tiny little school and he came here and the first couple of days he would come in the room and I'd say, "Are you ok, Emanuel?" and he'd say, "There are so many kids." And he'd be like, "I need to go to the nurse." He'd say that the whole time (PD2, lines 214 – 223 & 279 – 304).

So, through their explicit reflection, teacher leaders broadened their own understanding of concepts and facilitated the growth of their co-participants. Modeling such as this was

one means by which Devon and Jean helped other participants to expand their understanding of ELL-focused teaching. Another way in which they accomplished this is by overtly challenging their colleagues' beliefs and practices.

Reflecting and Challenging. Disaccord leads to professional learning because it encourages community members with differing viewpoints to work toward common understandings, thereby expanding their awareness of complexities and broadening their perspectives in the process (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, Lave & Wenger, 1991; Little, 2003). At points over the course of our professional learning sessions, the teacher leaders openly challenged the assumptions and existing instructional practices of those in other roles. As Devon and Jean described their own practices and either overtly or tacitly challenged those of other participants, this obligated their colleagues to engage with alternative ideas and practices.

One routine of our meetings was to engage in a reflection and group brainstorming about a particular ELL. During our discussion of Yuri's progress, Devon challenged ESL teacher, Nancy's perspective regarding this student by recontextualizing deficiencies identified by Nancy, casting them instead as mere complications that she was able to effectively address.

Nancy:	But he is also immature, too.
Devon:	He is immature. So a lot of times I will have him sit right next to me. "*I don't want to sit there. I want to sit....*"
Mary:	Oh, he asserts himself?
Nancy:	He is very assertive.
Devon:	That he will do.
Nancy:	and the two of them [Yuri and Sonia, who are siblings] can be very loud at times.
Devon:	True. Sonia and Yuri have strong personalities. But, you know, it is funny listening to Sonia when she gets going about something in English. Because she has it in there and that is when you see it come out, when she is pissed off about something. She'll be going

on and I'll say, "There it is. There it is. Now do that in group." But, yeah...it's just keeping them focused.

Nancy: yes.

Devon: But with Yuri, you really have to force him. You have to really be on him. And I have to hold him accountable. "Yuri, you are going to answer this one." And he does. He does when you are on him like that. So when I walk away he is doing something else, and I have to constantly be on him (PD4, lines 404 – 430).

In this exchange, Devon's emphasis on cogent teaching practices was reflected by the fact that she literally challenged Nancy's concerns with facts about how she effectively managed each one in order to better support Yuri's and Sonia's learning. While this segment of the discussion was collegial in tone, it represented an example of dissonance because Nancy was faced with the reality that her colleague's baseline assumptions and accompanying instructional skills rendered her concerns about Yuri and Sonia insignificant. And while not outwardly stated, Devon's positive management of these students' behaviors implicitly suggested that Nancy's instructional skills were lacking in this specific regard. During this session it was not apparent that Nancy's understanding had been expanded, yet a later interview with her suggested that she did benefit from considering alternative viewpoints and practices.

> For me, it was helpful just to hear about how other teachers who also teach my students approach things. I see Georgia and Eris, but I rarely have the chance to talk to the literacy teachers, so hearing how they do things was helpful (PINC, lines 455- 458).

In this manner, Devon's statements pushed Nancy to broaden her understanding about high expectations for ELLs and about how other's instructional techniques lead to improved student achievement. Similarly, during our group's study of "Say Something" cards (Appendix F, p.281), which are tools to support ELL dialogue, both Eris and Nancy

were challenged in their beliefs regarding the scaffolding of ELL higher order thought. In this case Devon and Jean, accompanied by Deena, worked in concert to challenge Eris and Nancy's assumptions that ELLs were incapable of speculating, or "wondering", about an idea due to their limited facility with English and due to a perceived infeasibility of ELL-non-ELL cooperative grouping options.

Nancy:	I think this would be very hard for the beginning ESL kids because they don't even know what wonder means.
Mary:	Oh?
Nancy:	And it is very hard to define that word.
Eris:	It is.
Nancy:	So, for them to sit down and say I wonder...because they can't verbalize what they are wondering. You know what I'm saying...even if they knew what that word meant. I think higher level ESL kids could do this. They have some grasp of the language so they can... you know, so they can talk about these things. You can interchange "I wonder" with "I think about" or "I'm questioning or something like that, but it is not really the same meaning as I wonder.
Jean:	Put them in groups.
Deena:	Well, I think that is a teaching point.
Devon:	Well, I would model all this anyway.
Deena:	Spend two weeks figuring out exactly what "wonder" is, especially for the ELL kids, and THEN you have done something. Then you can use it.
Devon:	Right
Jean:	Yes
Mary:	That word...wonder. It is a very abstract word and there are a lot of layers to it. How would this work, " I think ___ because ___." That's pretty concrete. How would it work if you taught it where two levels of ELLs were together and one could take that idea and explain it in the student's first language? How would that work?
Jean:	I'd put them in groups. One kid who understands more that the other one. And have the work on it together (PD3L, lines 160 – 179).

In this case, the teacher leaders were pointed about their claim that speculation, or wondering, could be achieved through direct instruction of wonder as a "teaching point, " by heterogeneously combining students in small groups and by teacher modeling .

Neither Nancy nor Eris returned a comment following Jean's final statement in this excerpt. They had just received a litany of instructionally sound strategies for scaffolding ELL students in this higher order thought process, and their silence after hearing this concerted opposition to their assumption suggests their weighing of these valid counterpoints.

Teacher Leaders' Professional Learning in Practice

Harding's teacher leaders captured the essential aspects of our professional learning experiences in their classroom instruction. These included culturally responsive pedagogy such as intentionally seeking to integrate ELLs' background experiences into lessons (Moll, 1992), maintaining high academic expectations for ELLs, and maximizing ELLs' opportunities to use academic language alongside non-ELL peers (Villegas & Lucas, 2002; Hawkins, 2002). Additionally, the teacher leaders' learning was also evident in the plans they created for staff members' future professional development.

Following our group's study of Luis Moll's Funds of Knowledge concept (1992), Jean made explicit efforts to directly include aspects of her ELLs' respective native cultures into a class idea-generating session about important aspects of holidays. Students were to use this information to collaboratively write descriptive essays about fictitious holidays that they created in small groups. Prior to the start of the lesson, Jean wrote several holidays on the board, and she invited students to share information about the purposes, specific activities, symbols and routines associated with each. Listed holidays included Christmas, Chanukah, Divali, Presidents' Day, Labor Day, La Festa de la Bafana and Jesus' Birthday 5th Eve. During the brainstorming, ELLs all enthusiastically described the important aspects of their holiday.

Jean: Gianna—La Festa de la Bafana...What can you tell us about it?
Gianna: Uh huh. They put a witch on the door. And then the day of Festa de la Bafana you get the stocking and then she comes around the houses and brings treats and candy. And if the bad boy or the bad girl is in the house, she gives black candy that ruins your teeth.
Jean: It is sort of like Santa. If you are not good, you get coal in your stocking rather than presents. So, that sounds kind of familiar. Giselle, what about Jesus' Birthday 5th Eve?
Giselle: Um...we have a big dinner. We sit at our fancy dining table. We say a prayer. There is this fire thingy and a plant and we put rocks in to make wishes. We have this piece of like church bread that they make, and we ...after we say the prayer and eat the bread, and then my parents put the bread into their wine and then we have a ton of different food. Do you want to me to tell you about the food?
Jean: We actually have to move on, but that will be a great thing to share in your group. You guys are going to be deciding what foods are going to go along with your holidays...what celebrations...is there going to be a special day or a few special days...are you going to have decorations...certain colors? Okay, so that is a great conversation to have with your group, we just need to move on.
Giselle: Okay. We still celebrate regular Christmas, though.
Jean: That's great. So you do both (POJB, lines 18 – 37).

Overall, the level of ELL participation in this lesson was plentiful and enthusiastic. In addition to the excerpt above, Carlos and Shilpa offered well elaborated descriptions of the purposes and practices associated with Christmas and Divali. Importantly, this level of enthusiasm carried over to the small group portion of the lesson, and each ELL readily offered suggestions about different aspects of the fictitious holiday their groups created. For example, in deciding upon a theme for their small group holiday, the frequency and substance of Shilpa's contributions are indistinguishable from those of her non-ELL classmates.

Shilpa: What about Family and Friends Day?
Gisella: What about food day?
Bethany: Like culture day.
Jean: What kind of food do you like?
Gisella: Macaroni and cheese

Jean: What kind of food do you like? [to Devon]
Dean: Chinese
Shilpa: Indian food!
Jean: What kind of food do you like? [to Brittany]
Bethany: Kit Kat day [laughing]
Jean: They are all different. I think we are going somewhere with the food day because each of you has something that is important to you in it. But, can you think of a different name besides Different Foods day?
Gisella: The Best Foods Ever Day!
Bethany: Cultural Foods Day
Shilpa: Good Food Good Fun Day!
Jean: Awesome Chow Day. Devon, what do you think? [group agreement](POJB, lines 285 – 312).

In general, Jean's classroom instruction reflected an emphasis on active involvement and an attention to relevancy. This emphasis on cultural relevancy manifested itself differently in each teacher leader's classroom as Devon and Jean planned lessons around different reading materials and different themes. However, based on my observations in each teacher leader's classroom, this segment from Jean's lesson is representative of the attention devoted to this important aspect of second language acquisition.

Jean and Devon each possessed high expectations for their ELL students, and our professional learning sessions and interviews offered them the opportunity both to learn new strategies and to further hone tools they used in scaffolding their students' authentic engagement in rigorous learning activities. For example, during one of my interviews with Devon, she described a template she recently developed to support her students' summary paragraph writing (Appendix F, p.287).

> It's basically a box and there is a prompt in the box. When you fill in the boxes you can create an entire summary from this outline. And it prompts them for the topic sentence, and that first detail, and the elaboration on the first detail. It prompts them to put in a quote. That kind of a thing...reminding them of all those parts. Then I started to pull those away half way through the year and have them

> do those on their own. And it's still tough for them. But they need to know, you're not going to have this outline next year (PIBC, lines 596-602).

Devon's template incorporated two significant aspects of our group's discussion of comprehensible input (Krahsen,1982 as cited in Calderon, 2007): the graphic arrangement of the boxes enabled ELLs to explicitly see how summary paragraph components are organized and synthesized, and the prompts inside of each box supported ELLs' learning of academic terms such as topic sentence and elaboration (Calderon, 2008; Walqui, 2006). Devon's intention with this tool was to enable students to master the format so that they could eventually write summaries independently. The tool's purpose and its limited time of use offered evidence of Devon's expectation that her students gain independence with this skill.

Teacher leaders' professional learning was also reflected in their efforts to maximize ELLs' opportunities to collaborate with native English speaking peers. One observation of Devon's class provided a representative picture of how these teachers promoted ELL-non-ELL interaction. During the writing portion of her class, Devon instituted a daily warm-up routine in which students worked together to analyze the parts of a sentence. As part of this routine, students worked with other classmates seated at their assigned tables to identify a given sentence's subject and predicate (simple and complete), direct object, indirect object, as well as each word's part of speech. Devon's practice was to call on one group member to respond on his/her group's behalf, but only after teammates had time to collaborate and to reach a consensus about the correct answer. In the following excerpt, Devon takes explicit measures to ensure that ELL Yuri's input into his group's response was encouraged and validated as the class worked to analyze the sentence, "We students are learning grammar."

Devon: Subject... What is the complete subject up here? *We students are learning grammar*.

[At their group tables, students whisper amongst themselves. Devon provides approximately 30 seconds of wait time.]

Start coming to an agreement, groups. [more wait time.] Tim? What is the complete subject?

Tim: We students.

Devon: Good. Tell me how your group reached that answer? Who thought what?

Tim: Well, Yuri and Tina thought it was *we*.

Yuri: But Tim said it was *students*, too.

Devon: Excellent Yuri and Tina, because you got the simple subject...the most important part of the subject. Good. Okay, but how did Tim convince you to agree with him? *Do* you agree with him?

Yuri: [no response]

Devon: [provides more wait time, but Yuri still does not answer.] Who can help?

Tim: I said that *students* has to be part of it because it tells you who *we* are in the sentence.

Devon: And what did the others have to say to that? Guys...what did you think about that?

Tina: We though he made sense.

Devon: Okay, so *We students* is the complete subject. Tina and Yuri, I like how you found the simple subject. That was careful thinking. Tim, nice job bringing? in the whole thing. Good explaining (PODC, lines 8-37).

First, the structure of this activity implicitly promoted ELL – non-ELL interaction because students were grouped by table, and Devon's ELLs were evenly dispersed among the classroom tables. Next, Devon ensured that all students were participating in the group collaboration aspect of the activity, and she was careful to include time for the group spokesperson, Tim, to discuss the consensus-building process. The discussion of this collaborative process reinforced Devon's emphasis on total group involvement. Lastly, Devon's specific feedback provided Yuri with more encouragement to continue his engagement in this interactive routine. Devon praised Yuri (and Tina) for correctly identifying "the most important part" of the subject, and this specific feedback reinforced

his content learning. Furthermore, acknowledging Yuri's "careful thinking" validated his efforts and encouraged his further engagement in this grammar warm-up routine. In this fashion, Devon's attention to ELL engagement in collaborative activities scaffolded Yuri's language learning, as well as his increasing his familiarity with common classroom practices and interactions.

Just as teacher leaders used the ideas and strategies we discussed during this study to provide cogent instruction for their ELL students, they also looked to turnkey aspects of our study to other teachers at Harding. For example, during one meeting Jean asked, "Mary, I was meaning to ask you. Can you send that stuff from last week electronically? I was talking to Helen Wilson and some other teachers who wanted to have copies. We have been sharing it." (PD4, lines 483 – 484). During another meeting Jean asked,

> Do you have anything on mentor texts because we got something sent to us, but I had to send it back because it was in such bad condition. We are going to be starting a Harlem Renaissance unit, and I was thinking that mentor text might be a good way to introduce that and then Devon and I have been talking about discussing that at one of our department meetings. I can't use what I was sent, though. It's got too many mistakes in it. It would be great if you have something (PD3L, lines 213 – 218).

When sharing her ideas about carrying the work of our group forward into the next year, Devon shared her preference for the specific strategies that teachers could readily implement in their classrooms.

> The concrete techniques that I could implement in my classroom without a lot of extra work because a lot of the teachers are overwhelmed. I hear that a lot. For the workshop that we'll put together, I want everyone to walk away going, "Yeah, I'm going to try one of these." The more useful the tools in a workshop, the more of a chance the teacher is going to walk away going," I'm not just excited about this, I'm actually going to use this" (PIBC, lines 723 – 728).

Then while explicitly reflecting on our professional learning experience in relation to her role as a teacher leader, Jean offered the following thoughts about how our meetings influenced her practice:

> But, next year Devon and I kind of want to do a P.L.C.[professional learning community] like this where it is really just discussing the current literature that is out there, and all the stuff that you have brought to us because you are out there currently and we are, but it is so hard with all the things that we have to do to try to manage both of those, you know? So, really thinking about the struggling readers, whether they are ELL or whether they are just struggling for another reason, talking about the current literature, how can we use different strategies to help these kids? What you did is a microcosm of what we would like to do on a larger scale next year (PIJB, lines 53 – 60).

Jean's interest in passing on specific strategies and in continuing this professional dialogue in an expanded manner was one of the most significant results to come from the weeks I spent reflecting on these teachers' needs and in planning group sessions that would cogently and engagingly meet them. In a community such as Harding that still had a low number of ELL students, the tendency to focus instructional attention on endeavors that address the aggregate needs and interests of the student body was strong. However, by virtue of their position as teacher leaders Jean and Devon held credibility among their colleagues. They were, therefore, best poised to carry forward the work our group began.

Teacher Leaders Participation: Summary

Broadly, teacher leaders' participation in our learning sessions was consistent with their role-related focus on effective pedagogy for struggling literacy students and the authority implicit in the role of teacher leader enabled these participants to effectively take up the reflective study of ELL-oriented language and literacy, even when Harding's broader focus remained on suburban needs and interests. Jean and Devon's positioning

as teacher leaders also permitted them to support their co-participants' professional learning. Whether by having practices modeled for them or by having their own practices challenged, the other teachers who took part in this study experienced opportunities to increase their knowledge of ELL-oriented language and literacy building measures because of the teacher leaders' actions.

The Remedial Language Arts Teacher

As discussed in the preceding section, being recognized as a teacher leader at Harding Middle School meant being known as a teacher with considerable pedagogical abilities and disciplinary expertise. Additionally, it meant being recognized as having responsibility for coordinating language arts curriculum and pedagogy at the school level. While Devon and Jean were recognized as teacher leaders by virtue of their official positions, Deena effectively enacted this participatory role even though she held the position of remedial language arts teacher.

As a remedial language arts teacher, Deena taught students who scored Partially Proficient on the New Jersey's *Assessment of Skills and Knowledge* and who, by New Jersey Department of Education policy (2006), were required to receive intensive language arts instruction as a result of this subpar performance. Enrollment in Deena's class was therefore limited to twelve students, and the smaller class size enabled her to better address the student deficiencies identified on the state assessment. Generally the position of remedial language arts teacher was not coveted among the teaching staff. Remedial teachers taught six full periods per day (as opposed to the team teachers' five and opposed to official teacher leaders' three), and their students' often displayed significant learning gaps and academic disaffection. During my own years as a remedial

language arts teacher at Harding and through my observations during this study, it was clear that holding this position was considered to be grueling work without any of the authority that teacher leaders possess and without a sense of integral importance that team teachers held. Yet, while Deena's official position was a remedial literacy teacher, the discourse she generated and actively solicited from others effectively elevated her to the role of teacher leader. Her assumption of the teacher leader role, therefore, was consistent with Gee's framing of a discourse-based identity; "People can construct and sustain identities through discourse and dialogue without the overt sanction and support of "official" institutions," (Gee, 2001, p. 103).

The Remedial Language Arts Teacher's Underlying Identity

Deena was a remedial literacy teacher. She did not have any institutionally defined norms or practices to substantiate her bid to be recognized as a teacher leader during our study, and she used discourse alone to accomplish this end. According to Gee, a discourse-based identity is produced and perpetuated by the ways in which people in a given setting speak with and about a particular individual, both during face-to-fact interaction and when he or she is absent. Gee holds that an individual may play an active role in soliciting and facilitating such talk, thereby "fashioning themselves in a particular way," (Gee, 2001, p. 104). Deena participated in our sessions as a teacher leader, an identity she actively sought by making bids to be recognized for successfully carrying out the functions that teacher leaders were known to enact: using exceptional pedagogical skill to effectively instruct low ability literacy students and promoting other teachers' professional learning.

Deena spoke openly about her successful development and implementation of effective teaching approaches during our professional learning sessions and in individual interviews with me. For instance, during our initial meeting, Deena spoke enthusiastically about the lesson she developed for her beginning ELL students. She explained that the unit she created for ELLs was based on the picture book, *The Mitten* (Brett, 1989). Referring to a bound retelling, field guide and video recording that she brought with her to our meeting, she explained,

> This [*bound book*] is something that I will forever be proud of. The kids were so engaged...so engaged, and it was just so powerful for them. We started with a reading of *The Mitten* which worked out very well since it is based on a Ukrainian folk tale, and so my two kids from there were hooked right away. Then every student could recognize at least a few of the animals, so we had the chance to tie in words from their languages. And, they really picked up on the pattern in the story. It took some work, but working with Robert [HMS librarian] we conducted research on each animal featured in the story, and the students compiled their data from different sources into the class field guide. That's at the back [pointing to the bound book]. In the front is the retelling. The ones with very limited English skills did that part, so there was something for everyone. And then they put on the retelling, which was incredible. Bob [school principal] was there. Marge and Karen [district supervisors] came and it was just such a powerful experience (PIDP, lines 272 – 283).

During one of our group meetings, Deena shared an effective tool she created for scaffolding literary analysis. She called this the reading report (Appendix F, p. 286), and the following excerpt speaks to the level of reflective inquiry that Deena exercised in using the reading report to plan cognitively challenging lessons for her students.

> I have refined it [the reading report] as the process was going on because on that one I asked them to identify two quotes and make two connections and then my three discussion questions. And I found that I was not getting the level of depth that I wanted, so now I ask for one quote and one connection, and I limited it to only text-to-text connections now because that is where we are going (MIDP, lines19 - 26).

It is notable that, although the reading report led to enhanced critical thought by her students, Deena's description focused, not on their learning, but on her efforts in generating this positive result. In another situation, Deena's discourse also promoted her recognition as a teacher leader when she actively sought to have a particularly challenging student placed in her class, even though the addition of this student would place her enrollment over the twelve student limit. Just before one of our group meetings began and when all participants were present except for Eris, she made the following comment to Jean,

> I knew you would understand that if there is a child who really has to have me, then just put them in because I would rather have 13 in there than have a child that falls through the cracks because they didn't get to a place where they should be. You understand what I'm saying. It's more important that the child be successful because what's the point in taking them out of a class where they are not doing well to put them in an even smaller class if they don't do any better there? No, he should be with me (PD5, lines 13 – 17).

Teacher leaders at Harding were known to possess exceptional pedagogical skill; they were known to teach the most challenging of students. These examples reveal Deena's pattern of consistently highlighting her own instructional abilities with regard to these students. In addition to having exceptional teaching skills, teacher leaders at Harding sought to enhance and support the professional learning of their colleagues. Accordingly, Deena demonstrated her interest in supporting professional learning. When discussing the district's three-day extended in-service experience, Deena expressed frustration at NOT being permitted to share her knowledge during the workshop.

> I don't need to go to a workshop and have the same thing again. And there wasn't anything for me to share with anybody because everybody there knew this material. It wasn't like this was uplifting and we were going someplace new and coming up with great ideas...it didn't happen that way (PD5, lines 54 – 57).

I also noted Deena's interest in supporting her colleagues' professional learning during the November 9, 2009 mentor text workshop I was asked to conduct for team and remedial literacy teachers. Following a small group activity in which teachers needed to select an excerpt from a picture book to use in their own writing, a teacher expressed concern that preparation for state assessments did not leave time for students to develop the more creative aspects of authorship. Deena then replied,

> Getting the kids ready for on-demand writing is such a chore, I agree with you. I find, too, that when I take bits of ideas I pick up along the way, I always find that there are ways to blend them in with all of the things we have to do. I like to think about how they would work in small ways with my group, and that works out well. So, it's thinking about the small ways....always the small ways and sometimes that really leads to big leaps in their writing (DP 11/9, lines 422 – 425).

In this manner, before the group of seventh and eighth grade writing teachers, Deena encouraged openness to new ideas, and this effectively countered a staff member's position that developing author's craft was not possible because it was not consistent with New Jersey's on demand writing parameters.

While Deena's own discourse promoted her recognition as a talented, successful teacher of struggling students and a proponent of professional learning, the words and actions of others also verified her possession of these teacher leader qualities. For instance, when describing her opportunities to collaborate with another remedial literacy teacher, Deena noted the fact that this teacher nominated her for an award. She described her colleague's actions in the following manner:

> Helen and I used to work together. We co-taught a number of times... Actually my first year here she recommended me for the Disney teacher award because she said she was so inspired by my literature circles... by my study guides... by what I did because I was very fluid and reading oriented (MIDP, lines72 – 75).

Later while I was visiting Deena's classroom, she shared an email she received from the assistant superintendent that commended her for her recent classroom observation. Deena beckoned me over to her computer screen and read the text of this email, stating how much she appreciated his recognition. (field notes 10/27/10). Lastly, Nancy referred to Deena's instructional skill frequently during one of our interviews. In the following excerpts from that discussion, Nancy recalled her positive experience co-teaching with Deena; her comments captured her positive appraisal of Deena's abilities as a teacher of ELL students.

> I was doing all the reading and speaking and Deena was doing the writing part with them and she was phenomenal (PINC, lines 137 – 138).
>
> I mean I almost felt like I had another ESL teacher with me because Deena was right there, she had that – she knew how to teach them. She knew what their abilities were, and ...she was great with them, great (PINC, lines 433-436).
>
> Because Deena and I worked a lot together and sometimes we would even – like when I had the low levels, she would have the high levels, when I had the high levels, she would have the low levels. So there were many times when we would actually co-teach. We would be in the same class together, we would co-teach and let me tell you, it was so nice – it worked out so nice and the kids were really doing well, plus I had somebody else to bounce off my feelings about. If we had a kid who had a problem, I had another teacher there who knew this kid the way I knew the kid, you know what I mean (PINC, lines 409- 416)?

These examples reflect Deena's recognition as a teacher of notable skill among the Harding staff. They demonstrate that Deena's bids to be recognized as a teacher leader were, in fact, accepted by Harding staff members so that together, Deena and her colleagues co-constructed her discourse-based identity of teacher leader.

The Remedial Language Arts Teacher's Participation in Professional Learning Sessions

Deena engaged in this professional learning experience in ways that reflected her assumption of a teacher leader role. Her emphasis on advanced pedagogical knowledge

and skills, and her strong interest in promoting her colleagues' professional learning remained prominent throughout the study. The concerns and topics for professional learning that Deena expressed interest in and her manner of interacting with others during meetings both aligned with these teacher leader foci.

The remedial language arts teacher's professional learning interests and needs.

Deena and I met in early August so that I could learn how I could tailor our sessions to incorporate her professional learning interests relative to ELL students. During this meeting, Deena spoke at length about her experiences teaching ELLs. For example she brought along a video recording of one of her class's culminating projects and she pointed out different students, commenting on their individual circumstances and academic accomplishments during their year with her. While our conversation centered on her teaching successes, Deena did identify three topics of professional learning interest: integrating ELLs with other students in classroom activities, providing ELLs with appropriately rigorous learning activities, and exploring cultural influences on learning. When discussing the need to foster greater ELL-native English student interaction she commented,

> The cliques that they wind up in tend to bolster them up and strengthen them in their community but it can also be a detriment to them because it robs them of the opportunity to strengthen their skills by working with someone who doesn't speak their language. <u>There are some who can break the ice and make friends that way</u>, and I try to encourage that in my classroom (PIDP, lines 126 – 130).

Deena spoke of the need for higher academic expectations for ELL students by criticizing another staff member's sanctioning of minimalistic expectations for ELLs while she highlighted her knowledge of teaching practices that would yield language and literacy gains among ELL students. She explained,

> There was a bilingual guidance counselor and his impact on the ESL program was pretty strong because he would say to the regular ed teachers—and he was heavily involved in their scheduling and while he was a wonderful guidance counselor, I kind of felt like his input negatively impacted those students because he would say to the regular ed teachers—"Just give them five vocabulary words and have them write sentences with them or ….you know, just talk slowly to them." And while you did need to speak clearly and enunciate, there were lots of things other than having five vocabulary words and writing five sentences that ESL kids could and should do (PIDP, lines 1 – 8).

> Diversify your teaching by providing information in many modalities so they can access that information.... Slowing down is important for a teacher...enunciating…use all modalities...but also letting them know that there is content that they *can* do. I think the worst thing you can do is say, "Here are five vocabulary words. Use them in sentences" (PIDP, lines 108 - 113).

Deena expressed a concern about of the learning challenges ELL students face due to their general unfamiliarity with US culture. She highlighted this concern in discussing the experience of one of her students from Ghana.

> We did an in-class essay, you know, two essays ago. ..This essay, I forget the name of the title, but it revolved around the TV show 'Sesame Street' and if Sesame Street was effective or not. He had no connection to it because he had never seen Sesame Street. But he said, 'I have no idea what this means. I've never seen this show.' So, I used my dialogue to help him. I explained what I could about the TV show but I also helped him understand what they were driving at and how maybe he could then use his own examples that related to the topic…I wanted him to see what he could bring to it (PIDP, lines 69-87).

Here Deena demonstrated how she validated her student's own relevant experiences by encouraging him to write about them. While his writing topic required a significant level of US early childhood background information, Deena's scaffolding demonstrated her own cultural responsiveness (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), and she later identified this as a topic that other participants would benefit from, " It's really paramount to remember that these students come to us with an entirely different set of skills...totally different experiences and sometimes I think teachers can forget that fact. That would be

something that we could talk about (PD6, lines 127 – 128). These suggestions accurately capture her familiarity with an interest in salient aspects of culturally responsive pedagogy (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), and they are, therefore, consistent with the professional learning interests that a teacher leader at Harding Middle School would express. However, what distinguishes Deena's remarks is the absence of inquiry into her own practice. Unlike every other participant in the experience, Deena did not speak of any particular dilemma or issue that she herself faced in the classroom. Rather statements such as, "There are some who can break the ice and make friends that way, and I try to encourage that in my classroom," and, "I also helped him understand what they were driving at and how maybe he could then use his own examples that related to the topic," called attention to her own pedagogical acumen while noting needs and concerns in general terms or with specific reference to other Harding staff members. Deena's lack of inquiry regarding her own teaching dilemmas appears to be a consequence of her sustained use of discourse to promote her recognition as a teacher leader; she did not appear able to expose her own classroom challenges while simultaneously promoting a discourse that upheld her instructional expertise.

Another pattern that I noticed among the professional learning interests that Deena noted was the premium she placed on interactive dialogue. Whether referring to opportunities ELLs have to learn by "breaking the ice and making friends" or when sharing how "She [I] used my dialogue to help him," it was clear that to Deena learning resulted from dialogic experiences. As Deena enacted the role of teacher leader, she spoke explicitly about the value of dialogue in relation to learning, and she modeled its use throughout our sessions.

The remedial language arts teacher's interactions in professional learning sessions.

In our professional learning sessions, Deena interacted with other participants in a manner that reflected instructional leadership; cogent instructional practices and support for professional learning were her constant foci. She consistently cultivated the professional learning of other participants by engaging in dialogic reflection about our topics that stretched others' understandings. At times, she also pointedly advocated for expanded use of dialogue in professional learning at Harding. Throughout her participation, a concentration on professional learning remained a constant pattern; modeling and advocacy were the means by which she fostered this learning in others.

Modeling Dialogue. Deena enthusiastically took part in the process of reflecting on second language acquisition and discussing the ways that she could promote it among her students. Through her previous teaching experiences, she was already sensitive to the meditational effects of culture, and she actively considered the concepts and instructional approaches I shared and then discussed them in relation to her own teaching circumstances or to those of others. This provided other participants with a consistent example of inquiry-focused professional dialogue; whatever the topic of discussion, Deena readily raised questions, made connections and suggested possibilities to extend the group's thinking. This pattern was especially well demonstrated during one session in which the group brainstormed ways of helping Gianna, an intellectually bright but unmotivated ELL whom Deena did not teach. After asking several questions about Gianna's background, Deena offered two suggestions that captured critical aspects of

culturally responsive pedagogy: intellectual rigor and high expectations. Deena suggested:

> Devon: Yes, part of motivation it is their age.
> Mary: From last year to this, does their seem to be a more dramatic shift in motivation?
> Deena: What is her age?
> Mary: She is an 8th grader.
> Deena: But how old is she?
> Nancy: 14?
> Deena: So she is not older?
> Devon: But I understand that she has been like this since she came to this country in 5th grade. Because I was talking to her teacher from then. She said she has always been like this.
> Deena: Where is she from?
> Nancy: Italy
> Deena: Oh, Italy. That is interesting. And the parents? What are they like?
> Devon: They are very nice people. They are old world Italian....
> Deena: You might consider moving her [Gianna] up to an on-level language arts class. If she has the ability and is just not doing it, it's like being in Pro-Plus [on-level designation]...if you are not motivated, that's your choice....Put her in with Helen [on level language arts teacher] (PD5, lines 287 – 303).

Regarding intellectual engagement, Deena's recommendation to move a failing ELL to a higher level language arts class reflected her ability to recognize the root causes of Gianna's difficulties as being distinct from her intellectual potential, and it also demonstrated her willingness to look beyond conventional parameters in addressing it. Later in this exchange, Deena's offered the following commentary on expectations:

> With Luke [a former disaffected student of hers] I found that positive expectations really worked well. His parents and I set up a system where he would complete his work with me at lunch if he did not do it that evening. At first it was like I'm not going to do it and you're not going to make me, but then he started to succeed because we held him to the standard. The parents responded well to it, as well. I was in touch with parents all the time with this, and Luke was right as rain. I expect Luke to be like Julia. What can she do? Hold her to it (PD5, lines 379-384).

The addition of this reflection contributed to the group's collaborative construction of knowledge about the impact of unwavering standards and a mechanism to enable students to meet them. It demonstrated how high expectations, when coupled with a willingness to put in extra work, yielded positive results for Luke. By adding, "What can she do? Hold her to it." Deena shifted the focus on this approach from Luke to Gianna and encouraged the group members to consider how Gianna might benefit from similar steps.

So, through information gathering, critical reflection and possibility-raising, Deena used dialogue to broaden other participants' understanding of second language acquisition concepts in a manner that both related to their current instructional needs and challenged their existing paradigms. In addition to modeling the use of dialogue as a vehicle for professional learning, Deena also explicitly advocated for its expanded use at Harding.

Promoting Dialogue. During two of our sessions, our groups had the opportunity to discuss professional learning at Harding and to raise possibilities about how ELL instruction might be fostered. Very early on during the fifth session, just before I convened the meeting, Deena made a remark about the school's recent in-service days. She spoke candidly about what opportunities for dialogue have meant for her own professional growth.

> Whatever dialogue we enter into impacts where we are going, hopefully for the better – I think *always* for the better because whether we recognize that the dialogue is crap or it's something that we'd want to do – it could be information that is not effective and we know that we're not going to go there and we're going to say, 'thank you very much and have a good time doing this in helping someone else,' or whether we say, 'Oh, that's really powerful and I have to remember to use this strategy because it's going to be something that's going to be effective,' or, 'I don't want to be doing that in my instruction,' You know...those things we hopefully always keep in check and dialogue can help us see them, but in addition

> to that, I think it opens my mind to other ideas that I hadn't considered before (PD5 lines 39 – 51).

This reflection was particularly beneficial in that it validated dialogue itself, and not any particular position or belief, as being of value to her. Notably, this comment occurred during the fifth session, just after the one in which Eris and the language arts teachers expressed conflicting views regarding ELL – non-ELL small group interaction. Eris's early departure form that meeting prevented the tension that arose from that exchange to be resolved in the course of continued discussion. So, Deena's edification of professional dialogue at this juncture, helped to neutralize any conflictual sentiments that may have remained from the previous meeting and to re-orient the group toward our broader purpose of professional learning.

During our seventh session, Deena explicitly advocated for expanded use of dialogue at language arts department meetings.

Deena:	You know for professional development what else we can do? When you were talking it made me think. You know that reading report that I use? What if at our next department meeting we made them come there with discussion questions. Then we could move right away to a dialogue about the questions and not need to spend the first ten minutes getting started.
Jean:	Oh...hummm
Devon:	That is tough because less than half the population that comes to the meeting will have brought them.
Deena:	But in my class, you only need one question to have a really rich discussion, so everyone would not have to decide to be prepared. If our kids can do it, we can...
Jean:	That is the hope....
Deena:	For all of us that are in that moving and changing and fluid part of education, we just have to keep that Glass is Half Full kind of outlook. Pull up the one's we can get along with us...the ones that are new and the ones that we do have motivated and on track. And then the other ones...we are always going to have those people that are, "What's in it for me?" or "Okay, I am going to do it

	because you make me do it." And that's okay...unfortunately a lot of the kids in their classes who really need that scooping up and nurturing are not going to get it but them some will. And then the rest of us will get them in our mentor groups and we will reach out to those kids-- as many as we can-- and we will do the very best we can. But it spreads a little and just because they are *all* not going to do it doesn't mean that *we* should not do it.
Jean:	Right.
Deena:	And I know you mean that...
Mary:	Too, it is a long term thing and you create a culture.
Deena:	Having said that, we have a great culture here (PD7, lines 214 – 255).

In this case, Deena's assumption of a teacher leader role was especially apparent. She provided Devon and Jean with a specific suggestion about incorporation reading reports into language arts department meetings, meetings that Devon and Jean coordinated. Her recommendation also included a directive that teachers would be given, "What if at our next department meeting we made them come there with discussion questions," and this also demonstrated the leadership stance she assumed. Devon and Jean paused to consider this idea in earnest, which further legitimized Deena's forthright approach to advocating for the use of professional dialogue. Devon then responded by identifying a possible complication—that teachers might not come to the meeting prepared. While this exchange was quite pleasant in tone, Deena's answer clearly challenged Devon's perceived constraints about the quality and extent of professional learning that can occur at department meetings. In so doing, she effectively pushed the official teacher leaders to move beyond their current procedures and expectations for professional learning so that dialogue might be utilized more readily.

The Remedial Language Arts Teacher's Professional Learning in Practice

Consistent with her assumed role of teacher leader, I observed that Deena's classroom instruction reflected considerable pedagogical knowledge. During my visits, it was apparent that she had incorporated several aspects of our professional learning experiences into her teaching. For example, the following excerpt demonstrates how she promoted ELL-non-ELL interaction during her class's discussion of the novel *Don't You Dare Read This, Ms. Dunphrey* (Haddix, 1996). As the students discovered that the teenage main character must decide how to deal with her absentee mother's overdue utility bill and property tax payment, statements made between ELL, Fabrizio, and non-ELLs illustrate how peer dialogue among Deena's students effectively supported ELLs' understanding of culturally embedded information, and allowed them to better understand and react to the literature they read. (Gibbons, 2003; Haneda, 2008).

Viddath:	Where will Matt and Tish live if they are not able to pay all the bills and taxes?
Fabrizio:	They will have to leave.
Deena:	Can they sell the house? Who owns the house?
Kenzie:	The bank owns it.
Greg:	Well, they do need to worry about the bills, but right now the main thing is the property tax because if they don't pay property tax, that is when they lose their house. The utilities they could keep if Tish really tried to work hard, but they won't have a house to use them in if she does not find a way to pay the taxes. Also, maybe if she asks Ms Dumphrey for help...not tell her all of the details, but maybe asks her for a loan or something.
Fabrizio:	They could live with Ms. Dumphrey.
Kenzie:	Yeah. Maybe they could.. Or, she would probably give them the money first.
Deena:	Do you think that if a student came to me a said, "Can you give me a loan? My mom left and now I can't pay all the bills"...What do you think I am going to do?
Viddath:	Ask all these questions.
Deena:	Yes and I'm going to say well, tell me more about it. And you are going to want to go to guidance and I'm going to say ...while I am going to ask you questions, I am going to try to help you see that that is probably not going to solve the real problem..the problem is that you are trying to do this without a mom.

> I do agree that Ms. Dumphrey is an option, but I'm not so sure that Ms. Dumphrey is going to loan her money. It is a possibility. And I like the way you separated those issues, Greg. How many people lumped all those parts together—the taxes, the electricity, the gas and thought, wow this is overwhelming? It is overwhelming, but he is right. There is a hierarchy to how parents spend their money. Greg is right. Taxes on your home do come before electricity payments because if taxes on your home get too far behind, you can lose it. So, taxes, house payments...then utilities like electricity and water. Then your parents buy you Nintendo and they buy you games. But there are payments that have to come first and that house is first (MODP, lines 98- 135).

Here Greg's knowledge of property tax codes enabled Fabrizio to better understand the complexity of the main character's dilemma. Specifically, Greg's statement, together with Deena's elaboration provided Fabrizio with insights into the typical bill paying priorities set by US homeowners, information that is part of many Harding students' existing schema since most community members do own their homes and since property tax rates are a typical and perennial point of concern in suburban New Jersey communities. In addition, Fabrizio's suggestion that the character could live with the teacher, Mrs. Dumphrey was affirmed by Kenzie in turn seven before she went on to suggest a more probable option, that Mrs. Dumphrey, "would probably give them the money first." In this manner, the peer dialogue enabled Fabrizio to have his contributions to the discussion validated by his classmate, and he was also provided with additional background information about mundane suburban concerns and interactions.

In addition to supporting ELLs' understanding of unfamiliar concepts such as property taxes, and in addition to enabling ELLs to receive validation as true contributors to academic discussions, Deena used classroom dialogue to model challenging academic vocabulary and then to restate phrases using words that are more familiar to her ELLs

(Gibbons, 2003). The following exchange with ELL, Selena, illustrates how Deena enacted this approach.

Deena:	Selena, give us your perspective. What do you think? Who else do you think might be aware of the situation that Tish and Matt are by themselves?
Selena:	Friends?
Deena:	Friends! What about her friends? Do Rochelle and Chastity and Sandy seem to be noticing that something is going on with her?
Selena:	They notice that Tish spends much time with Matt? They notice that.
Deena:	Yes, and what do they suggest?
Selena:	Work-a-holic or something?
Deena:	Well they think she works a lot, but what else? What else do they say?
Selena:	That she has a crush.
Deena:	Yes...that she might like a boy and is not telling them. What do you think about that?
[Selena-- no response]	
	Do you think that is a reasonable idea for her friends to have?
Selena:	Yes (MODP, lines 243 – 269).

Here, Deena not only restated her question, but also provided Selena with contextual details that allowed her to recall the correct response and to associate the term "perspective" with "What do you think?" Deena then moved beyond a basic recall question by asking Selena to evaluate the suppositions made by the characters in the book – a request that permitted Selena to analyze them in light of her own knowledge and judgment of what would be reasonable in this instance. When Selena remained silent, Deena stated the question in a manner that allowed for a *yes* or *no* response, and this enabled Selena to answer. Selena's successful participation in this analysis occurred as a result of Deena's challenging and responsive scaffolding.

Overall, the instructional episodes involving ELLs, Fabrizio and Selena are representative of the teaching I observed during each of my visits to Deena's class; they

suggest a sustained interest in facilitating the active and authentic participation of her ELL students. Accordingly, they also reflect the emphases Harding Middle School teacher leader.

Remedial Language Arts Teacher Participation: Summary

Deena was a unique participant in this study. Her position of remedial language arts teacher was not one of authority or status within the Harding context. In fact, it was generally held in low regard because of its six period teaching load and because the classes were exclusively comprised of struggling learners. However, in spite of these factors, Deena enacted the role of a teacher leader and, therefore, demonstrated how one need not be bound by institution-based parameters when engaging in a professional learning experience such as this. In a variety of ways, she used discourse to promote her pedagogical acumen, and these efforts were then accepted by administrators, fellow teachers and official teacher leaders at Harding. Deena's process of making bids to be recognized as a teacher leader and then having those bids accepted by the Harding community enabled her to substantively contribute to the professional learning of all study participants. While as Deena stated, dialogue did offer her an important vehicle for professional growth, her use of discourse to achieve validation as a teacher leader appeared to limit the professional learning that she might have achieved if she were to expose or verbally inquire into classroom dilemmas that she herself faced. Overall, however, Deena's participation was reflective and insightful, and through her example and explicit advocacy, she positively contributed to the professional learning of this study.

The ESL Teacher

Nancy was the ESL teacher at Harding Middle School. Nancy's primary function was to provide in-class and tutorial support for Harding's eight ELL students. She was the only teacher in the study who taught ELL students over the full course of their middle school experience, and the two-year period of time in which she interacted with ELLs enabled her to offer a longer-term perspective of their progress with language and with integration into the Harding school community. By itself, however, the job title "ESL teacher" did not capture the true essence of her position at Harding and her role within this study because it reflected none of the lack of esteem in which her professional knowledge was held by the administration and by her colleagues. In fact, Harding's institutional structures and practices conspired to isolate Nancy in the school and to place her in a position of disempowerment. It was from this position of disempowerment that she took part in our professional learning experience.

The ESL Teacher's Underlying Identity

Gee (2001) equates identity with being recognized by others as a certain kind of person, and he maintains that the sources that validate this recognition stem from natural-, institution-, discourse- and /or affinity-based sources. At Harding, factors germane to the institution itself offered potent sources that led Nancy to be recognized as a voiceless teacher, as an individual who operated without agency. One significant institution-based factor that played a determining role in this was Harding's need to comply with *No Child Left Behind* provisions, and specifically the need to meet demographic sub-group Adequate Yearly Progress benchmarks (US Department of Education, 2006). This meant that in spite of the school's pervasive focus on suburban norms of individual merit,

competition and corresponding measures of academic achievement, this legislation's mandate that struggling demographic sub-groups, such as ELLs, accomplish predetermined academic gains each year led administrators to adopt Scholastic's Read 180 program (field notes 8/17/2010). This is a research-based, multi-modal literacy program designed to engage and remediate the lowest performing middle grades students. Since Nancy's ELL students were counted among this group of struggling literacy students, they were included in the Read 180 program. Additionally, since Read 180 required three class periods of instructional time daily, Nancy's time with these students was reduced to one instructional period per day, as well as tutorial time during their lunch periods. At the same time, administrators also made the decision to include ELLs in mainstream science and social studies classes. According to Nancy, after ELLs were scheduled for three contiguous periods of Read 180, it was not possible to schedule another two back-to-back periods for Nancy to teach both language and social studies. Apparently that would have precluded their having gym and lunch. Based on these constraints, the decision was made that ELLs were to be scheduled into mainstream social studies and science classes with Nancy serving as their in-class support teacher. Spurred by No Child Left Behind imperatives, Harding administrators changed ELLs' complete curricular framework, which effectively eliminated Nancy's previously validated role in the planning and delivering the major segment of each ELL's instructional program. Therefore, this school-based decision played a significant role in shaping Nancy's marginalized position.

While the Read 180 program enabled the school to meet state and Federal benchmarks for demographic sub-populations such as ELLs, Harding remained above all

a school of predominantly white, upper middle class students (NJ School Report Card, 2008). This fundamental characteristic influenced broader administrative initiatives, and it influenced the types of curricular and professional learning opportunities that were made available to the Harding community. For example, Nancy's perception was that ELL instruction would never garner the attention that issues impacting a greater number of students received. "I mean, the fact is that we have such a small population of ESL kids that we are never going to be a priority, you know what I mean?"(PINC, lines 280 – 281). In fact, the Harding Middle School leadership did concentrate its attention on professional learning endeavors that would benefit the aggregate population of students. For example, the building principal was very candid about the fact that ELL education had not been a prime consideration at Harding.

> Well, there has not been a whole lot of formal or even, I would say, informal conversations or examination of how students are adapting to the classrooms both in our ESL classrooms specifically, or even those students as they go into science or social studies with the regular classroom teachers, either. There has not been a lot of that – at least not in the last four to five years since I have been here at the middle school (JT interview lines 31 – 36).

By contrast, he spoke at length about the imitative currently in place to scaffold teacher's transition into inquiry-based mathematics instruction.

> With a new math program that was going in a couple of years ago, it was my emphasis that in addition to front-loading certain professional development about how to teach and shifting in the way in which to teach in a more 'inquiry oriented' sort of fashion for math, that there needed to be ongoing conversations over the course of the year. The teachers could not just simply learn how to do this and then be expected to do it; they needed to talk more about how it was going over the course of the year. Teachers were willing to do that. They were willing to sign on and spend time in those kinds of conversations and so that sort of became another model. Now, currently this year we are still in a flux with this, still a lot of experimenting going on where we have some groups that are meeting before school or after school and doing things and we have a couple that are meeting

> actually during school time where they are being released [from class] (JT interview lines 272 – 282).

So, through his personal involvement, the offering of targeted professional development activities, and the provision for structured, on-going dialogue, the building principal implemented a comprehensive array of professional learning opportunities around inquiry-based mathematics that effectively dwarfed the measures taken to promote ELL learning. Nancy's awareness of this disparity also contributed to her sense of marginalization.

Another institution-based factor that pushed Nancy to the margins of the school's operational structure was the powerful influence of its interdisciplinary team and department structures. Consistent with the middle school model, students at Harding were each assigned to one academic team consisting of one language arts, math, science, social studies and special education teacher. Those teachers, therefore, served the same complement of students and had the opportunity to confer about student progress, plan interdisciplinary projects and develop team-building events for their students. Team teachers had one designated period each day in which to engage in this collaborative work. Harding used team planning forms for teachers to record minutes of these meetings and submit them to the office for administrative review, and annual parent conferences took place with all team teachers present (field notes 12/19/2009). In this manner, the team structure made up an essential aspect of school life at Harding.

With regard to subject-specific curriculum development, lesson planning and instruction, Harding's department structure played a fundamental role in curriculum implementation and professional learning. Content area teachers took part in two

department meetings per month during which time they shared teaching strategies and lessons with one another, participated in workshops or attended to matters relating to district and state assessments. Additionally, grade-alike content area colleagues volunteered to support new teachers so that novices received individualized content-specific support in addition to the student-related support they received from their interdisciplinary teammates. Harding's department structure was especially beneficial for non-team teachers such as world language teachers, related arts teachers and physical education teachers as it provided them with an important source of professional support and learning. Nancy, as the only ESL teacher in the building, had neither interdisciplinary teammates nor department colleagues with whom she could share information, and she was the *only* teacher in the building who was completely without either of these important organizational supports. Institutionally Nancy's claim, "I don't know where I fit in", (CCC Line 422) was unfortunately accurate. Without a place to fit in, she took up a position on the school's periphery, and from this position she took part in this study of ELL-focused language and literacy.

The ESL Teacher's Participation in the Professional Learning Sessions

As a teacher who worked apart from Harding's main organizational framework and institutional priorities, Nancy carried out her work each day with a dearth of institutional support and interest, and she was placed in a position that reflected a commensurately limited sense of belonging. It was not surprising, therefore, that Nancy took part in our professional learning sessions and interviews in a fashion that mirrored these limitations.

The ESL teacher's professional learning interests and needs.

During our initial meeting, a meeting that Eris and Georgia took part in, Nancy spoke at length about the challenges her ELL students faced in content area classes. Based on her actual comments as well as the inferences I drew from them, it was apparent that she viewed her students' linguistic and cultural differences as obstacles as opposed to assets in their learning. For example, this sentiment was reflected in Nancy's discussion of ELLs' social studies instruction in Georgia's classroom.

Nancy:	Although in history, it's much more difficult than in science.
Georgia:	Yes, I agree.
Nancy:	So much more difficult. They have to know…it's not the term, it's the general language that is used. I mean, first of all, if you are talking about a constitution, they don't know what that means. I mean, I guess you could translate that, but then is it the right translation? And are they really understanding it in their own language? And the things that our kids know [non-ELL kids] just because they know it, the ESL kids just don't.
Mary:	Would they understand anything about the governmental system in India or in Costa Rica?
Nancy:	I don't know.
Mary:	I'm just thinking thematically, if the idea is democracy or freedom or people's participation in the government…something like that where it is not the specifics of this particular country, can there be a point that they can connect to within their own schema (CCC, lines 123 – 142).

Here Nancy identified numerous dimensions of social studies instruction that she found particularly perplexing; these included specific vocabulary, general academic language, and appropriate use of ELLs' native language and prior knowledge. However, as opposed to insurmountable obstacles, these are in fact, instructional factors that an ESL teacher would routinely evaluate and account for in planning (Calderon, 2007). It is significant that she did not state any measure at all she had taken to support their vocabulary learning, build academic language or access prior knowledge regarding the

topic of study. This suggests that Nancy possessed a limited knowledge of the pedagogical strategies and approaches that ESL teachers would ordinarily employ to address needs that arise in content area classes.

During this initial meeting, I noticed Nancy tended to stereotype ELLs according to their cultural background. Significantly, her stereotypical comments often occurred during conversational segments that Georgia initiated so that Nancy appeared to be following Georgia's lead. So, while not explicitly stated by either participant, these statements further reinforced the need the for culturally responsive pedagogy (Nieto & Bode, 2008) among our professional learning topics. In one instance, Nancy joined Georgia in making stereotypical comments about ELLs' work ethic.

Georgia:	With several students, and I touched upon this with you in our conversation…work ethic can be a problem….nonexistent.
Nancy:	Yes.
Georgia:	No matter what you are doing.
Mary:	In your class, too Nancy? When they are together in a small group?
Nancy:	I mean, it depends again. It depends on their ESL level. Like Gianna and Conceta who speak the language well enough to get out there and socialize; they're not that interested because they feel like they know it all. But then when they get into a class like science, they can't do it. And again, it depends on the culture. You know, we've got kids from Taiwan who are "in the books". Indian kids, you know "in the books" (CCC, lines184 – 197).

In another exchange, Georgia and Nancy lamented the teaching opportunities that were lost when administrators intervened to stop ELLs from maintaining the school's landscaping as a co-curricular activity organized by an instructional aide. Nancy described how the instructional aide supported these students' English development while they weeded, pruned and watered plants around the building.

Nancy: They took that away from her, too. They didn't want her out there doing the plants. The fact that they are out there with the plants and they're talking and they're socializing and they're learning so much.
Mary: Because of time in class, that's why they got rid of it?
Nancy: Yeah, they can't see beyond....
Georgia: I brought up the fact that have you ever thought that there is more than one way to learn. And in a classroom where you are embarrassed. People look at it like well, why would you take Hispanic students out there. The only gardeners and landscapers you see are Hispanic and you're teaching then that that is what they can expect.
Nancy: Yeah, but it is okay to put them in sports. Are they going to be soccer players? No, but you put them on the teams because they are good.
Georgia: Let's put all the Asians in robotics**.**
Nancy: Yeah. Exactly.
Mary: Was there ever any discussion about perhaps integrating biology into it or having the G&T kids get involved?
Nancy: It was the basics. What's a root. What's a stem. What's a petal...the different tools (CCC, lines 273 – 299).

In both of these excerpts, Nancy's repeated statements of "yeah" and "yes" demonstrate the manner in which she appeared to accede to Georgia's position, and again, these remarks reflect a lack of cultural responsiveness on both teachers' parts. Yet in Nancy's case, they also indicate a lack of individual voice which could reflect the loss of agency she suffered with the change of curriculum.

A separate dimension of culturally responsive pedagogy is the importance of cognitively rigorous instruction for culturally and linguistically diverse students (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002), and this represented a potential topic of professional learning I noted based on these participants' dialogue. In the above exchange, Nancy stated that ELLs learned basic vocabulary while performing the school's yard maintenance. My questions about integration of biology concepts and the potential involvement of academically gifted students were posed because I hoped to

determine whether Nancy had given any consideration at all to how this activity might be elevated above the present menial academic level. Yet my question did not spark any interest or cause her to verbally reflect upon how her ELLs' academic learning might be better accomplished through this labor. In a different episode, Nancy expressed minimalist views regarding some of her students' academic futures.

> And don't forget, some of these kids are not legal, and if they're not legal, they're not going to college here, which means their parents are probably encouraging them to think about working. Getting out there and helping support the family, and so we're not talking about kids who are going to go off to college (CCC, lines 341 – 344).

In addition to the challenges Nancy shared in this meeting, she did note one specific interest that she would like to learn more about in our sessions.

> Specifically, what can I do to help the kids when I am in the classroom with the other teachers and how can I help the teachers. I have such a hard time knowing what to do because they are the experts. And so I am trying to get as much of the information I can so that I can water it down a little bit so that I can explain it to my kids at a different period. And it's also hard, I find it so hard to work with them individually when the class is going on because then I will be interrupting. I don't know where I fit in sometimes. I want to help but I don't know exactly how to do it (CCC, lines 417 – 422).

Broadly, Nancy's statement suggested a lack of agency on her part. Reading content area materials, preparing for lessons ahead of time and considering creative ways to reinforce concepts require that one believes that these measures will produce a desirable result. Yet, Nancy entered into this professional learning experience lacking institution-based features and supports to lend validity to her position of ESL teacher. She entered into our study having received the message that her efforts prior to Read 180 were not efficacious. Additionally, she entered into our study without interdisciplinary teammates or department colleagues to support and ratify her position as an ESL teacher. Lastly, she

entered into our sessions believing that the needs of ELLs were not priorities among the school's leadership. Additionally, she had adopted a negative, deficit-oriented focus toward her students, and this carried over to influence her participation in our professional learning sessions.

The ESL teacher's interactions in professional learning sessions.

Consistent with the stance she demonstrated during our initial interview, Nancy's mode of participation in our professional learning sessions reflected a deficit view of ELLs and an overall lack of agency.

Deficit Orientation. Nancy did not critically think about matters of ELL-oriented pedagogy during our sessions. To illustrate, one regular component of our professional learning sessions was the inquiry into the progress of a single student. When ELL Yuri was the focus of our inquiry, an exchange occurred in which Nancy appeared not to recognize the effects of a fundamental aspect of language learning: cognitive load, or in this case, overload (Calderon, 2007).

> It is hard to keep him in his seat. But in science, where he is good as gold, he sits there, but he is not listening. Yesterday Eris handed out a worksheet and everyone was going over it and he is sitting there coloring in all of the o's and d's on the sheet. And you had to see this...all the little o's were filled in. All of the little d's were filled in. Eris just held it up at the end of class, and I was like, "I know" (PD4, lines 354 – 358).

Here Nancy appeared not to recognize indicators of excessive cognitive load, and she described Yuri's difficulty in a superficial manner that focused only on an outward symptom. As this discussion progressed, Nancy's focus on Yuri's learning deficits continued,

Nancy: But the material is so over his head. [spoken with great emphasis]

Jean: Oh yeah?
Nancy: Like she was talking about mitosis, meiosis.
Jean: I was just going to say cell division.
Deena: This thing is he can do some stuff. He could learn what a cell is.
Jean: Or visually. See a cell split or pictures.
Nancy: I'm not saying that he doesn't have it because back when I have them in my room we are actually doing a hands-on that Eris has done that in her class. Too where she uses the pipe cleaners, and we split the cells. So in my room he was able to do the hands-on with the pipe cleaners, but if you ask him to explain, he can't . He has no idea. He is not understanding. You can't blame him for losing interest (PD4, lines 364 – 381).

Here Nancy appeared not to recognize an indicator of excessive cognitive load on Yuri, and when Eris held up Yuri's worksheet, Nancy did not consider that his coloring in of the circles on his worksheet may have happened due to fatigue from needing to attend to English-only instruction all day. Even if Nancy herself did make the connection that by his 2:15 PM science class, the cognitive demands of needing to interpret English all day could cause Yuri's attention to drift, she did not clarify this for Eris. Later in the exchange, Nancy indicated understanding of the fact that Yuri's challenges with scientific concepts taught in English could lead to a loss of engagement. However, her focus remained on what he could not understand as opposed to how this may be addressed instructionally, and this deficit orientation persisted even when Jean and Deena offered suggestions that were focused on his capabilities.

In a separate instance, the group was discussing eighth grade ELL, Gianna's improved motivation and progress after deciding that she would like to apply to the county vocational school. This was a lengthy discussion in which every participant besides Nancy elaborated on Gianna's notably improved attitude or shared specific ways

that they could support Gianna in reaching this goal. During this discussion, Nancy made only one comment which appears in the following segment.

Jean:	I have seen a very major positive change in Gianna in my class. She is more focused, and happier. And the turning point was the day that she went to visit the vo-tech school. I hoped that she would come back with an interest...see something that sparked an interest. So, it was her 9th period when she came back from the trip and I said, "How did it go?" And she said, "I loved it." And I said, "What did you see that you liked?" and she said, "cooking and dance." And the cooking was what we thought might catch her interest because she is interested in food and she is always talking about how her dad is such as good cook. She has a dream to own her own business one day. The writing sample she gave me was how she would like to own a spa or a circus for underwater creatures [laughter] I 'm not sure how to take that part of it, but anyway, she is very creative and artistic, and we were trying to tell her, use that. Don't sit there and say I don't want to do anything because you can't do that in life. You know you have to have a goal somewhere, and it looks like she found something that she is happy about because the smile on her face has been like, everyday she comes in...
Nancy:	Do they have to take a test to get in?
Georgia:	For social studies, it would be her grades. And she can do it when she wants to.
Jean:	Yes, and that's the other thing. What I have seen is that she is more focused on doing well because she wants to get in.
Devon:	That's what I was thinking, that now there is a goal.
Jean:	Yes...she has a goal now and before it was nothing (PD7, lines 92 – 115).

This segment contains the only comment made by Nancy in this exciting and dynamic conversation about Gianna's turning point. In the rest of this discussion, every other participant went on to share encouraging remarks about Gianna's improved affect or about her academic potential. The discussion was upbeat, engaging and completely out of alignment with every observation Nancy had shared with her colleagues regarding ELLs during our sessions and during the pre study interview. Nancy's silence during this positive discussion of Gianna appeared to reinforce her deficit-oriented viewpoint and

tendency to focus on instructional obstacles. Without a negative context, she had nothing to say. Again, this negative stance reflected a marked change from the manner in which she talked about teaching prior to the advent of Read 180. A loss of agency was another distinct change in Nancy's approach toward her work, and this was also plainly reflected in her participation in our sessions.

Lack of Agency. During our final session, Georgia proposed that she (not Nancy) go to the principal to ask that Nancy be periodically released from her second period office duty assignment so that they could plan together.

Georgia:	It would be nice to have a common planning time to
Nancy:	Yes I know. I am not in there to ...
Georgia:	You know I was going to propose...this may not be the most appropriate time but you know how you have that office duty second period? That is our team planning time, and if you are ok with it, I was going to make a plea to start at least twice a month and then roll it over to once a week that they let you out of that office duty to meet with me.
Devon:	That's more important.
Jean:	That's more important than office duty.
Georgia:	Because I didn't realize that that is where you were until I was there for an IEP meeting and saw you there, and Mary and I were talking about how frustrating it is to try and ...and this brought that up.
Mary:	Yes for when you are looking at student work or talking about a kid like we have during these meeting, I think you should ask
Georgia:	It would help us to recognize patterns
Deena:	I think this would be a great focus point for professional development. I have said that for years, this would allow us to recognize what our kids are doing (PD7, lines 183 – 205).

While common planning time would greatly facilitate ELL instruction in social studies, it is significant that every participant *except* Nancy offered a comment about why her duty period should be excused for this purpose. Remarkably, she remained totally silent while everyone else discussed how she should spend her time, and this reflected the

disempowerment she associated with her current role. This lack of agency also reflected itself in discussions about instruction. In two other sessions, discussions arose in which Georgia told Nancy how "they" were going to teach a concept in social studies class, and in both cases Nancy's missing voice was plain to note. Their discussion about illustrated vocabulary cards (Appendix F, p. 277) unfolded in the following manner.

> Georgia: No, but I love that idea, not just for ELL kids but it is something that the others would benefit from ,too, because all they do is copy down the word and they are done. I do pronunciation....parts of speech because I'm reinforcing literacy because I'm finding that with this group ...these students don't do anything until they are told to do it.
>
> Eris: I know! That's true for all students.
>
> Georgia: [to Nancy] I'll just pull out that blue chart and we'll start putting them on cards on the wall (PD3C, lines 280 – 285 & 301).

Nancy did not comment or make any nonverbal gesture in response to Georgia's statement about what they would do. This silence was also notable during a discussion of sentence frames (Appendix F, p.280), which were templates that students could use to enact a range of comprehension strategies. In discussing the specific strategies that she found of use, Georgia stated,

> Well there are definitely things that we could use. The "summarize" with our book...with places for specific notes. We could focus on "Pre-read" this. Answer this "question." Nancy, you could use this one ...the "prior knowledge"... (PD3L, lines 131- 134).

As in the above instance, Nancy returned no comment about how these approaches would work in social studies class. Her silence in response to Georgia's "we" and "our" language underscored Nancy's disengagement from the discussion. The participants never learned whether or not Nancy agreed with these ideas. Indeed, her lack of

questions or comments prevented them from learning if Nancy even understood Georgia's plans to enact them.

It is quite significant that in all of these instances, Nancy's silence seemed to go unnoticed. The participants carried on with their discussions without directly soliciting her opinion or allowing time for her to respond. She was told how she (we) would implement the strategies, and she was told that Georgia would be going to the principal on her behalf regarding release from office duty. The lack of attention she received from her colleagues further explained her sense of disenfranchisement.

Generally, Nancy's participation in our professional learning sessions reflected the sense of marginalization she experienced as a result of Harding's shift to Read 180, and it demonstrated the lack of voice the suffered because there was no team or departmental structure in place to help validate her role as an ESL teacher. Instead of speaking of instruction or of ELL learning in constructive terms, her views of students tended to center on challenges and deficiencies. Although the aim of these sessions was to promote participants' professional learning through inquiry into aspects of ELL-oriented pedagogy, Nancy did not overtly demonstrate professional learning.

The ESL Teacher's Professional Learning in Practice

As a teacher that was marginalized within the Harding context, Nancy did not put in place any instructional strategy discussed during the group's professional learning sessions. In the social studies classes I observed, Nancy sat on the side of the room when Georgia was directing a recitation. She did not orchestrate any instructional activities at all during my observations of social studies classes. Similarly, during the guided practice segment of lessons, Nancy supported ELLs in following Georgia's directions; she did not

attempt to alter those directions in any way. During the science classes I observed, Nancy's involvement was similar. She sat beside her four ELLs and ensured that they were at the correct item on their worksheets while Eris led explanations of activities or conducted reviews of homework. During small group activities, Nancy monitored the progress of her students to ensure that they were completing the steps as prescribed by Eris. She made no attempt to enact any ELL-oriented approach that our group discussed either during teacher directed instruction or during the independent practice components of these lessons.

As noted above, I attended Nancy's lunchtime tutorials twice weekly during the course of this study. These were held in Nancy's classroom, a small space with enough room for one dozen student desks that all faced the white board and a small bank of three computers that were located along one side wall. Again, in her own classroom with only her ELL students to attend to, Nancy did not attempt to utilize any of the approaches we discussed. While her walls were decorated with airline posters depicting scenes of tourist sites from around the world, there were no displays reflecting the use of students' various native languages for common phrase translations or for specific content vocabulary translations (Calderon, 2007). Additionally, there was no use of "Say Something" cards (Appendix F, p. 281) or any other scaffolding mechanism to promote student discussion about what they were learning in science and social studies (Calderon, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2008). Nancy did have a small book shelf containing simple novels and picture books of various levels; however, I did not observe students making use of these in any way. Additionally, I did not observe Nancy using the low-level, illustrated informational texts on Islam (subject of the first social studies unit) and genetics (subject

of the first science unit) that I provided her with as a means of supporting concept learning (Calderon, 2007; Walqui, 2006). Rather, Nancy made use of this time to rephrase questions on tests, quizzes and other assignments that ELLs received extra time to complete. In addition, Nancy made regular use of the white board to reinforce information presented during science and social studies. For example, in one lesson I observed her use Expo markers to illustrate how squirrel remains fossilize over time. During her discussion, Yuri impulsively called out and got up from his seat repeatedly because he wanted to help her draw aspects of the process. While she did allow him to draw, managing his regular interruptions consumed so much time that she lost the attention of the remaining three ELLs. This lesson was typical of the lunchtime tutorial sessions that Nancy led. They addressed content area subject matter, but in an ad hoc style that reflected no consideration of linguistic or cultural congruence (Moll, 1992), no additional visual or auditory components to enhance understanding (Calderon, 2007; Walqui, 2006), and no measures to promote collaborative discussion (Calderon, 2007).

The weeks I spent observing Nancy's lunchtime classes provided several opportunities for us to have several informal discussions which I documented in my field notes. During some of these conversations Nancy confirmed the lack of efficacy she felt in her current in-class support assignments. Her position was not one that would lend itself to reflective inquiry because such a stance requires a degree of confidence and trust among the colleagues with whom one engages in such work (Little, 2003). So, Nancy was not best poised to actively reflect upon her practice during our group sessions, and it followed that she would not take action to implement the topics we discussed.

The ESL Teacher's Participation: Summary

Nancy was a marginalized ESL teacher with no prior public school experience whose primary task of ELL instruction was not seen as a priority in the building. Additionally, she recently underwent a significant functional change in how she serviced ELL students. The curriculum she created was supplanted by a research-based literacy program that was delivered by the school's language arts teachers. With this change, her primary function became that of supporting ELLs' science and social studies content learning, tasks she was ill-equipped to carry out effectively given the advanced nature of these curricula. Also with this change, Nancy's view of ELLs' academic capabilities became negative and minimalistic. Isolated within the organizational structure of the school and marginalized by numerous institutional factors, Nancy was poorly poised to approach this professional learning opportunity with an eye toward critical reflection or implementation of instructional changes.

Teacher Participation Chapter Summary

The primary aim of this inquiry was to describe how six suburban middle school teachers engaged in an ELL-oriented, inquiry-based learning community. Through my observation, interviews and facilitation of professional learning sessions, and through the recursive process of analyzing study data, it became apparent that each teacher's modes of participation fell into one of three distinct categories, or roles. Eris and Georgia assumed the role of team teacher. Devon, and Jean each enacted the role of teacher leader. Similarly, Deena enacted the role of a teacher leader even though her official job title was remedial language arts teacher. Nancy was the sole ESL teacher in this study, and she was placed in a position of disempowerment based on limited institutional support. While the communities of practice framework (Lave & Wenger, 1991)

facilitated my analysis of each teacher's separate engagement in and commitment to the group's professional learning efforts, it was Gee's model of identity (2001) that enabled me to identify and analyze the underlying sources that legitimized and authorized their assumption of these roles. With this particular analytic lens, I was able to reach a more refined understanding of the institution-based, discourse-based and affinity-based sources formed the foundation of their professional learning. As an institution, Harding Middle School's norms offered a powerful mediating source for all three participatory roles. However, exploration of Deena's participation confirmed that discourse alone can be a sufficient source of identity. Likewise, Eris's participation sustained the notion that engagement in affinity-based practices effectively determines the role an individual may assume. Together, examination of Eris's and Deena's participation demonstrates that, while impactful, institution-based elements alone do not dictate the manner in which teacher engage in professional learning. Together, these findings illuminate the complex factors that mediate individual teacher's professional learning, and they point to noteworthy implications for teacher learning communities and for continued research around ELL-focused professional development.

CHAPTER 6

Summary and Discussion

English language learners in non-urban school districts present educators with culturally and linguistically distinct learning needs that often depart from existing traditional suburban norms and instructional foci. Without multi-literate teachers and specialized curricular programs that are more prevalent in city districts, school systems such as Harding's look for viable means of supporting this growing population of students with their existing resources.

Among all ELLs, secondary ELLs present educators with a particularly acute challenge. Because they are older, these students are expected to grapple with complex, cognitively demanding content, while at the same time, they have less time to gain the English and content area proficiencies required for high school graduation and successful transition to post-secondary education or to economically viable forms of employment. In addition to time constraints, secondary teachers are generally disciplinary specialists with limited knowledge of second language or literacy pedagogy to bring to the challenge (Calderon, 2007; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007). Accomplishing this outcome requires that science, social studies, language arts and other content area teachers expand their instructional competencies with regard to ELL students. Professional learning opportunities that best facilitate this growth (a) take place over multiple sessions, (b) are collaborative, and (c) incorporate authentically situated inquiry into teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007, Knapp et al., 2003; Levine & Marcus, 2007; Little, 2003; Raphael et al., 2001). However, there is a limited knowledge base around this form of professional

learning when ELL language and literacy is the topic of inquiry. When focusing on ELL-oriented professional learning in non-urban schools, the research available to inform such endeavors is even more scarce (August & Calderon, 2006; August & McCardle, 2008).

The present study responds to this gap in the knowledge base around teacher education related to ELLs. By establishing an inquiry-based learning community in which six middle school content area teachers undertook ELL-focused study, this investigation asks:

1. How do suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in an ELL-oriented reflective inquiry group?
    a. What questions, challenges and interests do these teachers identify as priorities in their ELL-oriented professional learning?
    b. How does the study of these questions, challenges and interests unfold as teachers interact in a reflective inquiry group?
2. How are the ELL-oriented instructional approaches studied during professional development actually enacted in these teachers' practice?
3. How do the opportunities or constraints present within a suburban middle school structure impact the content area literacy instruction they provide for the ELLs in their classrooms?

Findings from this inquiry add to what is presently known about how teachers can support this complex and ever increasing segment of our student population. In this chapter, I look across findings from the professional learning sessions (Chapter 4) and findings relative to teachers' overall participation in this study (Chapter 5) to respond to the research questions that guide this inquiry. Following this discussion, I identify the

implications of the study for practice and for future research. First, however, I provide a summary of the study's design.

Overview of the Design

The aim of this inquiry was to examine how middle school content area teachers participate in an ELL-oriented, inquiry-based learning community. In addition to interactions in the professional learning sessions, school-based contextual factors and teachers' enactment of ELL-oriented instructional approaches were considered in order to capture the mediating factors and consequences of their participation.

I grounded this study in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) because of the emphasis it places on cultural norms and social interaction in mediating learning. More specifically, I incorporated Lave and Wenger's communities of practice concept (Wenger, 1998) into the conceptual framework of this study because of its concentrated focus on social interaction in communities. Lave and Wenger expanded on this aspect of Vygotsky's theory by demonstrating how learning is not merely the domain of the novice within a community but rather that through sustained social interaction, knowledge is co-constructed among all community members. There were no novice teachers in this study. Rather, the participants were all tenured, with at least four years of teaching experience in the different content areas they represented. As such, Lave & Wenger's notion that learning is actually the shared product of collective interaction was especially relevant to our professional development sessions.

In planning and delivering the eight professional learning sessions, I referred to the questions, challenges and interests that participants identified as priorities, and I also drew upon current second language acquisition literature. All participants were interested

in vocabulary and comprehension tools to scaffold ELLs' understanding of text and concepts (Calderon, 2007; Walqui, 2006). Based on the emphases stressed in second language acquisition literature, we explored how participants can develop and maintain a classroom environment in which the concepts, practices and language valued in their particular content areas can be made fully available for appropriation by ELLs through interaction with native English speaking classmates (Haneda, 2008; Hawkins, 2004). In addition, we examined culturally responsive pedagogy, which is a framework for instruction that has at its core the notion that all people's ways of thinking and behaving are profoundly influenced by factors such as race, socioeconomic class and language (Ladson Billings, 1994; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Participants developed their knowledge of these topics via participation in our eight professional learning sessions. Reflection questions, intermittent classroom observations and interviews with me offered additional opportunities for participants to broaden their knowledge of ELL language and literacy scaffolding measures. This professional learning experience took place between September – December, 2009.

Data collected during this study were examined using qualitative analysis of professional learning sessions, observations, interviews, related documents and my research journal entries related to these interactions. Deductive and inductive analysis (Merriam, 1998) of professional learning sessions allowed me to develop a session-by-session account of the teachers' interactions and professional learning along with an account of my post-session reflections and in-the-moment decisions I made to optimize their engagement during this experience. Then, to offer a portrait of the teachers' engagement in professional learning that reflected their cumulative engagement in the

entire professional learning experience, I first prepared written descriptions of each teacher's individual engagement in the professional learning sessions, which included information regarding the mediating effects of the Harding context and a description of her implementation of the approaches we studied. I turned to inductive analysis of the data to better examine the underlying factors that impacted each teacher's engagement in the sessions and to provide for a more comprehensive analysis of the professional learning that occurred throughout the entire study. Inductive analysis then pointed me to the lens of Gee's identity model (2001) in which he designates nature, institutions, discourse and affinity group membership as the sources of identity that enable a person to be recognized as a "certain kind of person." Combining this with Lave and Wenger's communities of practice framework (Wenger, 1998), I was then able to notice common patterns of participation that aligned with how the six participants were each recognized within the Harding context. Findings that focus on the professional learning sessions (Chapter 4) point to valuable implications for educators seeking to undertake similar professional learning endeavors. Findings related to teachers' respective identities and resultant engagement (Chapter 5) provide broader implications for enhancing ELL-oriented professional learning and for improving ELL content area instruction across middle school environments such as Harding's. Together this study's implications point to other avenues of research to further develop the knowledge base around this timely and critical topic.

Professional Learning Sessions

The following discussion of professional learning sessions addresses research question number one:

1. How do suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in an ELL-oriented reflective inquiry group?
    a. What questions, challenges and interests do these teachers identify as priorities in their ELL-oriented professional learning?
    b. How does the study of these questions, challenges and interests unfold as teachers interact in a reflective inquiry group?

This discussion highlights how the participants' interactions during our professional learning sessions both sustain and complicate extant research regarding the salient factors of effective teacher learning experiences. It then illustrates how the participants' questions, interests, and interactions depended upon the measure of mutual engagement present within our community of practice.

To be effective, a professional learning endeavor must be on-going, must incorporate collaborative interaction among participants and must include opportunities for relevant, authentically situated inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Heller & Greenleaf, 2007, Knapp et al., 2003; Levine & Marcus, 2007; Little, 2003; Raphael et al., 2001). Consistent with this research, this study found that sustained and on-going sessions did appear to promote the professional growth of most participants. Indeed, participants' collective recognition of the significance of culturally responsive practices in language learning was most apparent toward the end of our sessions, and this suggests that had our time together continued, their professional learning would have, as well. Similarly, these sessions demonstrated that collaborative participation appeared to promote professional learning. In particular, Georgia's continued engagement in sessions illustrated how a teacher whose practice

remained grounded in individual, merit-based norms could still begin to recognize how such a focus could disadvantage ELLs such as Carlos.

Relevancy is the third component of effective professional learning identified in extant research, and this study underscores the uncertain nature of relevance as it pertains to the participants' views of ELL-oriented professional learning. When I conceived this study, it was with the intention of organizing an ELL-targeted professional learning experience for teachers who possessed an interest in the topic. To this end, I asked the principal to suggest potential volunteers. Those he sought out were the content teachers who taught the school's ELL population, and I thought it reasonable to presume that they would find the topic relevant, both in how the experience could enhance their individual practice, and in how as a group, they could learn from one another's perspectives and cohesively enhance the instruction presently being offered to ELLs. However, by the close of our second session, it was apparent that Georgia did not find our initial topics to be relevant, and the same might be concluded about Eris, given her irregular attendance. This evidence that Georgia and Eris did not immediately find our meetings to be relevant raises questions as to whether these teachers would have even volunteered to participate in this study had their principal not invited them to do so. Given the fact that I also solicited preliminary input from each teacher regarding ELL-related questions, concerns and areas of interest that I then folded into session content, this also raises questions as to the extent to which relevancy can be validly anticipated or gauged in advance. Findings from this study suggest that it cannot. Rather, when coupled with the positive evidence of professional learning that resulted from Georgia's sustained participation in our professional learning activities, this study's findings suggest that relevancy should not be

viewed as a prerequisite condition, but instead as a component that *may* be cultivated along the way. Eris's lack of engagement in our endeavor demonstrated that successful cultivation of relevancy can not be guaranteed, and where it can not be cultivated, professional learning can not be optimized. However, my finding that relevancy can be gradually fostered in participants through on going and responsive professional learing activities offers encouragement to teacher educators who seek to undertake similar endeavors in suburban settings.

Mutual engagement was another critical element within our learning community. Lave & Wenger assert that through sustained mutual engagement members of a community of practice develop a repertoire of resources that "includes routines, words, tools, ways of being... or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence" (Wenger, 1998, p. 83). Findings generated from this study's eight professional learning sessions highlight the importance of the facilitator's role in maintaining the critical element of mutual engagement. Indeed, my reflections on and responsive management of participants' varying dispositions, professional orientations and personal backgrounds proved to be a vital element in this professional learning experience because although their individual attendance rates and amounts of verbal commentary varied from one participant to the next, this was without doubt, an undertaking whose value lay in the interactive engagement of the group. For instance, during the study all participants expressed a strong interest in the text comprehension and vocabulary-building tools I presented. Their interactions around these tools included a harmonious sharing of content-specific applications which led teachers to draw connections to related practices that friends or former colleagues in other districts

utilized. As a result, participants' knowledge-building opportunities were expanded beyond the direct thoughts and experiences of the participants themselves. In a different scenario, the language arts teachers expressed a strong interest in strategies for fostering ELL-non-ELL dialogue, while the science and social studies teachers did not view these as viable options. In this case, the pattern of interaction was that one teacher would express a doubt about a particular strategy for including ELLs in student-to-student dialogue. Another teacher would then illustrate how she herself could use the procedure in her content area. Another teacher would, in turn, point out a complication or suggest another means of implementing the approach. On two occasions, this type of dialogue produced conflict between participants, so these interactions were not always harmonious. However, they always did lead to an exposition of different perspectives that enabled the group to build a broad and well-situated understanding of the instructional strategy under discussion. Willingness to openly bring up ideas and expose them to group consideration was necessary in order to develop this repertoire of resources, and my ability to cultivate this willingness was critical to the overall endeavor. Since the study participants had never worked together in an inquiry-based learning community before, and since I had never worked with them, I was, in essence, charting new territory as I sought to optimize each teacher's active involvement and to respond to each teacher's individual needs and interests as they arose. As I learned from each successive encounter, my ability to capture and maintain the participants' engagement increased along the way.

Harding is a middle school that is located in a middle class, suburban New Jersey community, and its staff had no established pattern of experience in working with

linguistically and culturally diverse students. As such, most of the topics we discussed were unfamiliar to the participants, and some topics even countered existing norms and practices relating to individual merit and competition. As a result, the professional learning session findings reflect valuable lessons that I learned about optimizing teacher engagement, encouraging a sense of joint enterprise, and maximizing the ELL-focused repertoire of instructional resources generated through sustained interaction. These lessons were especially valuable since some of our professional learning activities led to dissonance and conflict within the community. Yet, since sustained mutual engagement remained my priority, these lessons offer valuable implications for educators who seek to undertake similar endeavors in suburban settings.

Lesson #1: Plan for Conflict

When teachers of different grade levels with different content area specialties and different background experiences in teaching come together for a professional learning experience, conflict is virtually assured. However, Lave and Wenger (1991) point out that, "conflict is experienced and worked out through shared everyday practice in which differing viewpoints and common stakes are in play" (p. 116). For example, this study illustrated how, through the tensions that sustained dialogue can produce, Georgia gradually came to understand the ramifications of publically calling out an ELL for misuse of language. In this way, this inquiry demonstrates how conflict can give way to resolution and continued professional learning so long as participants remain actively engaged in the work of the group. When teachers are provided with tools and strategies for expressing disagreement in supportive and constructive ways, it minimizes the risk that a participant could be alienated and consequently opt out of the experience.

Structured conversation protocols (McDonald, Mohr, Dichter & McDonald, 2007) provide discussion frameworks, statement starters and other linguistic tools to support participants' expression of disagreement, sustained engagement in discussion and on-going reflection. For inquiry-based learning communities such as this, such an array of tools would provide a common format for participants of diverse backgrounds and interests to scaffold their active and confident sharing of perspectives.

Lesson #2: Introduce Potentially Dissonant Topics with Extra-contextual Means

In this study, topics such as identity and participation (Hawkins, 2004; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) opposed the suburban, middle class norms that guided Harding's practices because these topics underscore the importance of maximized ELL integration in academic contexts, and they, therefore, point to the need for non-competitive, collaborative instructional activities that are necessary to effectively achieve such integration. Since these were salient and contextually relevant aspects of second language acquisition, it was necessary that the participants engage with these topics and begin the process of constructing meaning of them within the Harding setting. When topics could strike a dissonant chord with participating teachers, facilitators would do better to introduce the topic in a context that is unrelated to the immediate school environment before directly linking the concept to the instructional practices of participants. Teachers in this study readily embraced the concept of Funds of Knowledge (Moll, 1992) when the discussion arose around the experiences of a Nigerian author and her house servant (http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html); this was the case because they could raise questions and discuss responses without

concern that the discussion would reflect negatively upon their practice. Additionally, during this discussion and without any direct prompting from me, the teachers linked these situations to Harding's context by suggesting ways that Harding could institute individualized projects that would arise from student-identified interests and needs. In this manner, opening our discussion by focusing on learning in an external context lead to a richly speculative discussion that explored relevant teaching and learning possibilities at Harding. To reiterate, the purpose of the distanced context is to provide a depersonalized scenario where teachers can begin to explore pedagogical approaches that could otherwise create dissonance or defensiveness if introduced in a manner that related directly to their school context. In this case, the approach proved to be a highly effective means of encouraging discussion of this topic in a manner that was connected to Harding, and the participants made this connection in a spontaneous fashion. However, facilitators should be prepared to overtly steer the discussion to back the school setting, if this does not occur naturally during the dialogue.

Lesson #3: Really Begin on Common Ground

When working with a diverse group of teachers, group facilitators should look to identify common interests among participants and should be sure to verify these interests through alternative sources before planning sessions. For example, in this inquiry all participants expressed an interest in promoting ELL – non-ELL interaction during their pre-study interviews, yet upon hearing Eris's and Georgia's pointed objections to this topic, I realized that their stated interests were incongruous with the prevailing norms of the building and with their positions as team teachers. Through less direct means, every participant also expressed interest in vocabulary strategies. These most closely aligned

with Harding's norms because they consisted of discrete, gradable tasks that could be completed independently, and so vocabulary strategies would have provided a more accurate common interest upon which to begin our inquiry.

Beginning an inquiry-based learning group with a commonly relevant topic provides positive momentum and promotes rapport building among group members. As such, group facilitators should critically evaluate the preliminary input they receive from participants by considering whether it aligns with building, team and/or community foci. Input from building administrators, district web sites, *School Report Cards* or similar independent sources will enable them to plan discussions and activities that accurately meet actual needs.

Lesson #4: Comfort Does Not Equal Learning

This lesson departs from those above because keeping participants happy and comfortable is not always the most effective way to foster professional learning. Throughout this study, I continually wrestled with how best to maintain a comfortable environment in an effort to maximize participant engagement in our study of ELL-focused language and literacy. Retrospectively, I realize that this caused me to miss occasional opportunities to question comments made by Georgia or Eris that blatantly reflected deficit-oriented views about ELLs. For example, in our pre-study interview, Georgia shared, "Work ethic can be a problem...nonexistent" (CCC lines 184 – 185). Rather than invite her to evaluate her construction of work ethic and to explore the culturally embedded beliefs and practices that enable native English speaking students who are members of the US cultural mainstream to successfully display work ethic in the style that Georgia expected, I reasoned that it would be better for me to continue my

initial data collection without making waves. I planned to later address this deficit-oriented view in a carefully planned professional learning session. In this study, Georgia remained engaged through the sessions, and I was able to identify evidence of her growth. Conversely, Eris remained marginally involved in the study, regardless of my overtures, and the fact that I never directly questioned her resistance to ELL/non-ELL interaction did not result in her enhanced participation. Based on these mixed results, I found no clear cut advantage to assuming so conciliatory a position when Eris or Georgia made observations that directly opposed the most salient aspects of our professional learning. In the future, I will uphold professional learning goals with greater fidelity, even if this requires that I facilitate a participant's learning by challenging his or her beliefs or practices.

In challenging beliefs or practices I, or other teacher educators who find themselves in similar positions, would benefit from a process or tool designed to facilitate such a potentially disruptive measure. The structured conversation protocols noted in Lesson #1 above provide defined discussion parameters that would facilitate participant's receptiveness to such a challenge because it would occur as part of an established routine within the group. Additionally, use of a process such as Laszloffy and Hardy's Validation, Challenging and Requesting (VCR) model (Laszloffy & Hardy, 2000) would help teacher educators achieve a constructive, reflection-generating result. Developed as a tool to help counselors address their clients' racist assertions, this model calls for the counselor to find some aspect of the client's position that they can genuinely affirm. Then the counselor would present a challenging question or comment that invites critical reflection, and finally, the counselor would make a request that translates this information

into actionable next steps. Applied to an ELL-focused professional learning experience in a suburban school where the norms of the US cultural mainstream predominate, teacher educators could use such as model to skillfully request continued reflection or dialogue that helps teachers identity the sociocultural lens through which they evaluate the academic potential of ELLs. Structured conversation protocols and tools such as the VCR model offer promising means of supporting professional learning.

In a suburban setting such as Harding, teacher educators must continually grapple with the question of how to best promote professional learning around matters of cultural responsiveness. When is it best to politely but unequivocally challenge participants on practices that oppose the very principles that they are working to promote? When is it best to gently scaffold participants' emerging understanding of how many of the norms inherent in their instructional contexts serve to constrain ELL learning? What if challenging participants causes then to abandon the undertaking? If they do withdraw, will the tension they experienced ultimately contribute to their learning? No clear cut answers exist to these complex and highly situated questions. Yet, by maintaining a reflective stance that prioritizes the learning (not comfort) of the participants, facilitators will not likely compromise the goals of their professional learning endeavors. Unfortunately, my actions in this study serve as an example of the difficult tensions inherent in these types of situations.

Teacher Identities and Engagement in Professional Learning

Research question #2 asked:

1. How are the ELL-oriented instructional approaches studied during professional development actually enacted in these teachers' practice?

In response to this point of inquiry, my analysis of data suggests that the approaches studied during professional learning sessions did not appear to be enacted in the participants' practice. This was likely due to the fact that my three observations conducted in each participant's classroom did not furnish me with enough data to validly determine the extent to which the professional learning reflected in session dialogue actually led to enactment of the instructional approaches studied. More frequent observations might have produced sufficient data for this purpose. Additionally, the study design consisted of eight professional learning sessions within a thirteen week period, and enactment of professional learning objectives has principally been documented in undertakings that took place over longer periods of time (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, & Birman, 2002; Little, 2003). However, it must be acknowledged that it is also possible that the approaches, new techniques or attitudinal changes we discussed in our professional development sessions may never be observed in the participants' practice. Further study would be necessary to learn if there were long-term impacts or no impact to practice from the professional development sessions. However, my findings regarding participants' identities and their impact upon engagement in this endeavor as a whole definitively address research question #3:

2. How do the opportunities or constraints present within a suburban middle school structure impact the content area literacy instruction they provide for the ELLs in their classrooms?

My findings clearly illustrate how Harding's institutional structures were, in fact, central mediators of the teachers' respective identities, and these findings also demonstrate how

the teachers' identities determined their receptiveness to the ELL-oriented topics and practices we studied. Therefore these findings do suggest a notable connection between research questions #2 and #3; features within Harding's school structure did influence the participants' *willingness* to enact the approaches and strategies we discussed during our sessions. Gee's identity model plays a foundational role in our understanding of the connection between Harding's institutional structures and participants' willingness to implement the ELL-focused approaches in their classrooms.

Findings related to my post-study analysis of the interviews, observations and professional learning sessions extend our understanding of Gee's identity model and suggest ways that ELL-oriented professional learning and instructional practice can be optimized across a suburban middle school context. Gee (2001) designates nature, institutions, discourse and affinity group membership as the four validating sources of identities that enable an individual to be recognized as a certain kind of person. He also holds that individuals have multiple identities according to this construct because people function in different contexts in life and are, therefore, recognized in different manners depending upon whether they are at home, at work, etc. While Gee provides these four categories, he does not rank or level them in their pervasiveness or overall impact in enabling an individual's recognition as a certain kind of person. This inquiry revealed that in Harding Middle School, institution-based factors were most pervasive in impacting a teacher's identity. These factors, therefore, mediated how she engaged in the shared work of professional learning and in the classroom-based practice of enacting ELL-focused scaffolding measures. Specifically, the institution-based features associated with Harding's staffing procedures, academic team design and teacher leader design were

most impactful. Outside of these, discourse also proved to be a unique, yet significant source of identity.

The Institution's Staffing Procedures

Harding Middle School's principal, in consultation with district supervisors, decided which teachers would work with Harding's ELL population. During one of our pre-study discussions (field notes 8/17/2009), the principal shared with me that he considered Eris to be a particularly appropriate teacher for ELLs because of her own Greek – English bilingual background. It is reasonable to assume that a teacher who had the experience of learning English in school as a second language would be able to empathize with Harding's ELLs and perhaps even seek to develop their teacher-student rapport into a mentoring relationship based on this common experience. Yet, one finding from this inquiry was the fact that Eris's experiences learning English in school did not lead her to reach out to her ELL students in this manner. Eris's experience as an ELL was one in which teachers did not provide ELLs with any instructional scaffolding, and in her view, this was not problematic. She found pairing Greek newcomers with Greek – English bilingual students to be a fully adequate means of addressing ELL learning needs when she was a student, and this position was consistent with the lack of consideration she gave to students such as Pilar, whose attempts to participate in science discussions required significantly more effort that her native English speaking students.

There are several factors that might explain the difference between the principal's logical assumption and the reality of Eris's stance. For example, if Eris's newcomer contemporaries arrived in the US with a comparable level of education in Greek schools, then they would already have knowledge of foundational academic concepts and perhaps

even academic norms. This would greatly facilitate their academic English learning, and they would require less scaffolding than would ELLs whose prior schooling was interrupted or significantly unlike that provided in the US. Additionally, Eris and her classmates may have possessed family or community resources to support their education. For instance, if one parent or other relative were available on a regular basis to be a supportive presence during homework completion and to otherwise provide moral support, this would enable him or her to overcome the particular challenges of second language learning more readily than if a student lacked this intensive support.

Generally, the difference between Eris's views about appropriate ELL instructional support and those introduced in our sessions serve as an important reminder that the experiences of ELLs can vary dramatically. Administrators responsible for making staffing decisions should consider that teachers' empathy and sense of pedagogical inquiry offer better indicators of their appropriateness for working with ELLs than do their personal backgrounds alone.

The Institution's Academic Team Design

Of all institutional structures, Harding's academic team design was most prevalent, and Georgia, Eris and, in part, Nancy each assumed identities based largely upon the norms associated with this framework. Georgia and Eris held positions as team teachers, and they were recognized by others as holding posts that were central to Harding's organizational framework and to its overarching mission: education of this suburban middle class community's pre-adolescents. Team web pages, team parent-teacher conferences and daily team planning periods were three of the features in place that enabled members of the Harding community to recognize Georgia and Eris as

holding positions that were integral to the school's central purpose. In turn, Georgia and Eris engaged in practices that reflected the school's suburban middle class emphasis on individual merit and competition. They recommended students for placement in ability tracked classes; they stressed grades and individual performance on assignments; and they distributed honor roll bumper stickers at team celebrations.

Generally, the Harding school community's practices and beliefs inherently mitigated against team teachers' receptiveness ELL-focused instructional scaffolding. From a parent objecting to her child being grouped with a "retard" ELL student, to the existence of team-based learning specialists and off-team remedial classes to address subpar learning needs, team teachers received many messages that it was not within the scope of their positions to consider how special instructional needs might be accommodated. Team class sizes also mitigated against ELL-oriented instructional scaffolding. Team teachers routinely had classes of over 28 students which, as Eris demonstrated, could cause them to guard their non-teaching periods for completing lesson preparation and paper grading. As exemplified by Georgia's humiliation of her student, Carlos, prevailing suburban norms and team teacher busyness can obscure the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of ELLs. Overall, Harding's suburban middle class setting brought with it an orientation toward individual merit that was firmly reflected in team practices, team teaching roles and responsibilities and even parent interactions. These patterns and practices disadvantaged ELLs because they contributed to a school context that limited the opportunities for ELLs to collaborate with native English speakers. Without such interactions, ELLs could not effectively learn, "not only the 'language' but the behaviors, attitudes, tools, and ways of engaging that learners will

need to recognizably display the identity of a successful student" (Hawkins, 2004, p. 18). In this regard, the team structure was not supportive of our professional learning endeavor. Nor did it encourage teachers to enact the instructional approaches we studied.

The team design also detracted from the professional learning aims of this study because Harding's ESL teacher, Nancy, had no role within the team structure. She attended science and social studies classes that Eris and Georgia led; however, none of the team-based features legitimized her role in those classes. She did not take part in team planning meetings or team parent-teacher conferences. Her name appeared nowhere on team web pages or home-school communications. Additionally, her primary interest was in teaching students who, in many cases, were not culturally and/or linguistically prepared to compete for honor roll status or to pursue placement in honors level classes. As such, her instructional focus diverged from that of team teachers, and this served to isolate her position. Therefore, the institution-based structures that reified Georgia and Eris in their positions played a notable role in delegitimizing Nancy in hers. In this delegitimized position, Nancy did not make bids to be recognized as a language specialist. She did not venture to make suggestions for how the instructional approaches we studied might be enacted to accommodate language learners, and she did not seek to assume a more active role in either class. Rather, she appeared to accept her marginalized position, a position that Harding's teacher leader structure also contributed to.

The Institution's Teacher Leader Structure

Harding's teacher leader structure was another institution-based construction that impacted the professional learning that came out of this study. Devon and Jean held the

respective positions of lead reading and writing teachers at Harding, and this afforded them recognition as teachers of notable skill and as leaders whose interest lay in fostering the professional learning of other staff members. With institutionally endowed authority, these teacher leaders had access to and used confidential standardized test data to prepare reports for school and district administrators. Jean and Devon managed school novel supplies and procurement activities. Additionally, they planned monthly language arts department meetings that commonly included a professional learning component. They also taught for only three periods per day so that they could consult with teachers during the remaining time. Known for their pedagogical skill, the school administration decided to assign Devon and Jean the lowest scoring language arts students, which included all of Harding's ELLs. In this manner, these institutionally authorized practices enabled members of the Harding community to recognize Devon and Jean as teacher leaders. Accordingly, being recognized as educators of considerable skill and interest in professional development enabled them to readily engage in the inquiry that was part of our professional learning experience. Regardless of our topic of discussion, Jean and Devon engaged in debate, posed questions and raised possibilities that extended the group's dialogue and broadened all participants' knowledge of language and literacy building measures for ELLs. Their dialogue included rich examples of how they enacted the strategies we studied, and I also observed both teachers' enactment of comprehension scaffolding tools and culturally responsive practices. In sessions, they demonstrated reflective inquiry by interrogating their own practices, and occasionally they challenged the assumptions of other participants with their explicitly described approaches for promoting ELL interaction with native English speaking students. Therefore, Jean and

Devon's professional practices provided others with ideal examples of teacher inquiry and reflective implementation of ELL-focused instructional scaffolds. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). As an institution, Harding Middle School offered significant sources of validation that allowed Jean and Devon to then take part in this professional leaning experience in a manner that increased the professional knowledge of all participants. Yet, even as these institutionally-rooted sources upheld Jean and Devon, they also negatively impacted Nancy.

As an institutionally-based feature, the teacher leader position detracted from the professional learning aims of this study to the extent that it further marginalized Nancy and constrained her participation in our sessions. When the Harding administration chose to place Devon and Jean in charge of ELL literacy instruction for three periods per day, Nancy lost the control she used to have over their language and literacy instruction. She previously determined how many periods of language class each child would receive. She selected materials, and she controlled the scope and sequence of their instruction. The decision to place ELLs in Read 180 under Devon's and Jean's instruction was prompted by the school's interest in meeting No Child Left Behind benchmarks (US Department of Education, 2006); however, a consequence of this institutionally-rooted decision was that it amounted to a vote of no confidence in Nancy's instructional ability. Disenfranchised in this manner, Nancy's participation in our professional learning sessions reflected a lack of agency as an ESL teacher, and she instead appeared to yield to Harding's prevailing deficit-oriented view of ELLs. She did not constructively engage with the instructional approaches we discussed, and she did not offer or respond to constructive suggestions for supporting struggling ELLs such as Gianna or Yuri.

Harding's academic team design and its teacher leader structure offered well-defined institutional practices and frameworks that led five participants to assume the roles that they did during our study. As team teachers, Georgia and Eris were solidly ratified in their positions, and as a result, they steadfastly upheld the suburban middle class norms that favored individual merit and discouraged collaborative, ELL – non-ELL groupings. Numerous institutionally-based measures legitimized Devon and Jean in their positions as teacher leaders, and they actively took part in the inquiry and reflection in a manner that one would expect from instructional leaders. While both of these structures detracted from Nancy's ability to validly enact the role of an effective language specialist, Harding presented her with no other institutionally endowed norm or structure to permit her to move from the fringe of the school's operating frameworks and into a more viable role as an ESL teacher. Therefore, looking across the different roles that these teachers played within the study and within Harding Middle School overall, it becomes clear that Harding's institutional features were pervasive mediators of ELL-focused professional learning and of the participants' enactment of EL-focused strategies in their classrooms. Yet, even as this inquiry indicates the pervasive force of Harding's institutionally-rooted practices and norms, it also points to the question of how these very structures can be better utilized in support of ELL-oriented professional learning. Indeed, there are several possible ways that institutional features at Harding Middle School and within the broader educational community can be better harnessed in order to enhance professional learning for teachers of ELLs.

Institution-based Implications for Practice

Most immediately, administrators should utilize features of the middle school academic team design to support professional learning, to meet the needs of the diverse learners, and to enable ESL teachers who are positioned as Nancy was to be validated in their roles. First, ELL-focused professional learning and collaboration could occur if ESL teachers participate in team planning meetings, as team members. For example in the last session of this study, Georgia made the suggestion that Nancy be released from her office duty period intermittently to be permitted to attend their team planning meetings. In fact, this approach could readily be applied for both seventh and eighth grade team planning times because Nancy maintained a flexible schedule during all four of the school lunch periods in order for her to offer lunchtime tutorials. Adding these to her duty period would provide a total of five out of the school's eight class periods in which she could meet with her students' assigned seventh and eighth grade team teachers. While these logistics apply specifically to Harding's school schedule, the concept readily applies to any school that seeks to accomplish this common planning opportunity. It requires a willingness to look at existing schedule parameters with flexibility and to engage in the trial and error experimentation that, when sustained, does yield tenable solutions.

Once ESL teachers become part of a team, school media resources can be utilized to showcase and further integrate ESL teachers into the academic team structure. ESL teachers' names can be included on team rosters, forms, web pages and other home -- school communications. ESL teachers can also take part in team special events such as field trips and celebrations. With these team-related measures in place, staff, parents and students would come to recognize ESL teachers as bona fide members of these academic

units, and their discourses would, in turn, further legitimize ESL teachers' positioning as team language specialists. Such validation would have positive consequences for professional learning around ELL language and literacy.

As a component of team planning, teachers bring up and discuss students of interest, brainstorm possible interventions for struggling students and generally keep one another updated on their teaching foci. ESL teachers' participation in this exercise on a regular basis would increase opportunities for team teachers to actively think about and discuss individual ELL's progress. They would benefit from ESL teachers' knowledge and perspectives, and as they shared plans for upcoming projects, tests and other assignments, they could learn specific means of modifying work as needed to support ELLs' success, while the ESL teachers would also be better informed about the types of support they should be offering the ELLs both inside and outside the content area classrooms. Importantly, with institutionally ratified integration into these teams, ESL teachers would be better poised to provide such input and to more proactively advocate for their ELL students. Overall, integrating ESL teachers into academic team structures provides a viable and sustainable approach to expanded ELL-oriented professional learning because it would occur within a framework that is already common and integral to many middle schools.

In addition to the professional learning that could come from ESL teachers' regular participation in team planning meetings, teachers could further develop their awareness of culturally responsive pedagogy through the school's expansion of professional learning opportunities. In a setting outside of their 40-minute planning periods, teachers across teams could come together in a sustained manner to examine the

concept of sociocultural consciousness in a broad sense and then progress to explore the specific ways in which the suburban norms that guide their work can inhibit ELL learning. In this study, Georgia's increased awareness of culturally responsive teaching approaches and her interest in continuing to dialogue with Nancy about meeting ELL needs demonstrates the fact that such awareness develops over time and through participation in well-crafted professional learning experiences. However, when considering suburban team teachers' professional learning about this topic, a realistic question that arises is how can an occasional opportunity to take part in a professional learning experience possibly counter the subtle and blatant messages that tell team teachers that their job is to focus on rank-and-file student needs? Yet, through Georgia's experience I learned that small scale consciousness-raising about culturally responsive pedagogy is a realistic goal that can be accomplished through the involvement of only a small number of individuals. Additionally when Jean shared her plans to replicate our inquiry-based format to engage team teachers in the study of struggling adolescent readers, I learned that small scale, inquiry-based efforts such as this can bear fruit. Therefore, when looking to promote long-term professional learning around second language acquisition in suburban settings, it is important that teacher educators (including administrators and teacher colleagues) not be put off by the potency of suburban norms or by the rank-and-file student orientation of team teachers. Small scale efforts may appear to be overpowered by the systemic norms that they seek to counteract, yet this study affirms the fact that such small, inquiry-based scale professional learning experiences do yield sustainable, positive results.

Expanding the teacher leader structure also offers possibilities for promoting ELL-oriented professional learning in districts like Harding. While they might be referred to as academic coaches, content specialists or lead teachers, most schools do have a teacher leader structure , and enabling more teachers to be recognized as teacher leaders in their schools would, in turn, help cultivate a culture of professional learning. Using Harding as an example, Devon and Jean spoke on different occasions about how their efforts to be responsive to teachers by providing materials and resources in a prompt fashion was beginning to cultivate teachers' interest in professional leaning communities. As noted above, they also expressed an interest in expanding professional learning community options at Harding so that teachers could pursue sustained, in-depth learning about topics such as struggling adolescent readers. Permitting teachers, such as Deena, without official teacher leader positions but with demonstrated interest in instructional leadership, to facilitate such groups would offer an ideal way to perpetuate openness to inquiry-based professional learning in a broad sense. Then, as this norm took root, teachers would be more receptive to reflecting on ELL-oriented topics, even those ELL-oriented topics that seemed to counter suburban norms around individual merit and competition, or topics that were not narrowly limited to their own content area.

The Power of Discourse

However strong Harding's institutional norms were in mediating the diverse ways in which the participants engaged in professional learning, this study revealed that they were not equally impactful on all participants. Juxtaposing the engagement of Nancy and Deena highlights this variability and raises significant questions regarding how discourse,

as an alternative source of validation, can be effectively activated to promote ELL-oriented professional learning.

Deena's position of remedial language arts teacher and Nancy's position of ESL teacher were alike in that neither carried any institutionally endowed authority. Similarly, these positions were not viewed as high status positions at Harding. In science, Eris did not include Nancy in planning or delivery of instruction. In social studies, Georgia did discuss instruction with Nancy; however this consisted primarily of Georgia dictating what the two of them would do. Additionally, in all of my observations of and interactions with Nancy during this study, I never observed her suggest that Eris or Georgia modify assignments or materials in any way for their ELLs. She never exercised a greater level of agency or made any sort of bid to improve the status of her job beyond its current marginal position. Similarly, Nancy's position was looked down upon because her students were struggling learners who did not bear the typical, achievement-oriented markings of the suburban middle class. Additionally, Nancy taught one more class than did team teachers, and this caused teachers at Harding to view her job as undesirable. However, despite the fact that both of these positions were held in poor esteem at Harding, Deena's and Nancy's engagement in professional learning and enactment of ELL-oriented instructional scaffolds could not have been more different.

Nancy reacted to her marginalized position in the school by assuming a deficit oriented view of ELLs. Her participation in the study, therefore, included statements about their limitations and the instructional challenges that these limitations presented. Conversely, Deena took purposeful steps to elevate her status by self-promoting her teaching skill and by actively encouraging the learning of others. By doing this she

successfully promoted the affirming discourse of other teachers and of administrators, and in this manner, she intentionally crafted for herself the identity of a teacher leader. Accordingly, her engagement revealed a level of pedagogical inquiry that one would expect from an instructional leader. Whatever our topic of conversation, Deena enthusiastically sought to make connections, suggested teaching approaches, and recommended professional learning options for herself or other Harding staff.

Contrasting Nancy's and Deena's participation in our professional learning experience then raises the question of what could lead two teachers who were similarly positioned to assume such different stances with regard to ELL-focused professional learning? Moreover, Deena's discursive practices provided a greater benefit to Harding's ELL students, and this raises the question of what professional learning measures (if any) could encourage Nancy to adopt Deena's tack of using discursive practices more constructively in validating herself professionally and in advocating for ELLs?

These are significant questions because with suburban demographics just beginning to shift, it is still very common for suburban schools to employ only one ESL teacher, and so isolation and a lack of agency within a greater middle class suburban school context are conditions that are not unique to Nancy's experience. Yet, as ELLs continue to move into suburban areas, suburban norms of individual merit and competition will increasingly conflict with basic tenets of second language acquisition, such as fostering ELL- non-ELL interaction. Additionally, the emphasis on ELL content area proficiency will likely increase since New Jersey is a member of the WIDA Consortium, a multistate association that promotes ELL proficiency standards and assessments across content areas (WIDA Consortium, 2007). WIDA's proficiency

standards are explicitly named “The Language of Science”, “The Language of Social Science”, and “The Language of Mathematics,” and their accompanying assessment, *ACCESS for ELLs*, measures content area English proficiencies. To effectively prepare a growing number of ELLs to demonstrate content area learning, it will be increasingly important that ESL teachers possess a sense of legitimacy in their positions and gain recognition as instructors of English and also the language of the content areas because this will enable them to better advocate for cogent ELL instructional approaches in these classes. University-based teacher education programs can play a significant role in preparing ESL teachers for success in these efforts.

Enlisting the Support of Universities

Findings relative to Harding’s institution-based structures and characteristics suggest ways that teacher education programs can better equip ESL teacher candidates to effectively function within suburban school settings such as Harding, where the ESL teachers attend content area classes with their students. First, since ESL teachers cannot realistically be expected to master all of the subjects in which they will support their students, it is essential that they learn specifically *how* to quickly and efficiently learn enough about a subject’s overarching concepts to be able to identify its most salient information and its linguistic forms and functions. They must then know how to strategically select the most appropriate scaffolding measures to use with their students. Additionally, ESL teacher candidates require opportunities to gain proficiency managing the typical classroom practices and interactions that take place in general education settings. Importantly, ESL teacher candidates need to enter the field with an understanding that this type of hands-on involvement in a range of content areas and with

large group classes is a critical aspect of their jobs. These opportunities will ultimately enable ESL teachers to act with greater proficiency and confidence when serving as inclusion teachers. This, it turn, will enable their colleagues to recognize and validate them as skilled professionals within the typical general education setting. An added advantage to this type of teacher preparation is that it will ultimately strengthen ESL teachers' voices when supporting culturally responsive practices or when advocating for ELLs through other means.

Second, teacher education programs can equip ESL teacher candidates with rich experiences that cultivate their teacher leadership capacity. In suburban secondary schools, they will need to know how to lead a varied range of content specialists toward understanding of culturally responsive pedagogical beliefs and approaches that may differ markedly from prevailing institutional norms. Exposure to and practice with the types of discourses that enable teachers to craft for themselves identities of professional influence and leadership among suburban school staff members will enable more ESL teacher candidates to enter the field ready to advocate for ELLs and to inspire and scaffold their colleagues in their professional learning about second language acquisition, and particularly culturally responsive pedagogy.

Third, ESL teachers must enter the profession as teachers of reading and writing. Literacy is a critical aspect of all content area learning, and ESL teachers must possess theoretical and practical proficiency in literacy instruction. *No Child Left Behind's* (US Department of Education, 2006) disaggregated student performance stipulations compel districts with relatively small numbers of ELL students to specifically attend to their instruction in specific language arts and mathematics competencies. Whether ELLs are

tested in English or in their first language, meeting *No Child Left Behind* provisions ultimately requires that ELLs receive instruction in areas such as expository writing, synthesizing concepts across texts and evaluating data sources. As illustrated in Harding, concern over accountability measures such as these led administrators to adopt the Read 180 program. Nancy lost 90 minutes of instructional time with her ELLs as a result, and this delegitimizing measure contributed to her inadequate advocacy for ELL interests. Were she trained to address the literacy learning needs of adolescent ELLs, she might have played a more active role in their literacy instruction. This also would have better enabled her colleagues to recognize Nancy as a capable professional, which would have enhanced her ability to promote ELL-oriented professional learning.

WIDA standards, *No Child Left Behind* provisions and increased knowledge about the value of participation in language learning means that ESL teachers' most valuable instructional time will be in content class settings alongside content area teachers. Consequently universities must critically evaluate their ESL teacher certification programs to ensure that their graduates are able to successfully meet the challenges they will encounter in suburban school settings.

Discourse-based Implications for Practice

While there are specific ways that university-based teacher education programs can equip ESL teacher candidates with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively work within suburban institutions to promote ELL-friendly instruction, individuals such as Deena appear to possess personal and professional qualities that enable them to work outside of existing institutional norms to achieve this end. I anecdotally noted some of Deena's grounding beliefs that appeared to support her success in soliciting the

legitimizing discourses of colleagues. These included her belief in maintaining high expectations for all students, her commitment to continually improving her practice, and her preference for working collaboratively in planning, teaching an and professional learning. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to thoroughly explore the underlying beliefs that enabled Deena to successful enlist others' validating discourses in order to fashion herself as a teacher leader. Therefore, I cannot definitively suggest characteristics that Nancy or other ESL teachers in her position could seek to cultivate in order to develop such ability. However, even as the findings surrounding Deena's discourse-based identity do not yield specific implications for practice, they do point to limitations of this study, and they do suggest directions for future research.

Limitations and Future Research

In scholarly research, study design limitations frequently signal needs for additional research, and in this inquiry, the length and scope of the professional learning experience provide such signals. The professional learning experience that was central to this investigation was but thirteen weeks in duration. The group of participants were teachers in a middle class suburban school district, and they represented only three content areas. Therefore, due to its limited scope, findings from this study cannot be validly generalized to different populations or to different settings. However, inquiries that extend the length of the ELL-focused professional learning experience would lead to a more nuanced understanding of how differently positioned secondary school teachers sustain their engagement in inquiry-based professional learning around ELL language and literacy building. Likewise, studies that expand or differentiate the professional learning group to include math teachers and related arts teachers would further broaden

the knowledge base around ELL-focused professional learning in suburban secondary schools.

In addition to studying teacher interactions within a professional learning group, this line of research should be expanded to focus on how such measures influence ELLs themselves. The effects of the comprehension and vocabulary scaffolding approaches introduced during this study could be measured using an experimental design. In such as study, the researcher might deliver instruction in participants' classrooms in order to ensure fidelity of treatment, and this would also enhance professional learning by providing participants with lesson modeling to further support their own implementation of these approaches. The influences of measures to increase ELL – non-ELL student interactions could also be investigated in an ethnographic study that captures the experiences of teachers, students, parents and administrators over an extended time frame. Methodologically, such a study would best be carried out apart from any inquiry into professional learning since combining these foci would untenably broaden the scope of the investigation. Yet, further inquiry into how ELL-oriented professional learning impacts students will validate and inform efforts to expand professional development initiatives and enrich the educational opportunities provided to ELLs.

In addition to these avenues of inquiry, potentially transformative information could be gained from studies that explore how, absent institutional structures to validate them in their roles, suburban ESL teachers can learn to intentionally solicit the discourses of others in their school communities in order to achieve this validation. Such an inquiry could help identify pre- or in-service measures that teacher educators could take to prepare ESL teachers who, like the students they teach, face marginalization in suburban

communities where patterns of competition and individual merit hinder efforts to provide ELLs with the intellectually rigorous, interactive learning experiences that they need to master language, content and norms germane to each subject they study.

Significance of the Study

In designing and carrying out this study, I offer insight into a dilemma that I both experienced as a teacher and saw broadly highlighted in published studies and practitioner-focused articles related to adolescent ELLs. By exploring inquiry-based teacher learning that focused on secondary ELL students in a suburban setting, I specifically address two notable voids in the current research base around this topic: ELL-focused professional learning at the secondary level and ELL-focused professional learning in a suburban setting (August & Calderon, 2006). By focusing on the interactions within an inquiry-based teacher learning group, this study also highlights the challenges, opportunities and complexities that arise from this form of interaction. In so doing, it informs continued efforts to promote inquiry-based professional learning communities in school settings.

Conclusion

In addition to contributing to this field's knowledge base, I first conceived of *ELL-focused Content Area Professional Learning in a Community of Practice: Capturing Perspectives and Meeting Needs* as a means of addressing a growing need that I had observed as a middle school teacher. Teachers without experience working with linguistically and culturally diverse students wanted and needed strategies and approaches to effectively teach these students, and I was anxious to start *meeting needs* in this regard.

Perhaps naively, I anticipated that teachers' needs would uniformly translate into inquiry, sharing, challenging and all of the powerful knowledge-building activities that lead to professional growth and enhanced practice. What I discovered, though, was the sheer magnitude of school context in determining the level of receptiveness and effort put into ELL professional learning. As a suburban middle school, Harding team teachers were strongly oriented toward the aggregate needs of their middle class, adolescent students. I discovered that they did not consider accommodating the needs of ELL students to be among their responsibilities, and I struggled with the fact that they initially found little relevancy in the study of a topic that is so vital to the welfare of ELL students, many of whom do not originate from middle class, suburban circumstances. Additionally, I needed to recognize that the principal's invitation to volunteer for this study may have been the primary factor in these teachers' decision to participate.

Yet, in contrast to these daunting revelations, I also discovered the power that committed teachers can wield in support of ELL-targeted teaching and learning. I learned that, apart from the potent influence of suburban school norms, structures and official job positions, teachers can enlist their own attitudes, words and actions to negotiate their own identities as teachers. When studying ELL-focused instructional scaffolds, teachers' agency offered a powerful meditative impact upon professional learning, and I saw how a professional stance that incorporates sociocultural consciousness can carry over to influence the professional learning of others. Based on these lessons, *meeting needs* then came to include highlighting the institutionally embedded beliefs and behaviors that can push ELL education to the margins of suburban school interests. *Meeting needs* came to include articulating ways that these same

patterns can be enlisted in support of ELL professional learning. Lastly, *meeting needs* came to include describing how committed teachers can transcend all suburban frameworks, engage in professional learning and offer transformative instruction to children who are still mastering English.

Reflecting back over the course of this investigation, I understand that *meeting needs* included addressing a range of complexities that I did not anticipate at the outset of this study. However, as I reflect forward, I realize that my continued advocacy for ELL-focused professional learning must include targeted support for the teachers who seek to transcend suburban norms in order to positively impact the life options of English learners. In this regard, this study offers hope for all professional learning efforts that are geared toward ELLs because while teacher leaders may change and while institutional structures may not, there will always be committed teachers who are advocates for ELLS, and as long as these teachers exist, ELL-focused professional learning will continue. My goal will be to foster more and more teachers like this.

References

Adiche, C. (2009, July). *Chimamanda Adichie: The danger of a single story*. Paper presented at TED Global 2009. Retrieved December 1, 2009, from http://www.ted.com/talks/chimimanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/

Asbury, E. (2006). *Real reading! Real writing! Informational text in the elementary classroom*. Presented at the 38th Annual Conference on Reading and Writing, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education, Somerset, NJ.

Au, K. (2000). A multicultural perspective on policies for improving literacy achievement: Equity and excellence. In M. L. Kamil, P. B. Mosenthal, P. D. Pearson, & R. Barr (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research, Vol. 3* (pp.835-852). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

August, D., & Calderon, M. (2006). Teacher beliefs and professional development. In D. August & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth.* (pp. 555-564). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

August, D., & McCardle, P. (2008, May). Working with English learning students: What additional research is needed. In Peggy McCardle (Chair), English language learners. Future research directions. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the International Reading Association, Atlanta, GA.

August, D. & Shanahan, T. (2007). *Developing Literacy in Second Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Beck, I., McKeown, M., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction.* New York: Guilford Press.

Blythe, T., Allen, D., & Powell, B. S. (1999). *Looking together at student work*. NY: Teachers College Press.

Calderon, M. (2007). *Teaching reading to English language learners, grades 6 – 12.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Carlo, M., August, D., McLaughlin, B., Snow, C., Dressler, C., Lippman, D., Lively, T. & White, C. (2004). Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs of English language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms. *Reading Research Quarterly, 39(2), 118-215.*

Chamot, A. & O'Malley, J. (1986). *A cognitive academic language learning approach: An ESL content-based curriculum*. Wheaton, MD: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.

Clark, C. & Peterson, P. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M. C. Whittrock (Ed.) *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd. ed., pp. 255 – 296). New York: MacMillian.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Fries, K. (2008). Research on teacher education. Changing times, changing paradigms. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D.J. McIntyre, & K.E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts, 3rd Edition* (pp. 606-636). New York: Routledge.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of research in education*, 24, 249-305.

Cochran-Smith, M. & Lytle, S. (1993). *Inside outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data complementary research strategies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Conchas, G. (2001). Structuring failure and success: Understanding the variability on Latino school engagement. *Harvard Educational Review*, 71(3), 475-504.

Curran, M. E. (2008). Culturally responsive teaching for English language learners. In S. B. Wepner, D. S. Strickland & J. T. Feeley (Eds.), *The Administration and Supervision of Reading Programs, 3rd Edition* (pp. 186-197). New York: Teacher College Press.

Desimone, L., Porter, A., Garet, M., Yoon, K., & Birman, B. (2002). Effects of professional development on teachers' instruction: Results from a three-year longitudinal study. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24(2), 81-112.

Donato, R (2000). Sociocultural contributions to understanding the foreign and second language classroom. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.) *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 27-50). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Freeman, Y., Freeman, D., & Mercuri, S. (2003). Helping middle and high school and English language learners achieve academic success. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice*, 1(1), 110 – 122.

Garcia, G. E. (1999). Bilingual children's reading: An overview of recent research. *Center of Applied Linguistics News Bulletin* [On-line], Available: www.cal.org/recources/archive/news/199909/main.html

Garet, M., Porter, A., Desimone, L., Birman, B., & Yoon, K. (2001). What makes professional development effective? Analysis of a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(4), 915-945.

Gavelek, J. R. & Raphael, T. E. (1996). Changing talk about text: New roles for teachers and students. *Language Arts, 73*, 182-191.

Gee, J. P. (2001). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. In W. Secada (Ed.), *Review of research in education, 25*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Gibbons, P. (2003). Mediated language learning: Teacher interaction with ESL students in a content-based classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 37*, 247-273.

Goldenberg, C., Rueda, R., & August, D. (2006). Sociocultural Influences. In D. August & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth.* (pp. 269 - 318). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Haddix, M. (1996). *Don't you dare read this, Ms. Dunphrey*. NY: Simon & Schuster.

Haneda, M. (2008). Contexts for learning: English language learners in US middle school. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism,11*(1), 57–74.

Hawkins, M. R. (2004). Researching English language and literacy development in schools. *Educational Researchers, 33(3), 13-25.*

Heath, S. B. (1982). What no bedtime story means: Narrative skills at home and school. *Language and Society*, 11, 49-76.

Heller, P. and Greenleaf, C. (2007). *Literacy instruction in the content areas: Getting to*

the core of middle and high school improvement. (Carnegie Corporation of New York) New York: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Hodges, D. (1998). Participation as disidentification with/in a community of practice. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 5, 272 – 290.

Hoyt, L. (1999). *Revisit, reflect, retell*. NH: Heinemann.

Jimenez, R. (2001). It's a difference that changes us: An alternative view of the language and learning needs of Latino students. *The Reading Teacher*, 54(8), 736-42.

Hillsborough Township (n.d.). *Our Towns*. Retrieved June 20, 2009, from http:/www.hillsborough-nj.org.

Johnson, M. (2004). *A philosophy of second language acquisition.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kagan, S. (1994). *Kagan cooperative learning*. CA: Kagan Publishing.

Knapp, M.S., Copeland, M.A., Ford, B., Markhott, A., McLaughlin, M., Milliken, M., & Talbert, J. (2003). *Leading for Learning Sourcebook: Concepts and Examples* (Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy). Seattle, WA: Dewitt-Reader's Digest Funds.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition.* Oxford, UK: Pergamon.

Ladson-Billings, G (1994). *The dreamkeepers: Successful teachers of African American Children.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Laszloffy, T. A. & Hardy, K. V. (2000). Uncommon strategies for a common problem: Addressing racism in family therapy. *Family Process, 39*(1), 35 – 50.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Lee, O. & Buxton, C. (2009). *Integration of science and English proficiency for English language learners*. Manuscript submitted for publication.

Lesaux, N., Koda, K., Siegel, L. & Shanahan, T. (2006). *Development of Literacy*. In D. August & T. Shanahan (Eds.), *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth.* (pp.75-122). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Levine, T., & Marcus, A. (2007). Closing the achievement gap through teacher collaboration: Facilitating multiple trajectories of teacher learning. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, 19(1), 116-138.

Little, J. W. (2003). Inside teacher community: Representations of classroom practice. *Teachers College Record, 105*(6), 913-945.

Linehan, C. & McCarthy, J. (2001). Reviewing "Community of Practice" metaphor: An analysis of control relations in a primary school classroom. *Mind, Culture and Activity*, 8(2), 129 – 147.

Lucas, T. & Grinberg, J. (2008). Responding to the linguistic reality of mainstream classrooms: Preparing all teachers to teach English language learners. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D.J. McIntyre, & K.E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts, 3rd Edition* (pp. 606-636). New York: Routledge.

McDonald, J., Mohr, N., Dichter, A., & McDonald, E. C. (2007). *The power of protocols: An educator's guide to better practice, 2nd ed.* NY: Teachers College Press.

McGriff, M. (2008). Teacher beliefs and English language learner achievement. Unpublished manuscript, Rutgers University.

Merriam, S.B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Moll, L. (2001). Through the mediation of others: Vygotskian research on teaching. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching,* 4th ed. (pp. 111-129). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Assoc.

Moll, L. (1992). Bilingual classroom studies and community analysis: Some recent trends. *Educational Researcher*, 21(2), 20-24.

Moll, L. & Gonzalez, N. (1994). Lessons from research with language minority children. *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 26(4), 439-456.

Moje, E. B., Ciechanowski, K. M., Kramer, K., Ellis, L., Carrillo, R., & Collazo, T. (2004). Working toward third space in content area literacy: An examination of everyday funds of Knowledge and Discourse. *Reading Research Quarterly* 39 (1) pp. 38 – 70.

Nagy, W., Garcia, G., Durgunolu, A., & Hacin-Bhatt, B. (1993). Spanish-English students' use of cognates in English reading. *Journal of Reading Behavior*. 25(3), 241-259.

National Reading Panel (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel*. (NIH Pub. No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: National Institute of Health and Human Development.

The New Jersey Municipal Data Book. (2008). Woodside, CA: Information Publications, Inc.

New Jersey School Report Card for 2006. (2006). Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Department of Education. Available: http://education.state.nj.us/rc/rc06/

New Jersey School Report Card for 2008. (2008). Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Department of Education. Available: http://education.state.nj.us/rc/rc08/

Nieto, S. & Bode, P. (2008). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education*, 5th ed. New York: Pearson.

Orellana, M., Reynolds, J., Dorner, L., & Meza, M. (2003). In other words: Translating or "para-phrasing" as a family literacy practice in immigrant households. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 38(1), 12-34.

Pavlenko, A. & Lantolf, J. P. (2000). *Second language learning as a participation and the (re)construction of selves.* In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), Sociocultural theory and second language learning (pp. 155 – 179). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pinnell, G. S. & Rodgers, E. M. (2004). Reflective inquiry as a tool for professional development. In D. S. Strickland & M. L. Kamil (Eds.), *Improving Reading through Professional Development* (pp. 169-193). Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.

Northern Nevada Writing Project and Writing Fix (2008). Poem in Two Voices. In *Going deep with comparison & contrast thinking guide.* Retrieved September, 2009, from http://nnwp.org.

Raphael, T. E., Florio-Ruane, S., Kehus, M., George, M., Hasty, N., & Highfield, K. (2001). Thinking for ourselves: Literacy learning in a diverse teacher inquiry network. *The Reading Teacher*, 54(6), 596-607.

Recorvits, H. (2003), *My name is Yoon*. NY: Farrar Straus Groux.

Reyes, I. & Moll, L. (2008). Bilingual and biliterate practices at home and school. In Bernard Spolsky & Francis M. Hult (Eds.), *Handbook of educational research (pp. 147-160).* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Saunders, W. M., & Goldenberg, C. (1996). Four primary teachers work to define constructivism and teacher-directed learning: Implications for teacher assessment. *Elementary School* Journal, 97(2), 139-161.

Short, D., & Fitzsimmons, S. (2007). *Double the work: Challenges and solutions to acquiring language and academic literacy for adolescent English language learners*. (Carnegie Corporation of New York) New York: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Shulman, L. S. (1986). Paradigms and research programs in the study of teaching: A contemporary perspecitve. In M. C. Whittrock (Ed.) *Handbook of research on teaching* (3rd. ed., pp. 255 – 296). New York: MacMillian.

Swain, M. (2000). The output hypothesis and beyond: Mediating acquisition through Collaborative dialogue. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 97-114).
Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Takahashi, E. (1998). Language development in classroom interaction: A longitudinal study of a Japanese FLES program from a sociocultural perspective. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*, 392–406.

US Department of Education (2006). Washington, DC: US Department of Education. Available: http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/finrule/2006-3/091306a/html

US Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (2008). *Preparing to serve English language learner students: School districts with emerging English language learner communities*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education. Available:
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/project.asp?projectID=151&productID=102

Valdes, G. (2001). *Learning and not learning English Latino Students in American Schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Villegas, A. M. & Lucas, T. (2002). Preparing culturally responsive teachers. Rethinking the curriculum. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(1), 20-32.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind and Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Walqui, A. (2006). Scaffolding instruction for English language learners: A conceptual framework. *International Journal of Bilingual Education & Bilingualism*, 9(2), 159-180.

Wells, G. (2000). Dialogic inquiry in education: Building on the legacy of Vygotsky. In C.D. Lee & P. Smagorinsky (Eds.), *Vygotskian perspectives in literacy research: constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, G. (1993). *Text, talk and inquiry: Schooling as semiotic apprenticeship*. Paper presented at the International conference on Language and Content. Hong Kong.

Wells, G. & Arauz, R. M. (2006). Dialogue in the Classroom. *Journal of the Learning Sciences 15(3), 379 – 428.*

Wenger, E. (2005). *Communities of practice: a brief introduction*. Alberta, Canada. Available: http://vpit.ualberta.ca

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning and identity*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Westheimer, J. (2008). Learning among colleagues: Teacher community and the shared enterprise of education. In M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D.J. McIntyre, & K.E. Demers (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education: Enduring Questions in Changing Contexts, 3rd Edition* (pp. 606-636). New York: Routledge.

WIDA Consortium (2007). Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Educational Research. Available: http://www.wida.us/standards/elp.aspx.

Wong-Fillmore, L. Snow, C. (2002). What teachers need to know about language. In C.T. Adger, C.E. Snow, & D. Christian (Eds.), *What teachers need to know about language* (pp. 7-54). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Appendix A

Contact Summary Form

Name & Position:

Date: Location of Meeting:

Type of meeting *(circle):* Interview PD Session Lesson Observation Post Conference

Brief Summary of Contents:

Research Questions:

1. How do suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in an ELL-oriented reflective inquiry group?
    a. What questions, challenges and interests do these teachers identify as priorities in their ELL-oriented professional learning?
    b. How does the study of these questions, challenges and interests unfold as teachers interact in a reflective inquiry group?
2. How are the ELL-oriented instructional approaches studied during professional development actually enacted in these teachers' practice?
3. How do the opportunities or constraints present within a suburban middle school structure impact the content area literacy instruction they provide for the ELLs in their classrooms?

Significance to Analysis:

Atypical Observations (if any):

Appendix B

Document Summary Form

Name of description of document:

Document Number:

Date Retrieved:

Type of meeting *(circle):* Interview PD Session Lesson Observation Post Conference

Event or contact, if any, with which document is associated:

Brief Summary of Contents:

Research Questions:

1. How do suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in an ELL-oriented reflective inquiry group?
    a. What questions, challenges and interests do these teachers identify as priorities in their ELL-oriented professional learning?
    b. How does the study of these questions, challenges and interests unfold as teachers interact in a reflective inquiry group?
2. How are the ELL-oriented instructional approaches studied during professional development actually enacted in these teachers' practice?
3. How do the opportunities or constraints present within a suburban middle school structure impact the content area literacy instruction they provide for the ELLs in their classrooms?

Significance to Analysis:

Appendix C

Participant Consent Forms

Informed Consent for Research Project Participation

Title of Study: Capturing Perspectives and Meeting Needs: Professional Development for ELL Comprehension
Principal Researcher: Mary McGriff
Sponsor of Study: Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

Researcher
Mary McGriff is a former Hillsborough Middle School teacher with seven years additional experience as an elementary school vice principal and principal in Flemington, New Jersey. She is currently an instructor at Rutgers University. She is also a student in the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University and is working toward earning an Ed.D. in Literacy Education.

Description of Study
The purpose of this study is to examine how suburban middle school content area teachers experience participation in a professional learning experience geared toward developing English language learner (ELL) literacy. A maximum of ten participants will volunteer to participate in this study, which will consist of participation in an initial, needs-assessment meeting followed by ten weekly professional development meetings that will be led by the researcher. The researcher will also conduct scheduled lesson observations in the participants' classrooms. Forty-minute post-lesson discussions will be scheduled in order to fully debrief each instructional episode. Finally, the researcher will hold a forty-minute post-study interview with each participant in order to capture his or her perceptions of the professional development content, processes and benefits to learners.

Benefits
The knowledge gained from this study will help educators understand how to effectively plan and implement professional learning experiences that address ELL literacy. The study also serves as professional development for the five teacher participants.

Risks
There are no foreseeable physical risks to participation in this study. Participants will be asked to allot time for interviews and post-observation discussion that are part of this study. Every possible effort will be made to schedule meetings at times that are convenient for participating teachers.

Initials of Participant: _____

Confidentiality
This research is confidential. All research data will be kept in a secure location. If a report of this study is published or the results are presented at a conference, real names will not be used.

Alternatives to Participation
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any point without penalty.

Results of the Study
Please contact the researcher if you are interested in reading the completed study.

Contact Information
If you have questions at any time about the research or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Mary McGriff, at:

206 Clark Circle
Flemington, NJ 08822
Telephone: (908) 782-5563
Email: mmcgriff@eden.rutgers.edu

If you have questions at any time about the research or the procedures, you may also contact the researcher's dissertation chair, Dr. Mary Curran, at:

Department of Learning and teaching
Graduate School of Education
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
10 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
(732) 932-7496 ext. 8101
Email: mary.curran@gse.rutgers.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research study, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at:

Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901
Telephone: (732) 932-0150 ext. 2104
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

Initials of Participant: _____

Please sign below if you agree to participate in the research study outlined above. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Print name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Informed Consent for Research Project Participation
Audio recording Consent Addendum

Title of Study: Capturing Perspectives and Meeting Needs: Professional Development for ELL Comprehension
Principal Researcher: Mary McGriff
Sponsor of Study: Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

You have already agreed to participate in a research study entitled: *Capturing Perspectives and Meeting Needs: Professional Development for ELL Comprehension*. I am asking for your permission to allow me to include the procedure of audio recording professional development sessions and classroom observations as part of this research study.

The interviews and meetings will be audio recorded to enable the researcher (Mary McGriff) to better describe the interactions and general process by which teachers gain understanding of language and literacy building strategies for English language learners. Classroom observations will be audio recorded for the same purpose.

Participants' actual names will not be included in the written transcriptions of these sessions. Audio recordings will be heard only by the researcher. They will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer, which will remain locked in her home. Back-up recordings will be stored on a jump drive, which will also remain locked in the researcher's home. Consistent with Rutgers University policy, recordings will be stored for three years following the study. After that they will be deleted and erased from computer memory and from the back-up jump drive.

Your signature on this form grants the researcher named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The researcher will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Print name:_____

Signature:_____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Informed Consent for Research Project Participation
Video recording Consent Addendum

Title of Study: Capturing Perspectives and Meeting Needs: Professional Development for ELL Comprehension
Principal Researcher: Mary McGriff
Sponsor of Study: Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

You have already agreed to participate in a research study entitled: *Capturing Perspectives and Meeting Needs: Professional Development for ELL Comprehension*. I am asking for your permission to allow me to include the procedure of video recording professional development sessions as part of this research study. You do not have to agree to be video recorded in order to participate in the study.

The professional development meetings will be video recorded to enable the researcher (Mary McGriff) to better describe the interactions and general process by which teachers gain understanding of language and literacy building strategies for English language learners.

Participants' actual names will not be included in the written transcriptions of these sessions. Video recordings will be viewed only by the researcher. They will be stored on the researcher's password protected computer, which will remain locked in her home. Consistent with Rutgers University policy, recordings will be stored for three years following the study. After that they will be deleted and erased from computer.

Your signature on this form grants the researcher named above permission to video record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The researcher will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Print name:_____

Signature:_____

Date: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D

Study Codes
Evidence of Reflective Inquiry

Participant Statements in PD Sessions or in Post Observation conferences

Observations:	Codes:
Makes observation that challenges strategy	
in general	
in own practice	
in colleague's practice	
Makes observation that affirms strategy	
in general	
in own practice	
in colleague's practice	
Makes observation that connects strategy to another practice	
in general	
in own practice	
in colleague's practice	
Makes observation that complicates understanding of strategy	
in general	
in own practice	
in colleague's practice	
Makes observation : not specified	
Questions:	Codes:
Raises question about implementation of strategy	
in general	
in own practice	
in colleague's practice	
Raises question about purpose of strategy	
in general	
in own practice	
in colleague's practice	
Raises question about conceptualization of strategy	
Added dimensions?	
other	
Suggestions/Possibilities:	Codes:
Makes suggestion about implementation of	

strategy	
in general	
in own practice	
in colleague's practice	
Makes suggestion about purpose of strategy	
in general	
in own practice	
in colleague's practice	
Makes suggestion about conceptualization of strategy	
Added dimensions?	
other	

Study Codes
Evidence of Strategy Use during Lesson

Participant Actions during Lessons

Participant Actions Re: Participation and CRP	Codes:
Greets ELLs	
By name	
Smiles/welcoming gestures	
Uses ELL's L_1 in any way	
Demonstrates knowledge of ELL's C_1 or extracurricular interests in any way	
Uses contextual support – visuals, realia, graphic organizers, etc.	
Repeats/rephrases statements	
Uses non verbal gestures	
Encourages small group or partner discussion about topic	
ELL segregated groups	
ELLs mixed with English dominant classmates	
Comes to ELL's desk	
Calls on ELL volunteer to answer question/give comment	
Open-ended	
Right/wrong	
Calls on ELL non volunteer to answer question/give comment	
Open-ended	

Right/wrong	
Calls on English dominant student to answer question/give comment	
Open-ended	
Right/wrong	
Participant Actions Re: Literacy Development	
Prior knowledge activation strategy	
Successful implementation?	
Background Building strategy	
Successful implementation?	
Comprehension strategy	
Successful implementation?	
Word-learning strategy	
Successful implementation?	

Study Codes
Evidence of Strategy Use during Lesson

Classroom Environment

Any evidence of ELL's L_1 or C_1	
ELL Seating	
segregated	
mixed w/ English dominant	
Wall display and/or technology contextual supports	
Visual aides	
realia	
Wall display and/or technology vocabulary learning	
Word wall	
dictionary	
Wall display and/or technology comprehension	
Think aloud prompts	
Graphic organizers	

Appendix E

Interview Guide: Pre Study

Begin by introducing myself and the aims of the study. Describe the proposed structure of the study's professional development experience.

1. Please tell me about your teaching experience. How long have you taught in Harding? How long have you taught English language learners (ELLs)?

2. Tell me about one particular ELL you taught that really stands out in your memory for any reason.
    a. Students' academic level
    b. Why was this his/her academic level?
    c. Outside interests
    d. Family
    e. Information re: culture/ ethnicity

3. When we think about "educating the whole child," what are your impressions of ELLs' needs, generally?

4. Looking specifically at academic language (not conversational English), how would you describe the needs of the ELLs in your class?
    -What do they need to really learn the type of English they will encounter? in (your subject)?

5. Looking specifically at the kinds of texts students need to be able to read and make sense of in your class, how would you describe ELLs' needs?

6. What do you do now to try to address some of these language/reading needs?

7. In your opinion, what does Harding Middle School do best when it comes to meeting ELL needs?
    -pull out support
    -professional development
    -collaboration with colleagues
    -home/school connections

8. How would you describe the easier aspects of working with ELLs?
    -Repeat participant's answers and ask her to rank them.
    -What is the most challenging aspect of all?

9. How would you describe the more challenging aspects of working with ELLs?
    -Repeat participant's answers and ask her to rank them.
    -What is the most challenging aspect of all?

10. If you made a wish list of things to help you in your work with ELLs, what would be on it? Why?

11. Is there anything else you would like to add about your work with ELLs?

Shifting toward professional development…

12. Many schools are looking at fostering the idea of the school as a professional learning community where these types of sustained professional learning experiences happen routinely. Do you see that trend in Harding schools? At Harding Middle School?

13. Have you ever worked together with a small group of teachers (such as in this study) to focus on a specific aspect of teaching? Please describe.
    -Topic?
    -What made it effective—content and process?
    -What about it could have been even better?

14. What do you see as the advantages/disadvantages of this type of approach?

15. What was the most effective professional development experience you have ever had?
    -Topic?
    -What made it effective—content and process?
    -What about it could have been even better?

16. What would make this an effective experience for you?
    -meeting times/days?
    -content?
    -procedures we follow?

Interview Guide: Post Study Interview

1. Is your understanding of second language learners and literacy different than in September?
    i. In classroom community
    ii. In school community
    iii. Overall

2. When we first began, you told me about your student, _____ (the student described in preliminary interview question #2 above). How would that student specifically benefit from what we have discussed and used during these sessions?

3. What about the small group discussion format of our sessions has been effective in helping you gain these understandings?
    a. -How have others in the group helped?

4. If this were being repeated the second half of the year, what words of wisdom would you share with a teacher considering joining this group?

5. What feedback would help a different researcher who is looking to conduct professional development here?

6. How does the overall climate at HMS affect PD that is geared toward English language learners?
    a. –overall receptiveness to PD?
    b. –openness to ELL population?
    c. -schedule?
    d. -other logistical aspects?

7. In your view, what should the next steps be to follow through with our work so far?
    a. -PD topics?
    b. -PD format and method of delivery?

8. Now that we are finishing the PD, if you made a wish list of things to help you in your work with ELLs, what would be on it? Why?

Appendix F

Professional Learning Session Materials

Pavlenko, A. & Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Second language learning as participation and the (re)construction of selves. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), Sociocultural theory and second language learning (pp. 155-179). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Main Points:

- Learning is a process of becoming a member of a particular community, and this requires the ability to communicate in the language of this community and act according to its particular norms.

- Participation is not just about a language learner' taking part in a new cultural setting. Rather, it is the fundamental struggle to reconstruct his or her identity.

- The personal narratives of second language learners shed light on the process of language learning from a cultural and identity-based perspective. One particularly salient example is taken from Eva Hoffman's *Lost in Translation*. Her she reacts to having her Polish name, Ewa changed to the English version, Eva:

  > *Nothing much has happened, except a small, mental shift. The twist in our names takes them a tiny distance from us—but it's a gap into which the infinite hobgoblin of abstraction enters. Our Polish names didn't refer to us; they were surely us as our eyes or hands. These new appellations, which we ourselves can't pronounce, are not us. They are identification tags, disembodied signs pointing to objects that happen to be my sister and myself...[They] make us strangers to ourselves. (p. 105)*

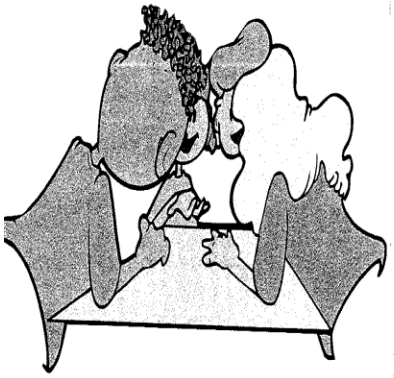
Reflect

Think of one question you have about the idea that language is a tool we use for constructing our thoughts?...our self-concept (identity)?

Think about one of your students within this context of identity breakdown/reconstruction. How could this process play itself out in observable ways?

Numbered Heads Together

Teammates work together to ensure all members understand; one is selected to share the response.



Procedures:

1. Students work in groups of four. Each student is assigned a number.
2. Teacher poses a question and provides think time. (example: "Everyone think about how rivers are formed. [pause] Now make sure everyone in your team knows how rivers are formed."
3. Students lift up from their chairs to put their heads together.
4. Students sit down when everyone knows the answer or has something to share.
5. Teacher calls a number. The student with that number from each team answers in turn. ELLs or reluctant speakers may benefit from:
    1. White board slates
    2. Choral response
    3. Manipulatives
    4. Yes/no response followed by teammate's elaboration
6. Teammates praise students who responded.

Kagan, S. (1994). *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. CA: Kagan Publishing.

Schema-building Walk

- Post pictures related to the content area that is going to be studied. Alongside each, post a large, blank sheet of paper and a prompt such as:
  - "This picture makes me wonder____."
  - "What do you want to learn about _____?"
  - "This reminds me of _____."
  - "Write a question to which the item pictured is the answer." (along the lines of *Jeopardy)*
- Distribute colored pencils, markers or crayons. It is best if each student has his or her own color. That way, you can get a better idea of who wrote what.
- Have the students circulate around the room to look at the pictures and to respond to the prompts.

As an alternative to posting pictures, conduct an experiment, do a demonstration, or show a model.

Adapted from Asbury, E. (2006*). Real Reading! Real Writing! Informational Text in the Elementary Classroom.* Presented at the 38th Annual Conference on Reading and Writing, Rutgers University Graduate School of Education, Somerset, NJ.

Illustrated Vocabulary Card

nu·cle·us

Nucleus – The central part of a cell that holds all of the information that the cell needs to reproduce.

Coding Strategy

This strategy is designed to help students be reflective readers, pausing and weighing what they are reading against their prior knowledge. It also creases the likelihood that students will engage in self-questioning as they read.

Because students need to write their reactions next to what they are reading, it works best to have them read from photocopies. An alternative that saves paper is to have students paper clip one-inch-wide strips of paper down the margin of each page they read or place sticky notes down the side, and then place their "codes" on these pieces of paper.

As students read, their task is to stop at each sentence or each paragraph and indicate their reactions to their reading in the following ways.

* I already knew this!
+ New information
! Wow
?? I don't understand

PURPOSEFUL POST-ITS

You can extend the codes as you teach new strategies.

* I already knew this

+ New information

! WOW

V Visual image

S Sensory Image

K Key Point

P Prediction

O Opinion

? Question

W Unknown Word

C Connection

Hoyt, L. (1999). *Revisit, Reflect, Retell*. NH: Heinemann.

Responding to Comparison/Contrast through Writing:
A Poem for Two Voices

Two-sentence summary: After students compare and contrast two items, they compose a poem for two voices in the "voice" of the two items. These poems should then be read aloud by two students, each assuming one of the voices from the poem.

Background knowledge needed: Joyful Noise by Paul Fleischman is a marvelous collection that celebrates the "poem for two voices" as a poetic genre, and it's a great book to have on-hand if you want to use the poem for two voices as a classroom writing technique. This type of poem is composed to be read aloud by two (sometimes even three) readers. Most lines in these poems are spoken by the individual reader separately, and the speakers take turns going back and forth between the voices; however, some lines are composed to be said out loud together by both speakers.

In the following two-voice poem, for example, the first line (*I am the polar bear*) is spoken alone by reader #1, and it is immediately followed by the solo reading of the second line (*I am the SUV*) by reader #2. The lines then are shared back and forth by the individuals, until they come to the last line (*Ice caps*), which is intended to be spoken out loud by both readers simultaneously. This coordination of voices requires some rehearsal by students before they perform, so be sure to allow time for rehearsal.

An example poem for two voices
written by NNWP consultant Campbell Pontius

Voice #1:	Voice #2:
I am a polar bear	I am an SUV
I eat fish	I guzzle petroleum
I must swim for my food	People pump mine
But I can't swim forever	I burn gas pretty fast
When I get tired	When I pollute
I depend upon	I begin to destroy

Ice caps.

Comparing/Contrasting: Many contrasting topics lend themselves very nicely to this poetic format. As seen in the example above, these poems—when well-written—rely heavily on interesting verbs that are associated with the contrasting topics. As students brainstorm, have them make lists of contrasting verbs.

Differentiating Instruction Ideas: Students can write these poems alone or in pairs. If students do write them alone, they can partner up after the poems are written and help each other revise and perform their poetry.

A thought on the writing task: These small pieces of writing naturally lend themselves to performance by the authors, but the performances do not have to be whole-class; students can just as easily perform for each other in groups of four or six or eight.

Think Aloud for ELLs

Prior Knowledge
I already know from _____ that ____. This is why I can predict that …

Visualize
I pictured what was happening here, and it will help me understand _____.

Predict
The title, the illustrations and/or the way the words appear on the page make me think this will be about…

Summarize
When I think about what I have read so far, I can summarize …

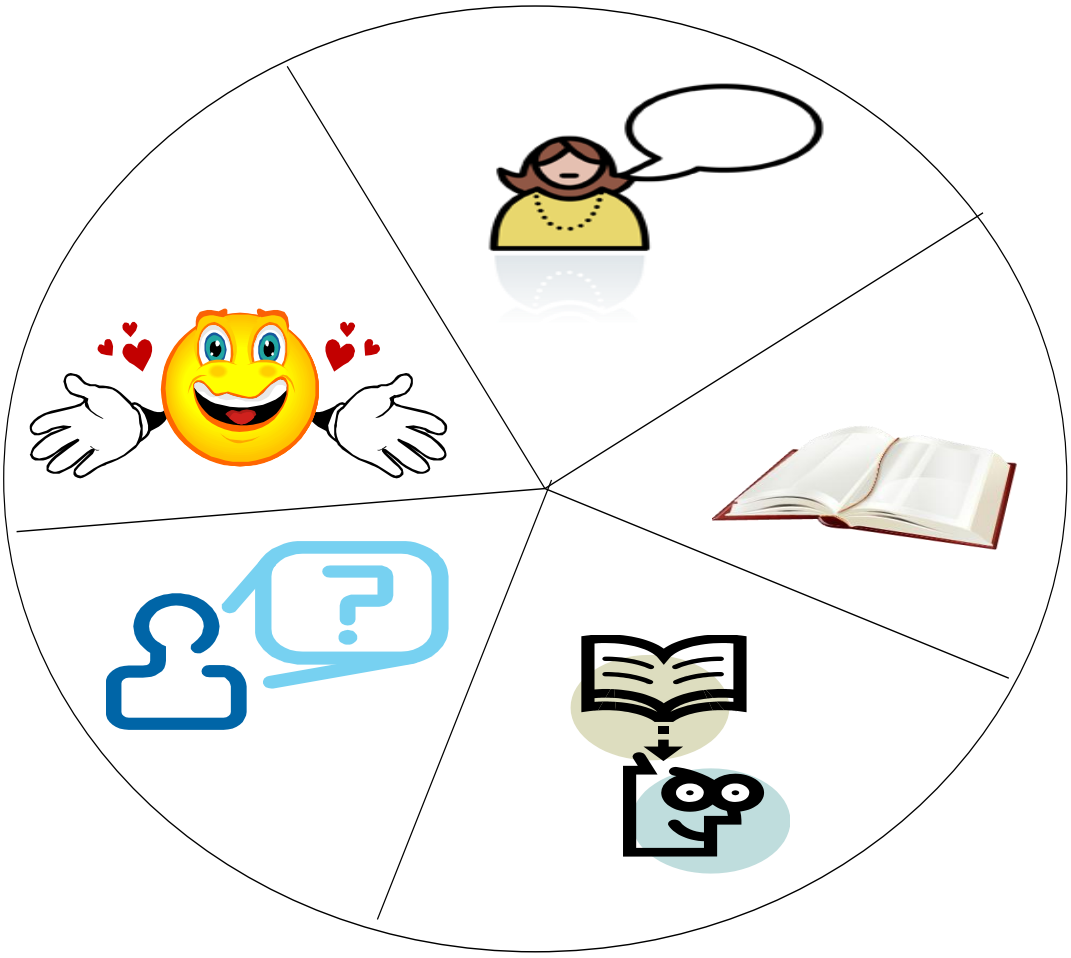
MONITOR
I know I am confused about ____, so I will stop to reread or rethink about ….

Question
I wonder about ____. I will read to find out…

Say Something Card Make a connection (Text to Text, Text to World, Text to Self). "_____ reminds me of _____."	Say Something Card Ask the group a question about something you are wondering about. "I wonder..."	Say Something Card Make a prediction/conclusion. "I think _____ because _____."	Say Something Card Summarize. "The main idea is _____."	Say Something Card Describe the "picture" in your mind. "When I read _____, I (saw, heard, felt, smelled) _____."
Say Something Card Make a connection (Text to Text, Text to World, Text to Self). "_____ reminds me of _____."	Say Something Card Ask the group a question about something you are wondering about. "I wonder..."	Say Something Card Make a prediction/conclusion. "I think _____ because _____."	Say Something Card Summarize. "The main idea is _____."	Say Something Card Describe the "picture" in your mind. "When I read _____, I saw (heard, felt, smelled) _____."
Say Something Card Make a connection (Text to Text, Text to World, Text to Self). "_____ reminds me of _____."	Say Something Card Ask the group a question about something you are wondering about. "I wonder..."	Say Something Card Make a prediction/conclusion. "I think _____ because _____."	Say Something Card Summarize. "The main idea is _____."	Say Something Card Describe the "picture" in your mind. "When I read _____, I (saw, heard, felt, smelled) _____."

Conversation Spinner

	Summarize what you read and include a prediction.
	Describe your favorite part of the chapter and tell why you liked it.
	Choose 3 interesting words to describe _____(topic, theme, etc.). Explain your choices using details from the chapter.
	Think of 2 questions you would like to ask about _____. Explain your choices.
	Make a personal connection with the story or topic. Explain.



Student Reflection

Observations:

Challenges-

Successes-

Looking forward….

Themes
Speakers
Talks
Translations

Chimamanda Adichie: The danger of a single story

Reading Report:
A Framework for Student Conversations

Name: Date:
Reading Report

Complete a Reading Report for each passage you are assigned to read

Part I: Text quotes: Write down two passages from the text and explain why the passages made an impression on you.

Page #	*Text*	*Why the passage made an impression on me.*

Part II Connections: Make at least one connection to the text. Identify your connection as Text to Text, Text to Self, or Text to World.

Novel subject matter	Connection	Connection Type

Part IV Questions: Write three discussion questions based on the text. These should be open-ended questions which will prompt discussion. They should not be factual questions.

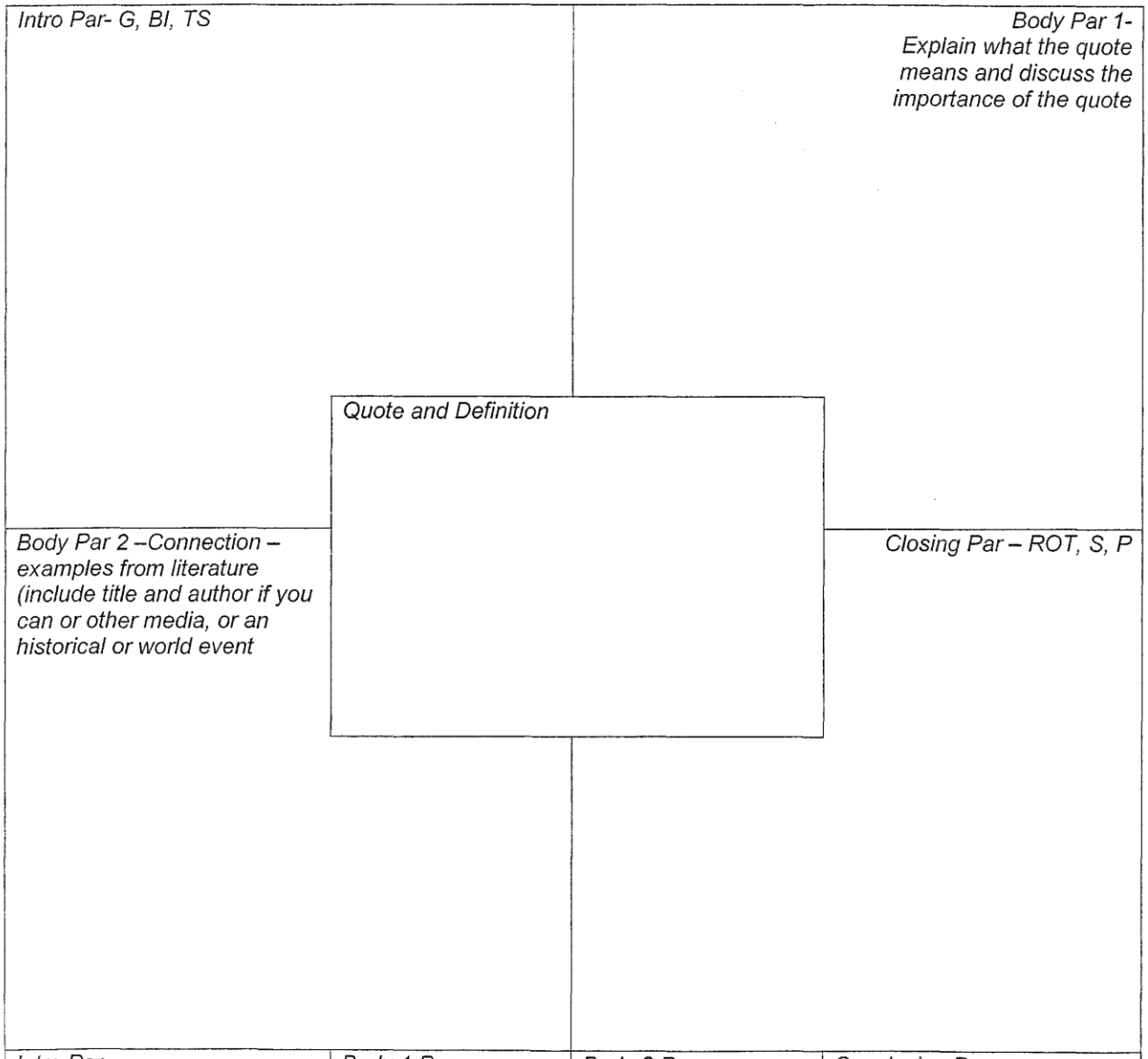
1.
2.

Name: Date:
Explanatory Prompt: Sample #4

Consider how the following quotation is related to you.

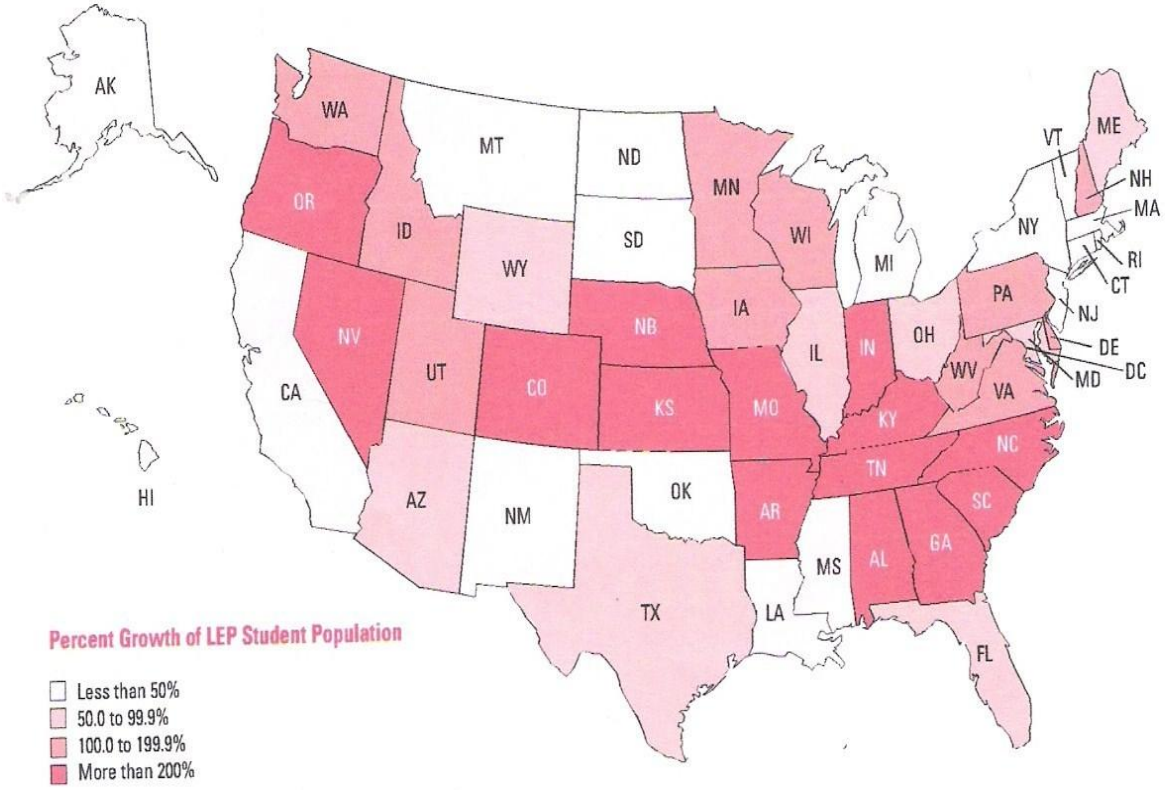
"If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere."
--Anonymous

Write an essay explaining what this quotation means to you. Use details and examples in your essay.



Intro Par	Body 1 Par	Body 2 Par	Conclusion Par
G= grabber BI= background information TS= thesis statement	What quote means/importance of quote	Connection – literature or other media, history, or world	ROT= reflection of thesis S= summary of information in body paragraphs P=final, powerful statement

Figure 2. LEP Student Population Growth from 1993 to 2003 by State



Note. LEP = limited English proficient
Source: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs; State Data

ELL Population Shift – New Jersey

from December 2005 Data

-20.1% of public school students speak a language other than English at home.

-57% of ELLs are enrolled in urban districts.
43% of ELLs attend suburban or rural schools.

-Flemington–- 15% ELL enrollment increase from 2000-2005
Lambertville-- 215% ELL enrollment increase from 2000-2005

New Jersey School Report Card for 2006. (2006). Trenton, New Jersey: New Jersey Department of Education. Available: http://education.state.nj.us/rc/rc06/

National School Reform Faculty

Harmony Education Center www.nsrfharmony.org

Tuning Protocol:
Overview

Excerpted, with slight adaptations, from Looking Together at Student Work *by Tina Blythe, David Allen, and Barbara S. Powell (New York: Teachers College Press, 1999)*

The tuning protocol was originally developed as a means for the five high schools in the Coalition of Essential School's Exhibitions Project to receive feedback and fine-tune their developing student assessment systems, including exhibitions, portfolios and design projects. Recognizing the complexities involved in developing new forms of assessment, the project staff developed a facilitated process to support educators in sharing their students' work and, with colleagues, reflecting upon the lessons that are embedded there. This collaborative reflection helps educators to design and refine their assessment systems, as well as to support higher quality student performance. Since its trial run in 1992, the Tuning Protocol has been widely used and adapted for professional development purpose in and among schools across the country.

To take part in the Tuning Protocol, educators bring samples of either own work or their students' work on paper and, whenever possible, on video, as well as some of the materials they have created to support student performance, such as assignment descriptions and scoring rubrics. In a circle of about six to ten "critical friends" (usually other educators), a facilitator guides the group through the process and keeps time. The presenting educator, or team of educators, describes the context for the student work (the task or project) - uninterrupted by questions or comments from participants.

Often the presenter begins with a focusing question or area about which she would especially welcome feedback, for example, "Are you seeing evidence of persuasive writing in the students' work?" Participants have time to examine the student work and ask clarifying questions. Then, with the presenter listening but silent, participants offer warm and cool feedback - both supportive and challenging. Presenters often frame their feedback as a question, for example, "How might the project be different if students chose their research topics?"

After this feedback is offered, the presenter has the opportunity, again uninterrupted, to reflect on the feedback and address any comments or questions she chooses. Time is reserved for debriefing the experience. Both presenting and participating educators have found the tuning experience to be a powerful stimulus for encouraging reflection on their practice.

National School Reform Faculty

Harmony Education Center www.nsrfharmony.org

Tuning Protocol

Developed by Joseph McDonald and David Allen

1. **Introduction** (5 minutes)
- Facilitator briefly introduces protocol goals, guidelines, and schedule
- Participants briefly introduce themselves (if necessary)

2. **Presentation** (15 minutes)
The presenter has an opportunity to share the context for the student work:
- Information about the students and/or the class — what the students tend to be like, where they are in school, where they are in the year
- Assignment or prompt that generated the student work
- Student learning goals or standards that inform the work
- Samples of student work — photocopies of work, video clips, etc. — with student names removed
- Evaluation format — scoring rubric and/or assessment criteria, etc.
- Focusing question for feedback
- Participants are silent; no questions are entertained at this time.

3. **Clarifying Questions** (5 minutes)
- Participants have an opportunity to ask "clarifying" questions in order to get information that may have been omitted in the presentation that they feel would help them to understand the context for the student work. Clarifying questions are matters of "fact."
- The facilitator should be sure to limit the questions to those that are "clarifying," judging which questions more properly belong in the warm/cool feedback section.

4. **Examination of Student Work Sample**s (15 minutes)
- Participants look closely at the work, taking notes on where it seems to be in tune with the stated goals, and where there might be a problem. Participants focus particularly on the presenter's focusing question.
- Presenter is silent; participants do this work silently.

5. **Pause to reflect on warm and cool feedback** (2-3 minutes)
- Participants take a couple of minutes to reflect on what they would like to contribute to the feedback session.
- Presenter is silent; participants do this work silently.

6. **Warm and Cool Feedback** (15 minutes)
- Participants share feedback with each other while the presenter is silent. The feedback generally begins with a few minutes of warm feedback, moves on to a few minutes of cool feedback (sometimes phrased in the form of reflective questions), and then moves back and forth between warm and cool feedback.

Protocols are most powerful and effective when used within an ongoing professional learning community such as a Critical Friends Group® and facilitated by a skilled coach. To learn more about professional learning communities and seminars for new or experienced coaches, please visit the National School Reform Faculty website at www.nsrfharmony.org.

- Warm feedback may include comments about how the work presented seems to meet the desired goals; cool feedback may include possible "disconnects," gaps, or problems. Often participants offer ideas or suggestions for strengthening the work presented.
- The facilitator may need to remind participants of the presenter's focusing question, which should be posted for all to see.
- Presenter is silent and takes notes.

7. **Reflection** (5 minutes)
- Presenter speaks to those comments/questions he or she chooses while participants are silent.
- This is not a time to defend oneself, but is instead a time for the presenter to reflect aloud on those ideas or questions that seemed particularly interesting.
- Facilitator may intervene to focus, clarify, etc.

8. **Debrief** (5 minutes)
- Facilitator-led discussion of this tuning experience.