EXISTENCE IN TENSION: A POST-INTENTIONAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL

ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PEDAGOGICAL

METAXY AS A RESPONSE TO GNOSTIC PHILOSOPHY

AND STANDARDIZATION IN EDUCATION

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all teachers, present and future, who consider themselves first and foremost learners participating in the tension.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of tension, or metaxy, on teachers' perceptions and understandings of pedagogy in the public school classroom in general and the teacher-student relationship in specific. A post-structural framework, informed in part by Bakhtin's (1984) insistence that reality of the self is possible only through discovery of the "other," recognizes the relational in-between-ness of pedagogy. Six elements of pedagogy are identified as participating in this relationality – monologic and dialogic theories, technical and relational practices, and teacher and student participants. These elements interact with one another to form what Ellsworth (2005) and van Manen (2015) refer to as transitional spaces and pedagogical moments respectively. The spaces and moments of pedagogy stand in opposition to current standardization efforts, which are critiqued as being Gnostic. Three Gnostic influences – dissatisfaction with the present, radical duality, and secret knowledge – actively work against metaxy by restructuring pedagogical relationships into hierarchies. A post-intentional phenomenological analysis of three middle school science teachers' perceptions of pedagogy suggests that educators can play a role in flattening these hierarchies by practicing compassion and humility in the teacher-student relationship. Compassion – defined as the recognition of the other, and humility – the acceptance of the unknowable, serve to repurpose educators' understanding of teacher dispositions as representations of learning. The study concludes by examining how this reframing of dispositions as learning may positively impact teacher education programs and their assessment of candidates.

I – INTRODUCTION

Christian theologian Paul Tillich (1959) understands religion and culture to be inextricably woven together, bonded relationally in both form and function. He describes this relationship by stating that "religion is the substance of culture, culture is the form of religion" (p. 42). As such, religion is not simply confined to one specific aspect of cultural expression or thought, be it moral, emotional or cognitive. "History tells us the story," Tillich insists, of "how religion goes from one . . . function to the other to find a home, and is either rejected or swallowed by them" (p. 6). It is often rejected for claiming an absolute moral position, objected to by cognitive science, or dismissed for lacking rationality or practicality. It has no specific place to belong, which grants it the freedom to be in all of them. Tillich explains that:

> In this situation, without a home, without a place in which to dwell, religion suddenly realizes that it does not need such a place, that it does not need to seek for a home. It is at home everywhere, namely in the depths of all functions of [humanity]. Religion is the dimension of depth in all of them. Religion is the aspect of depth in the totality of the human spirit. (p. 7)

Religion is not an aspect of humanity, but rather a quality, a substantial part of everything that exists within humanity, including culture. It is embedded within all cultural mediums – politics, economics, and even education.

This dissertation explores religion as the substance of the culture of education, specifically how religious ideologies impact current educational reforms. Slattery (2013) notes that religion has been and continues to be a "significant factor," often hidden just underneath the surface of many reform efforts and controversies – from assimilation in

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the common school era, to school prayer and Scripture readings in the twentieth century, to the more recent debates over the place of intelligent design in the science curriculum (p. 79). Although certain aspects of Christian theology are central to the religious context, they primarily serve as an entry point for the discussion regarding the religious underpinnings of reform efforts rather than as a critique of any one particular religion's influence on education.

The religious framework for this study examines the influence of the Christian heresy of Gnosticism on current policies aimed at standardizing education practices and the impact these efforts have on the relational aspects of pedagogy. Briefly defined, Gnosticism refers to a collection of religious ideas and practices that were deemed heretical by the burgeoning Catholic Church in the first few centuries of the Common Era (Tiessen, 2007). Efforts to establish orthodoxy within the fledgling Christian religion required a unified position (Pagels, 2003), which meant eradicating any belief systems that ran counter to the accepted faith. Practices and beliefs that fell short of the acceptable criteria were lumped together into broadly defined heretical categories, the most notable being Gnosticism (King, 2003; Williams, 1996). As the label suggests, Gnostic heresies were identified based largely on their understanding of *gnosis*, which literally translates as knowledge. Gnosticism referred to any Christian belief or practice that ascribed to a view of gnosis that differed from the accepted norm (Desjardins, 2005; King, 2003; Williams, 1996).

The establishment of Gnosticism as a heresy was the result of both a process and a product (Williams, 1996). Although the end result was a product that attempted to neatly inscribe Gnosticism within specifically defined heretical parameters, the process of

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how the product came to be is equally important to its influence on standardization. In other words, the process of how standardized practices are constructed is as important as the standardized product itself. Just as identifying Gnosticism was as much about defining the catholic faith as it was about rooting out heresy, the process of standardizing education can be thought of as an attempt to determine what counts as learning in order to label what cannot count as learning. Policy and reform efforts aimed at standardization seek to define what counts as learning quite literally, as what can be counted or measured (Taubman, 2009). The practices of education that can be abstracted and recorded as numbers for the purpose of measurement are what counts as effective teaching and learning.

The push to standardize these measurable practices have a negative effect on other aspects of pedagogy and learning. Taubman (2009) suggests that "practices that rely on mathematical calculation and the impersonality of numbers have replaced the individual teacher's often unique and context specific approaches to teaching" (p. 6). These contextual aspects of teaching and learning, the more relational elements of pedagogy, are systematically devalued. The product of standardized pedagogy is made possible through this systematic process of reducing or removing those practices that are deemed incapable of being standardized.

The remainder of this chapter develops in detail the connection between Gnosticism and standardization and the issues it creates for relational pedagogy. The first section highlights the pedagogical discord between standardization efforts and the more context specific, relational elements of pedagogy. The middle two sections describe the connection between the development of Gnosticism as a heresy and educational

standardization. The concluding section develops a post-structural framework for understanding dialogic pedagogy as a response to both standardization and Gnosticism.

Pedagogical Discord

The current focus of education reform, dominated by an accountability and audit culture (Taubman, 2009), hinders the development of pedagogical relationships in the learning environment. Understanding educational achievement exclusively "through mastery instruction and testing, without reference to the physical, emotional and social ambience within which the learning is occurring . . . is similarly seen as potentially an obstruction rather than facilitation of learning" (Lovat, Dally, Clement, and Toomey, 2011, p. 32). Efforts at standardizing education practices inhibits learning in the classroom, and yet these measurable products of accountability practices continue to serve as the sole indicator of success in education, including the effectiveness of teacher-student relationships (Anderman, Anderman, Yough, & Gimbert, 2010). Standardization and accountability practices claim that teaching is a science, and the relational components of pedagogy can be "mechanized" to increase learning for all students (Taubman, 2009).

While there is a substantial amount of research supporting the importance of pedagogical relationships to academic achievement (e.g., Davis, 2006; Dotterer & Lowe, 2011; Fan, 2012; Huan, Quek, Yeo, Ang, & Chong, 2012), the increased reliance on mechanical/technical pedagogy for the sake of improving test scores diminishes the impact of the relational aspect of learning. Humans are "fundamentally emotional and social creatures," and the 'high-level cognitive skills' that educators insist are necessary for academic achievement "do not function as rational, disembodied systems, somehow

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influenced by but detached from emotion" (Immordino-Yang and Damasio; 2007p. 3).

The process of learning relies on more than just cognitive and technical skills; social and relational aspects are equally as integral to learning. Yet, the dominant standardized educational discourse centers on the implementation of systems that favor scientific and technological solutions in an effort to engineer learning (Kim, 2010). This process of engineering learning takes 'the teacher-student relationship for granted for the sake of the system that ought to serve it" (Giles, Smythe, & Spence, 2012, p. 233).

Standards and standardization. The increased focus on technical pedagogy is the result of reform efforts aimed at standardizing educational practices. Standardization is the implementation of more homogenous pedagogical practices, management strategies, and curriculum frameworks for the purpose of increasing test scores. The accountability practices and gnostic influences that undergird standardization amount to a kind of "pedagogical fundamentalism," using a predetermined set of standards to deny the needs of the individual (both teachers and students) for the sake of conformity (O'Malley, 2009, p. 250).

While standards are not synonymous with standardization, their misuse can result in the practice of standardization. This is not a slippery slope argument, suggesting that the implementation of standards will inevitably lead to the practice of standardization. Polikoff (2012) suggests that the theory behind standards-based reform efforts hinges on coherence. Standards are constructed for core academic subjects to specify what students must know and be able to do. They also require explicit goals which are measurable, often with standardized tests. When measurable goals are assessed, teachers will follow suit by aligning their instruction with the standards and assessments, and learning will

improve (p. 341).

The danger of misusing standards lies with a potential discrepancy between the rhetoric and praxis of standards. Rhetorically, standards provide structures aimed at supporting learning. In practice, standards are often reduced to a policy of test-based accountability, substituting test items for standards (National Academy of Education, 2009). In other words, the test ends up exerting a stronger influence over instructional practices than do the standards. Although researchers continue to debate the impact of high-stakes testing on education, some claim this practice limits teachers' abilities to attend to the socio-cultural needs of their students (Au, 2007). The view is that the emphasis on testing establishes "conformity with a set of predetermined standards without reference to the needs of individual[s]," (Milligan, 2005, p. 106) making it difficult for teachers to develop relationships in the classroom.

Effects on teacher-student relationships. The implementation of standards and standardized practices has a profound impact on the primary expression of relational pedagogy. It is not the presence of standards or the ways in which they have been used in the educational setting that has had the most impact on relationships. Rather, it is the authority of the products of standardization, namely test scores, to determine what counts as acceptable teaching and learning, as well as evaluating who and what has achieved success, that has created a perilous environment for the teacher-student relationship. Taubman (2009) explains that:

> We have arrived at a moment when students and teachers are subjected to a
> curriculum driven by disconnected multiple-choice questions or essay prompts
> that must be answered in a set amount of time and . . . that have little, if any

relationship to problems, interests, or speculations that we might associate with

thinking. (p. 17)

The fact that the test is standardized places limits on what counts as learning, requiring

teachers adhere to these limits and their constitution of knowledge without deviation

(Kim, 2010). Standardized tests embody "a view of knowledge that equates

understanding and creativity . . . with information retrieval" (Taubman, 2009, p. 26). The

practice of information retrieval impacts the pedagogical relationship by suppressing the

individuality of the teacher by controlling curriculum and instructional practices.

Au (2007) describes this suppression in terms of formal and pedagogical control.

Formal control refers to changes in the form of the curriculum in an effort to create "a

unifying education process, providing the same curriculum and expecting the same

outcomes for all students" (Kim, 2010, p. 10). Since the standardized test consists of

multiple-choice questions, teachers feel the pressure to structure their curricula to teach

according to this format (Au, 2007). Learning has become equated with passing a test,

which has resulted in a loss of individuality and creativity on the part of curriculum

(Rubin, & Kazanjian, 2011).

Pedagogical control refers to the change in teaching format, most notably to an

increased reliance on standardized teacher-centered instruction (Au, 2007), for the

purposes of collecting data on test scores. These data become the "objective reality" used

to justify educational policy (Taubman, 2009, p. 27), such as standardized pedagogy and

curriculum. The focus on test data creates the need for standardized teaching practices

where the "process of teaching and learning is predetermined, pre-paced and pre-

structured . . . [and] specific, correct answers are elicited to specific, direct questions"

(Rubin, & Kazanjian, 2011, p. 94).

The control that standardized testing exerts over pedagogy creates a dualism between the purposes of the social climate and measurable student outcomes (Allodi, 2010). Quantifiable, measurable outcomes are favored and seen as authoritative, partly because they adhere to the "impersonal laws of nature and numbers" (Taubman, 2009, p. 27). In other words, data gathered from standardized methods are seen as superior to those gathered by other means. This hierarchy creates two issues within the classroom from a relational perspective. One, it can force educators to choose between a pedagogy focused on performance and outcomes or one focused on interactions and relationships (Margonis, 2011). Two, it can reduce or eliminate the immediacy of the teacher-student relationship. Taubman (2009) notes that "control exercised through surveillance of abstracted data helps perpetuate a system of virtual relationships that replace the specific and idiosyncrasy of situated face-to-face relationships" (p. 20). When pedagogy serves the needs of test data, the data dictate what is to be taught and how. These pedagogical decisions are not made by the teacher in the midst of a relationship. Rather, they are made outside the relationship (virtually) in way that serves the purposes of test data as opposed to the (immediate) context of the pedagogical interaction.

Gnosticism and Education

In order to establish a connection between an ancient religious ideology and current education reform, the concept of Gnosticism must be understood as both a product and a process. Focusing exclusively on Gnosticism as a product creates the illusion that it was a complete, cohesive, organized religion with a clearly defined ideology. Religious scholars argue that, despite popular opinion, Gnosticism was not a

well-defined or established religion. Rather, it was a term invented in the early modern period to help concretize the acceptable boundaries of orthodox Christianity (King, 2003; Williams, 1996). Yet, denying that Gnosticism produced some semblance of a coherent and systematic set of beliefs and practices ignores the very real effort its detractors made to remove it from organized Christianity (Pagels, 2003). The fact that Gnosticism existed as both a product and as a process is evident in what it helped create and sustain, the process of establishing a concrete and well-defined product of Christian orthodoxy.

Gnosticism as a product. The predominant view of Gnosticism traces the beginning of the movement to the foundations of Christianity in the second and third centuries C.E., and have historically been treated as heresy by the Church (Tiessen, 2007). The reason for this condemnation is predicated largely on the radical dualism of the Gnostic understanding of the creation of the world. Central to the orthodox critique is a Gnostic belief in a complete and total separation of the spiritual world with the physical world (Johnson, 2004). Humanity and the world in which it exists (i.e. the physical or immanent world) was created by a false god and separated from the loving Creator (i.e. the spiritual or transcendent world). The true God did not create the world and humanity (King, 2003). Yet, a "divine spark," older than creation itself and connected to the Creator, resides in each individual (Morris, 2008). The Gnostic goal of life was to gain an awareness of the spiritual world and release this fragment of divinity trapped inside humanity, a goal that can only be accomplished by unlocking a secret knowledge, or gnosis (Edgoose, 2006; Morris, 2008). This knowledge was only available to a select few who could discover the ability to access the transcendent and thereby escape the physical world (Tiessen, 2007).

The creator of the world was an ignorant and jealous pretender, concerned with dominion over his creation. The Christ figure portrayed in the Christian scriptures never really existed in the flesh. Rather, he only appeared to do so in order to fool the lesser God (King, 2003). His purpose was to call humanity to an awareness of something outside its physical world through an act of salvation, a physical ascension to the transcendent world. This salvation was made available through a secret knowledge, or *gnosis*, and served as a key to the spiritual world (Williams, 1996).

Constructing a coherent and uniform definition of Gnosticism as a product is difficult at best because of its roots in what is described as the Christian heresiological position (Desjardins, 2005; Pricopi, 2013). According to this position, Gnosticism is intrinsically linked to "the ongoing project of maintaining a normative Christianity" (King, 2003, p. 18). Founded largely on the writings of early church scholars such as Irenaeus of Lyon (circa 180 C.E.), Gnosticism became a label for almost any belief that did not ascribe to what would eventually be understood as orthodox Christianity (Desjardins, 2005; King, 2003; Williams, 1996). In fact, the term was not coined until the 17th century. Henry More, an English theologian, designated the label Gnosticism to refer to all ancient Christian heresies (Pricopi, 2013).

The Gnostic label is a modern construct (Williams, 1996), and the very word "Gnosticism" has become problematic with regard to its overuse in defining and describing certain phenomena in the history of religions (Webb, 2005). Christianity's desire to delineate its boundaries led to the construction of a typological categorization of Gnosticism and the need to assign every heresy a place in it. It was a forced typology, an amalgamation of ideologies and beliefs held together by one commonality, a gnosis,

which was described as false teaching (Marjanen, 2008; Williams, 1996). The result of this typology was the construction of Gnosticism as a particular religion, separate and apart from other religions, with its own clearly identified boundaries (Pricopi, 2013).

The development of Gnostic as religious heresy to orthodox Christian dogma led to the assumption that Gnosticism arose from Christian theology (Desjardins, 2005; King, 2003; Williams, 1996). While much of what is understood and categorized as Gnostic can be traced back to the development of Christianity, there is evidence to suggest that it predates the foundations of the religious movement (Pearson, 2001; Pricopi, 2013). Philosophers such as Plotinus (205-270 C.E.) wrote treatises against Gnosticism that spoke against misinterpretations of Plato, not Christianity. Additionally, documents such as the *Apochryphon of John*, which were eventually designated as heretical Gnostic documents, predate the establishment of Christianity (Pearson, 2001).

Gnosticism as a process. Defining Gnosticism as a specific religious entity, a product with clearly delineated parameters and theological dogmas, dismisses the process involved in the creation of this definition. This process of concretizing Gnosticism is as integral to understanding its pronouncement as a heresy as well as its influence on education reform. Although the term Gnosticism is an early modern label, as mentioned previously, it did not exist as a recognized religion without a name before then. Rather, it was constructed as the "heretical other in relation to the diverse and fluctuating understanding of orthodox Christianity" (King, 2003, p. 2). In other words, the development of the Gnostic heresy mirrored the process of defining an understanding of orthodoxy, serving as the binary opposite of what came to be accepted as established Christianity.

The first four centuries of the Common Era were difficult for the fledgling Christian movement. Externally, people who identified themselves as Christians faced persecution from other religious organizations as well as from the Roman government. Internally, members and various Christian sects disagreed with one another as to what constituted acceptable practices and beliefs. Early Christian leaders, such as Irenaeus, Polycarp, and Tertullian, sought to unify the movement for the sake of survival amidst persecution, skepticism and distortion by outsiders (Pagels, 2003). Of key importance to these leaders was the question of spiritual truth and how it was discerned or realized. How does one come to know spiritual truth? For many in the Christian movement, this truth was realized through the embodiment of both the human and the divine in the person of the Christ.

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to detail the history of the Christological argument in Christian theology. It is, however, necessary to understand that the disagreements between the role and person of the Christ figure were central to establishing Gnosticism as a heresy. The Christological debate centers on the relationship between the divine and human elements of the Christ. This relationship carried with it serious consequences for the understanding of salvation in Christian thought (O'Collins, 2009). Irenaeus and other early Christian leaders sought to explain the Christ as an utterly unique individual, the "God made flesh" messiah (Stone, 2012). It was necessary for him to be both completely divine and completely human so that he may bring salvation to humankind.

Some factions within the movement expressed a more humanist understanding of the relationship between themselves and the Christ (Parvis, 2008). They saw the Christ

as more of a conduit for discovering the spiritual truth that already existed in humanity. Christ was not merely a material representation of the divine, but more of a key to unlock what humans already possessed. Thus, it was not necessary for him to be completely divine. For example, the theologian Arius, who was involved in one of the earliest controversies in Christian history, suggested that the Christ was created by God, describing him as a lesser emanation of God. Combined with the belief that the flesh was evil, Gnostics asserted that it was impossible for the Christ to have taken on real flesh (Stone, 2012).

These competing views of the role of the Christ in Christian theology were seen by its early leaders as an obstacle to unity and survival (Pagels, 2003). According to Irenaeus, one of the more influential early leaders, it was heresy to "assume that human experience is analogous to divine reality, and to infer that each one of us, by exploring our own experience, may discover intimacies of truth about God" (Pagels, 2003, p. 145). Irenaeus insisted that it was impossible to discern the truth about God merely through human experience. The divinity of the Christ made the discernment of spiritual truth through human experience an impossibility. Those who sought to express a more nuanced understanding of the role of Christ's humanity were sorely mistaken. The importance of this disagreement for the validity of the movement led to the first ecumenical council, referred to as the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E., where a treatise was declared establishing the accepted understanding of the Christ's role in spiritual discernment. The view expressed by Irenaeus and others became the dominant and orthodox statement of the burgeoning catholic church, while all dissenting views were labeled heresy.

Product defining process. The archbishop of Indianapolis recently stated that "heresy is always a reluctance to deal with complexity" (McElwee, 2014, para 17). Identifying and naming Gnosticism as a heresy simplified the relationship between process and product by establishing a hierarchy between two. The heretical product came to define and describe Gnosticism, and practically eliminated its conception as a process. The construction of a hierarchy that favors product over process tends to "produce static and reified entities and hide the rhetorical and ideological interests of their fabricators" (King, 2003, p. 15). In other words, by claiming the product, or end result, is more important than the process of constructing it, those who name the product can conceal their rational for doing so. The focus is placed on a concrete and real product, which becomes embodied and material even though it initially began as a process.

Emphasizing the product over the process gives those responsible for naming the product a certain amount of control. As a process, concepts remain open and unfinalized. Naming them as a product grants control over how the product can and should be understood and expressed. The Gnostic heresy, for example, has largely been viewed negatively because those responsible for naming it controlled the perception of the product, even if certain qualities were exaggerated or distorted. The complexity of the Gnostic process was reduced to these qualities for the purposes of comparison and competition between orthodoxy and heresy (Williams, 1996). The binary construction of the product necessitated the exaggeration of thoughts and ideas in order to brand them as either orthodoxy or heresy. The problem with this necessity is that not all thoughts and ideas fit neatly into artificial categories. As King (2003) notes, "you can never really get the different-shaped blocks to all fit into the same hole without some violence to the

evidence" (p. 9). In order to brand Gnostic ideas as heresy, a certain amount of distortion

and violence is necessary. This violence effectively serves to name Gnosticism as a

product over and against orthodoxy. Categories are established and preserved at the

expense of the understanding and complexity of the process.

Relevance to education. Emphasizing the product of Gnosticism over the

process provides the opportunity to control thoughts, ideas, and experiences. In terms of

education reform, there is a desire and insistence to control the product of the learning

experience, most noticeably in classroom instruction and teacher performance. The impact

on instruction is described as a "search for systemic validity" where educators create a one-

size fits all definition of what counts as appropriate instruction, assessment and achievement

(Douglass, Thomson, & Zhao, 2012, p. 320). In an effort to control the learning

environment, educators have constructed standards to systematize instruction in order to

effectively monitor achievement.

In this respect, standards-based reform efforts embody the desire to construct a

product for the purpose of control. Education policy makers acknowledge that standards are

the central framework guiding current reform by focusing on the construction of content-

specific standards in core academic areas in order to determine what students need to know

(National Academy of Education, 2009; Polikoff, 2012). The goal of these reform efforts is

to leverage change through test-based accountability measures based on the created standards

(National Academy of Education, 2009). By controlling the content and instruction,

educators believe they can control student achievement. In this sense, education focuses

almost solely on the product of learning to the detriment of the learning process.

Voegelin and Modern Gnosticism

The 20th century political philosopher Eric Voegelin attempted to show how Gnostic ideology is still prevalent in modern thought. Voegelin attempted to explain how modernity was "fundamentally characterized by [humanity's] attempt to refashion the world in [its] own image" (Trepanier & McGuire, 2011, p. 1). Born in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century, Voegelin studied at the University of Vienna, graduating in 1929. His early publications branded him an enemy of the National Socialist Party's rise to power. Voegelin emigrated from Germany before the start of the Second World War and eventually settled at Louisiana State University. Over the course of the next few decades, he crafted a new perspective on political science, rejecting the positivistic assumptions grounded in the use of natural sciences to explain humanity and societies in favor of one founded on human consciousness. The relationship between the world and humanity was not one of intention, but rather one of participation (Trepanier & McGuire, 2011). There existed a tension between humanity and the world in which it lives.

Building off the idea of lived reality as existence-in-tension (Raeder, 2007), Voegelin constructed an argument against the influence of Gnosticism on modern political movements. For Voegelin, the roots of ancient Gnosticism lay in "the interaction between expansion of empire and differentiation of consciousness" (1974, p. 21). His critique of political Gnosticism as existence-in-tension extends to the issues of standardization in education and its impact on relational pedagogy.

Existence-in-tension. Voegelin characterized the duality made radical in Gnosticism, not as two separate worlds, but rather as a differentiation of consciousnesses (Webb, 2005). He labelled one consciousness noetic, to which he attributed rational thought and scientific reasoning. It was the consciousness that determined what could be known through methodology, inquiry, interpretation and critical reflection (Webb, 2005). Voegelin

(1974) termed the second consciousness pneumatic, owing to his insistence that there was knowledge to be gained in a different, more spiritual way. He sometimes referred to this consciousness as existential consciousness. Voegelin referred to the noetic consciousness as the immanent pole, the concrete, personal experience of existence. He called the pneumatic consciousness the transcendent pole, which is often given names like "God" or "Being."

Central to Voegelin's definition of the two consciousnesses is not that both exist, but rather that they share a relationship. He describes the reality of existence as a "mutual participation . . . of human and divine" (1990, p. 187). Human conscious existence, according to Voegelin, is a participatory event between what is human and what is other (Mitchell, 2002). It is this human-divine participation that defines the essence of being (Hughes, 2004).

Voegelin uses the Greek word *metaxy* to describe the relational and participatory "between-ness" of lived reality, which is constantly experienced as a "condition of tension, especially of longing for what is Beyond or being pulled by it" (Webb, 2005, p. 62). Voegelin (1990) notes that "existence has the structure of the In-Between, of the Platonic *metaxy,* and if anything is constant in the history of mankind it is the language of tension" (p. 119). The tension between the two poles is what Voegelin is concerned with, not the poles themselves. He cautions that focusing on the poles transforms them from experiences of human existence into things. For example, when the focus is solely on the pneumatic pole, the Beyond becomes the tangible entity called "God" rather than a limit of human experience. Conversely, when the noetic pole is the object of singular focus, the human experience becomes encapsulated into a being, which is separate and apart from God (Webb, 2005).

For Voegelin, focusing on anything other than the tension between the two poles deprives people of their existence and humanity. Voegelin (1990) explains that "if man

exists in the metaxy, in the tension 'between god and man,' any construction of man as a world-immanent entity will destroy the meaning of existence, because it deprives man of his specific humanity" (p. 280). The attempt to objectify and concretize the non-material threatens the meaning of existence, reducing the "co-constituting elements of the 'tension' of consciousness into thing-like objects . . . as entities rather than as explanatory notations for the . . . in-between reality of consciousness" (Hughes, 2004, p. 26). The tension of metaxy is inherently uncertain, and this uncertainty can be troublesome. Efforts to resolve the tension and create certainty often lead to attempts to "consummate the metaxy" by forcing the transcendent pole of consciousness into the concrete and material (Mitchell, 2002, p. 8). The reduction of the transcendent to the realm of the immanent or material provides humanity with the pretense of understanding reality with certainty. Voegelin (2000b) claims that these attempts amount to nothing more than a rebellion against metaxic existence, a desire to eliminate the tension in order make certain the meaning of existence.

　　　　The elimination of tension in favor of competition. For Voegelin, the goal of Gnosticism is to eliminate this tension by placing the two poles of experience in direct competition with one another. The Gnostic sees the world divided between what is and what could or should be, between the tangible and the transcendental (Morris, 2008). Rather than find a balance between the two, the Gnostic creates a binary, pitting one experience against the other, assigns one the value of good and the other bad, and creates a system in order to have good triumph over bad. The traditional view of Gnosticism describes the transcendental experience as a new world, a kind of utopia that offers salvation from the present material world that is described as evil or bad (Raeder, 2007). Through personal effort and a privileged knowledge, people can escape the present experience and enter the new, perfect utopia (Edgoose, 2006; Morris, 2008; Raeder,

2007).

Voegelin takes this traditional definition of Gnosticism and turns it on its head. Instead of describing the Gnostic purpose as rejecting the material world in favor of the transcendental (Webb, 2005), Voegelin describes it as an attempt to incorporate the transcendent into the material. The significance of this shift in focus lays the foundation for the argument Voegelin uses to weave Gnostic ideology into the conversation of modern politics, an argument to which I will return later. I mention it here because it is worth noting that, although Voegelin changes the end result of Gnosticism away from its conventional rejection of the material in favor of the transcendental, he keeps the basic tenets of its ideology. There is still a radical duality between two experiences or existences. The two experiences remain locked in a struggle between good and evil, between old and new. The goal of existence is to abolish the tension between the two, to flee the old world in favor of the new one. Only, for Voegelin (1974), the "modern apocalyptic-Gnostic movements attempt to abolish the Metaxy by transforming the Beyond into this world" (pp. 237-238).

In order to better understand Voegelin's concept of existence-in-tension, it is necessary to discuss two central ideologies behind what he terms Gnosticism: the death of God and humanity's struggle for control over history. The death of God details the elimination of the transcendent reality, while the issue of the control over history focuses on humanity's attempt to redefine historical events entirely within the locus of the material/noetic consciousness.

The death of God. Voegelin (2000b) understands the goal of Gnosticism to be the establishment of a new, more perfect truth in place of the old. In order to accomplish

this goal, the reality of the material world's dependence on the transcendent must be destroyed. Thus, according to Voegelin "the death of God is the cardinal issue of Gnosis, both ancient and modern" (2000b, pp. 247-248). To Voegelin's Gnostic, God was merely a human creation, the work of human invention. Voegelin echoes Nietzsche's (2003) claim that "Alas, my brothers, that God whom I created was human work and human madness, like all gods" (p. 48). This claim was based on the assertion that what humans considered to be divine was essentially human to begin with.

The German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach is credited with first suggesting this notion, one which Marx and Nietzsche eventually used as the foundation for their allegations of the death of God. In his seminal work *The Essence of Christianity*, Feuerbach (1841/2004) suggests that "the proofs of the existence of God have for their aim to make the internal external, to separate it from man" (p. 204). That which is divine is merely an attempt to take qualities of humanity and give them life outside of human existence, to make what is internal external. Not only that, but humans take certain qualities and imagine them in their most perfect state, and then ascribe these states of perfection to their gods. Feuerbach explains the process in this way:

> The most perfect being is that which no higher can be conceived: God is the highest that man conceives or can conceive . . . . That which is the highest for man, from which he can make no further abstraction, which is the positive limit of his intellect, of his feeling, of his sentiment, that is to him God. (2004, pp. 202-203)

Feuerbach claimed that the goal of religion in general (and Christianity in specific) was to create a self-existence for its abstraction. That which had been abstracted from human

existence must be given its own, separate existence. Humans create the transcendent

being from an abstraction of what they imagine perfection to be. In the Gnostic sense,

this imagination is seen as a response to the state of turmoil found in the human

existence. In other words, the world is not perfect, so there must be something outside of

it that is perfect to which humans can ascribe perfection and claim as divine. Since the

Gnostic believes in a progression from chaos toward perfection, it is counterproductive to

remove the notion of perfection from human control and give it to the divine. The belief

that perfection can be attained through human effort must be possible if it is to be

realized, and the only way to attain this perfection is to take it back from God.

In this sense, what is seen as the death of God is little more than a taking back of

what initially belonged to humanity. It is this act of taking back what was thought to

belong to humans originally that Voegelin (2000b) terms the "murder of God" (p. 278).

Nietzsche (1974) too, celebrates the necessary role humanity undertook to make itself

whole once again "Whither has [God] gone? I will tell you. We have killed him - you

and I! We are all his murderers" (p. 181). Marx, like Nietzsche, recognized the illusory

character of transcendence and echoed the desire to draw it back into humanity. Once the

world of experience beyond truth has disappeared, then humanity can begin to establish

its own truth in the material world (Voegelin, 2000b).

Control over history. To seize complete control of human experience, one must

eliminate, not only the need for transcendence, but the actual existence of it. The

Gnostics accomplished this feat by wresting away the responsibility and control of

history from God and giving it to humanity. Much of the modern Western understanding

of history has been influenced by the Judeo-Christian thinkers of the last 2000 years,

most notably St. Augustine of Hippo. His interpretation of history through the Christian scriptures laid much of the framework for how the West viewed humanity's understanding of and participation in historical events.

According to Augustine, *historia sacra* were those events that were documented in the Christian Scriptures, which were written under divine inspiration and served a normative function for society. Any historical event that was not recorded in the Bible belonged to "profane" history and could not serve a normative purpose for humanity (Van Oort, 2012). This interpretation of history implied that humans were not able to explain current world events because they were outside the scope of human understanding (Gardner, 2013). Only those events that had been divinely revealed were understandable. Any present or future historical occurrences were best understood as belonging to God, wand would only be revealed through divine inspiration. Since the Scriptural canon of the Christian religion had been closed, there would be no additions to Augustine's definition of *historia sacra*. Thus, humanity had neither the capability to understand nor control the events of history; they belonged to God. Another way of understanding this idea was that all historical events belong to God – they both emanate from and return to God (Van Oort, 2012).

Of particular concern to Gnostics was a desire to place history into a teleologic context. What purpose did history serve? What was it moving toward? When would it end? These are the teleologic questions that concerned Gnostic thinkers, and subjecting the answers to the whim and control of God did not alleviate the problems they witnessed throughout humanity's existence. Augustine's response to these concerns was that history, or more precisely humanity's attempt to understand it, were not bound by time.

Temporal events were neither the concern nor interest of God. Augustine asserts that "God, as creator of the world, is simultaneously the One who created time, yet he is not subject to time" (Van Oort, 2012, p. 3). The temporal aspects of human existence, though created by God, are not something with which he is concerned. Augustine himself was not troubled by this notion, in part due to the fact that he believed humanity was already living in the last days, or the end of time. The incarnation of the divine in the example of the Christ had ushered in the end times, effectively reinterpreting history through the embodiment of the Church (Zakai & Mali, 1993). This event signaled that the end times were already present and would continue until his return (Van Oort, 2012).

This Judeo-Christian view of teleology dominated Western thought until the 12th century, when a monk named Joachim of Fiore sought to challenge Augustine's interpretation of humanity's control of history. Joachim extended the understanding of Augustine's *historia sacra* to include all of human history and essentially bound it within a teleologic interpretation of existence (Boxall, 2014). In other words, he broke from the Augustinian tradition by placing the understanding of the end times within the scope and grasp of human control (Hames, 2005). According to Joachim, the pattern of history bears the imprint of the divine, an assertion he connected to the triune belief of the Judeo-Christian God. Christianity professed a belief in God the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Whalen, 2010). The progressive self-revelation of this triune God fell into three great historical stages, each stage correlating with one of the three divine Persons. The first stage, assigned to God the Father, lasted from creation to the advent of the Christ. The second stage was under the direction of God the Son, and lasted until the 13th century. The last stage, designated by God the Spirit, would be the culmination of human

existence and last until the end of time (Gould & Reeves, 2001).

The significance of Joachim's assertion cannot be overestimated. Until his reconfiguration of historical understanding, much of humanity lived under the rule of Augustine's interpretation; the course of current human events was outside their control. Joachim allowed humans to begin to interpret history in terms that were inclusive of their being as opposed to being excluded and outside the realm of God's *historia sacra* (Boxall, 2014). The attractiveness of Joachim's reordering of history was that each stage was progressive toward the next. Whereas the first stage was identified as humanity being under the law of God, the second stage progressed from law and placed humanity under the grace of God. The third and final stage, embodied by the Spirit of God, would allow humanity to live in full freedom and understanding (Gould and Reeves, 2001). Each new stage was seen as both a continuation and perfection of the preceding one. The law was made more perfect in grace, and grace would be made more perfect through the freedom of human understanding. Gould & Reeves (2001) describe the transformation that occurred with Joachim's revelation as giving humanity a "clearly articulated faith in a new age to come, an age of new 'spiritual understanding' which could be translated into a new knowledge of a scientific age" (p. 342). Joachim's placement of history inside of human understanding eliminated the Augustinian categories of profane and sacred history. History and the knowledge it contained was not the domain of God alone, but rather had been slowly revealed over time, culminating in an age where humankind now lived in full freedom and understanding.

Summary. Voegelin (2000b) describes the aim of Gnosticism as an attempt to "destroy the order of being, which is experienced as defective and unjust, and through

man's creative power to replace it with a perfect and just order" (p. 278). It is humanity's responsibility to create the perfect and just order. For the Gnostic thinker, perfection is attainable through human endeavor, but humans must be given the ability to attain it. When the idea of perfection exists outside of human existence and even outside the world in a separate, abstract transcendent existence, then it is impossible for perfection to be realized. Thus, humans must take back what initially belonged to them, and bring about an end to the chaos and turmoil in the world. Gnosticism is concerned with placing the human attempt to gain actual knowledge above God. In order to accomplish this goal, it must remove the existence of both God and the transcendent. Perfection is possible for the Gnostic, but it must exist within this material world if it is to be realized. There can be no transcendent reality, historical interpretation or order of being. Gnosticism views the perfect order as immanent (material) and achievable in its entirety, subject only to the will and action of humanity.

Relevance to education. The persistence of Gnosticism to eliminate metaxic tension and redefine history is, in at least three ways, evident in education reform. Although these three Gnostic elements will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, a brief summary will serve to tie Voegelin's critique of political Gnostic thought to education. First, Gnosticism relies on a dissatisfaction of the present reality as motivation for eliminating tension. Education reforms over the last four decades have done so as well. Beginning with 1983's *A Nation at Risk,* reform policy has sought to describe education in less than favorable terms, attempting to create a dissatisfaction with the present in hopes that it will lead to necessary reforms (Berliner & Biddle, 1995).

Second, Gnostic perceptions of reality are founded on a radical and complete dualism. Ultimately, Gnostics see the human existence as mired and imprisoned in the

depravity of the material world. They understand their experience of the world "as an alien place into which man has strayed and from which he must find his way back home to the other world of his origin" (Voegelin, 2000b, p. 254). The material world is defined negatively, with the perfection of the world before creation lost in the spiritual fragments, or sparks (Edgoose, 2006). Dualisms in education are found in perspectives of curriculum and a hierarchy of knowledge, where sciences and math are viewed over and against the arts and humanities (Teese & Polesel, 2003). They are found in pedagogy, where teacher-centered learning is contrasted with a more student-centered focus (Neumann, 2013) as well as differentiating between the technical and relational elements of pedagogy.

Third, Gnosticism describes a belief in a secret knowledge that connects the transcendent spiritual world with the immanent physical world. This secret information acts as a saving knowledge to free the individual from the physical world and is intensely personal, focusing on the attainment of personal knowledge rather than action and behavior as the means of salvation (Morris, 2008). Standards and standardization serves in many respects as a kind of secret knowledge, closely regulated and controlled in order to "save" education (Clarke, 2015).

Post-Structuralism and Dialogic Pedagogy

Voegelin's understanding and application of metaxy, the relationship between the consciousnesses, provides the starting point for reframing pedagogical reform regarding its Gnostic influences. Rather than view standards and the standardization of pedagogy in terms of a dualistic either/or, Voegelin provides the opportunity to focus on the relational qualities inherent in pedagogy. The technical, standards-based components of pedagogy are necessary, but not at the expense of the relational components. The two aspects of pedagogy exist in a metaxic relationship that is grounded in a post-structural

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understanding of dialogic pedagogy.

Post-structuralism. Post-structuralism, like the development of the Gnostic heresy, is both a product and a process. It is both an outgrowth from and a reaction to structuralism, which initially began as a response to relative humanism (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 2008). Structuralism sought to identify invariant structures that were embedded in cultures and societies, the foundations that that create meaning (Slattery, 2013). This searching for invariant structures was a response to what was seen as the increasing relativism expressed in existentialism and phenomenology (Marshall, 2004). Structuralists privileged systems or sets of relations over specific phenomena or experiences in an attempt to "stop the hemorrhaging of subjectivity into the world" (Pinar et al., 2008, p. 457). In their minds, the existential and individualistic expressions of phenomena were actually identified and constituted by and these structures and relations. For example, a phenomenological exploration might describe education as it is experienced within the teacher-student relationship, while a structuralist analysis might explain education in terms of invariant structures and systems that shape both the teacher and student regardless of who they are (Pinar et al., 2008). In other words, the aim of structuralism was to ground experience and knowledge outside of the person, an anti-humanist approach to meaning and reality (Marshall, 2004). The structures themselves constitute reality.

Post-structuralism attempts to deconstruct these structures in order to reveal their inherent contingencies (Slattery, 2013). Two specific points of departure for the post-structuralists are language and power. Structuralism considers language to be systematized and codified, recognizing it as a medium through which structures are

revealed (Pinar et al., 2008). Language corresponds to reality, with words point to pre-existing things in the world and simply reflect their true nature (St. Pierre, 2000). A fixed and permanent reality lies underneath language.

Post-structuralism argues that nothing lies underneath language. Meaning and reality are never fixed, never "apprehended through language" (Slattery, 2013, p. 305). Discourse, the practice in which language itself forms the objects of which it describes, is central to post-structuralism (Pinar et al., 2008). Rather than perceiving language as a marker of fixed reality, discourse understands language and reality as co-constructive (St. Pierre, 2000). Whereas structuralism strives for unity and coherence between language and meaning, post-structuralism focuses on "the capacity to create new life-forms capable of disrupting old meanings . . ., even potentially overwriting or eclipsing them" (Davies & Gannon, 2005, p. 319).

The notion that language constructs reality rather than represent it underscores the question of power in post-structural thought. Structural thought considers knowledge to be power, and assumes that knowledge represents an undistorted view of reality (Pinar et al., 2008). This connection to power ascribes knowledge with essentializing qualities – it both names and defines reality. Post-structuralism challenges the essentializing power behind the knowledge/reality connection (Davies & Garon, 2005). By describing reality as co-constructed with language through discourse, meaning is no longer named and essentialized. Rather, it becomes the "site of departure, a place where reality is constructed, truth is produced, and power is effected" (Slattery, 2013, p. 305).

Post-structuralism in pedagogy. The relevance of the structuralism/post-structuralism conversation for educational contexts hinges, in part, on the understanding

and practice of pedagogy. Post-structural critiques often accuse traditional approaches to pedagogy of placing limits on the kinds of meaning that can emerge from learning (Osberg & Biesta, 2008). Traditional pedagogy limits acceptable learning through an understanding of curriculum that understands knowledge in terms of representation. Teaching in this regard is a matter of representing the world outside the classroom (Biesta, 2004). Through a representative curriculum, or body of knowledge, educators can control the meanings that emerge in learning environments (Au, 2007). The knowledge contained within the curriculum is equated to power and considers the meaning(s) inherent in it to precede any and all educational discourse (Osberg & Biesta, 2008). The end result is often a limitation as to what counts a legitimate knowledge and expressions of meanings (Kim, 2010).

A post-structural understanding of learning views pedagogy as an "experimentation in thought rather than a representation of knowledge" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 27). Learning is experimental because there is no finite definition of knowledge that is simply transmitted from one person to another. Teachers are more than just transmitters of a knowledge that somehow precedes the act of teaching, just as learners are more than empty receptacles waiting to be filled. All participants engaged in pedagogy add something to the curriculum (Biesta, 2004). In post-structural language, pedagogical participants collaborate with the curriculum to co-create meaning.

Participating in the active construction of meaning is only part of the post-structural argument for pedagogy. Not only is meaning co-constructed, but it can only occur within the pedagogical relationship. Ellsworth (2005) claims that "the limits of our knowledge . . . requires us to put ourselves in relation . . . . What we cannot know

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requires us to constantly traverse the porous boundaries between self and other" (p. 61).

Unlike the structural understanding of pedagogy that places limits on what counts as knowledge, Ellsworth suggests that our knowledge is limited because there is only so much one can independently know of the self, the other and the world. She continues by saying that:

> We cannot know self in absence of separate different others. We cannot know others in absence of self. We cannot know only through distinction, difference, and cutting, and we cannot know only through connecting, integrating, and cohering. We think only in relation. (p. 61)

Meaning, knowledge, and the practices of pedagogy exist only within relationships, within the recognition of difference and the other. Pedagogy cannot occur in isolation or be transmitted by one individual to another individual. It cannot exist in a monologic system, but is by nature dialogic (Matusov, 2009).

Post-structural dialogic pedagogy. Dialogic pedagogy recognizes that language is a fundamental element of teaching and learning (Stewart, 2010). The post-structural perspective of language understands that language is not representative of an external meaning, but is instead a co-creator of meaning (Pinar et al., 2008; Slattery, 2013). This meaning with and through language can only be constructed within the dialogic relationship. Smith (2010) describes this dialogic necessity in terms of existence by suggesting that "a person is *non*-self-sufficient . . ., the person exists in relation to other people" (p. 25). Bakhtin (1984) states that "a person's consciousness awakens wrapped in another's consciousness" (p. 138). In other words, dialogic pedagogy is necessary for both the construction of the self and the other as well as knowledge and meaning.

Ellsworth (2005) understands pedagogy as "experiences of being radically in relation to one's self, to others, and to the world" (p. 2). To describe pedagogy as dialogic is, in this sense, redundant. Pedagogy, by necessity, is always dialogic (Matusov, 2009).

This study considers a post-structural perspective of dialogic pedagogy as a necessary response to the dominant discourse of technical pedagogy and Gnostic standardization within education reform. While the concept of dialogic pedagogy will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, three specific elements central to its inclusion in the post-structural discourse are detailed in this section. Arendt's natality, Bakhtin's unfinalizability and Derrida's inventionalism work together to elucidate the unpredictable, co-creative nature of post-structural dialogic pedagogy.

Natality. Hannah Arendt (1958, 1961b) introduces the concept of natality to describe how people interact with and experience the world. Natality is the notion or idea of newness, "the condition which grounds our ability to insert ourselves in and become part of the world" (Hayden, 2012, p. 246). Every person, when they are born, brings a new experience and way of perceiving the world into which they enter, of having both a beginning and being a beginner (Biesta, 2010). This natality is the source of an individual's uniqueness and carries with it the potential to do something that has never been done before. The key for Arendt is that every new individual brings with him or her "something which could not be expected" (1961b, p. 170).

It is not just in the act of being born that individuals bring with them something new, but also through their speech and actions with others (Biesta, 2010). Every conversation or action performed in community allows individuals to "insert [themselves] into the human world and this insertion is like a second birth" (Arendt, 1958, pp. 176-

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177). This unending repetition of birth and rebirth allows individuals to continually

modify and condition the world in which they live (Champlin, 2013), actively resisting

the perception that reality and truth are products of fixed, known patterns of cause and

effect that "seem to rule the processes of natural life" (Schnell, 2002, p. 464). The world

will never and can never be set right once and for all. It is constantly in need of the

renewal that natality makes possible (Levinson, 1997).

     The continual presence of natality undergirds Arendt's purpose for education and

its responsibility to create opportunities for new individuals to become a person by

teaching them how to enter into a community through thought and action (Ljunggren,

2010). This entrance into community raises a concern for Arendt because, although each

individual's thoughts and actions are new, the community in which they are introduced

are not. Arendt (1961b) refers to this problem as belatedness, or the notion that

individuals are simultaneously heirs to a specific history and new to it, that "the world

does not simply precede us but effectively constitutes us as particular kinds of people"

(Levinson, 1997, p. 437). The existing community's ability to determine what kind of

thoughts and actions people can have creates the potential for stultifying natality. This

possibility is at the heart of Arendt's crisis in education. The crisis comes when

educators within the community force their expectations for the future onto new

individuals and ask them to conform their natality to experiences that are dictated by

others. Arendt (1961a) states that:

> The role played by education . . . shows how natural it seems to start a new world
>
> with those who are by birth and nature new. So far as politics is concerned, this
>
> involves of course a serious misconception: instead of joining with one's equals in

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assuming the effort of persuasion and running the risk of failure, there is

dictatorial intervention, based on the absolute superiority of the adult, and the

attempt to produce the new as a *fait accompli*, that is, as though the new already

existed. (pp. 176-177)

In other words, education runs the risk of forcing its views of what the future should hold

onto students, minimizing (if not eradicating) the effect of their natality on the world. By

reducing the importance of natality, education in this sense does not allow new

generations to envision a future very different from the future as well as the present's

hopes for the future (Higgins, 2010). The stultification of natality forces education to be

conduits of the present's notions of change for the future, in essence "[cutting] the future

down to the size of the present" (Rorty, 1999, p. 120).

    Unfinalizability. Bakhtin (1984) introduces the concept of unfinalizability to

describe the dialogic relationship, suggesting that individuals are defined by their "sense

of their inner unfinalizability, their capacity to outgrow, as it were, from within and to

render untrue any externalizing and finalizing definition of them" (p. 59).

Unfinalizability recognizes that dialogic interactions, at all times, contain an openness to

unpredictability and change, where participants can never "know with certainty who the

other is or can become" (Smith, 2010, p. 26). It understands the interactions between

dialogic participants, between the self and the other, as ongoing and, therefore,

unfinalizable (Latta, 2005). The nature of dialogue is a continuous, unending process of

anticipation and response to the other, always recognizing that one's voices contains the

voice of the other (Frank, 2005). As such, it is an impossibility for one to give the final

word about the other (Smith, 2010). Bakhtin (1984) states that "as long as a person is

alive he lives by the fact that he is not yet finalized, that he has not yet uttered his ultimate word" (p. 59).

Unpredictability and unforeseen possibilities are a necessary foundation to dialogue because they are integral to human nature. Bakhtin (1993) claims that "what constitutes [unforeseen possibility] is the human being; everything in this world acquires significance, meaning, and value only in correlation with . . . that which is human" (p. 61). The fact that significance and meaning are acquired through human dialogue and interaction as a necessary function of human nature means that participants are constantly involved in creating meaning. This act of creating can only be accomplished through the "interconnections between self and other" (Latta, 2005, p. 33). This creativity and innovation make human experience and event in the world and "incomplete and inconclusive place" (Hutson, 2000, p. 126).

Because the world and human nature are understood as incomplete, Bakhtin (1993) understands meaning and significance to be created in the singular event. Meaning, significance, and even human nature cannot be systematically understood because they are created through isolated moments. "All these moments, which make up the event in its totality, are present . . . as something given and as something to be achieved conjointly" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 30). It is precisely this simultaneous given and not-yet-achieved that makes dialogue unfinalizable. A person may enter in to dialogue with something to give, but this giving does not contain the totality of the event or meaning because it has not and cannot account for the not-yet-achieved. Bakhtin continues by describing the moments "of what-is-given, and what-is-to-be-achieved, of what is and what ought to be, of being and value [as] inseparable. All these abstract

categories are here constituent moments of a . . . once-occurrent whole – an event" (1993, p. 32). The both-and nature of dialogic interaction means that there can be no final word spoken because something yet-to-be-achieved is always possible, because the nature of each participant is always unfinalized (Karimova & Shirkhanbeik, 2012).

This act of unfinalized creating impacts form and content as well as the process of dialogue. The content of dialogic interaction is not something that exists separate and apart from the dialogue, but rather is intricately woven with the process. Bakhtin (1993) states that "content . . . does not fall into my head like a meteor from another world, continuing to exist there as a self-enclosed and impervious fragment, as something that is not woven into the unitary fragment of . . . an essential moment" (p. 33). Rather, content comes to be understood through the event itself, dependent on the interaction of the participants (Latta, 2005). Additionally, Bakhtin (1990) understands form to exist within the dialogic interaction along with content, stating that "form ceases to be outside us as perceived and cognitively ordered material; it becomes an expression of a valued-related activity that penetrates content and transforms it" (p. 305). Neither content nor form are outside actors that influence or construct the dialogic interaction. Instead, they are brought to life and given meaning through the interaction in which participants engage.

Inventionalism. The elements of unpredictability and uncertainty that undergird Bakhtin's unfinalizability are also present in Derrida's notion of inventionalism. Whereas Bakhtin focuses on the innate characteristics of human nature that create unfinalizable events, Derrida is concerned with the "in-coming of the other" as the source of uncertainty and possibility (Biesta, 2009, p. 104). The fact that dialogue occurs between participants, between the self and the other, necessitates inventionalism. One

cannot account for, predict, or control what the other brings to the event. Derrida (1989) insists that "[inventionalism] can consist only in opening, in uncloseting, destabilizing foreclosionary structures so as to allow for passage toward the other" (pp. 59-60). In other words, inventionalism seeks to remove barriers that hinder or prevent the other from participating in dialogue, resisting the idea that the other is something that can be produced, made or controlled (Miedema & Biesta, 2004).

Inventionalism resists outside structures that seek totality and control (Winter, 2011) simply because the other, by definition can neither be foreseen nor totalized (Biesta, 2009). Derrida explains that there can never be one true meaning or representation of meaning or reality because of the other (Taguchi, 2010). For example, in literature, the written text cannot serve as a marker or representation of truth or reality because it is impossible for it to contain or comprehend the myriad of possible meanings. This is what Derrida alludes to when he claims "there is nothing outside the text" (1979, p. 163). Meanings of concepts and texts do not exist outside the text; they only become possible or evident in their relation to all the other concepts brought to them by the reader (Taguchi, 2010). Meaning is brought forth from the interaction between the reader and the text, between the self and the other. The attempt to impose meaning or truth from outside this "deconstructive inventiveness" (Derrida, 1989, p. 59) threatens to cut off or exclude the in-coming of the other (Winter, 2011).

This threat of excluding the other, of negating or denying inventionalism, is an issue of justice for Derrida. His definition of justice as "the relation to the other" (1997, p. 17) involves a concern for both the presence of the other and the unpredictability of the relationship. In this respect, justice declares that it is impossible to articulate or totalize a

unified center of knowledge, experience, truth or meaning from which everything can be controlled (Miedema & Biesta, 2004). Derrida points to the "incalculable" nature of justice and its relationship to the other, claiming that "once you relate to the other as the other, then something incalculable comes on the scene, something which cannot be reduced to the law or to the history of legal structures" (1997, pp. 17-18). The inability to predict or determine the relational otherness of justice prevents it from being reduced, codified and structured into truth or law. Its very essence is relational, a recognition that the other exists. For the sake of justice "we are obligated . . . to keep the unforeseen possibility of the in-coming of the other, the surprise of the 'invention' of the other open" (Biesta, 2009, pp. 102-103). This surprise of the other is the driving force behind inventionalism within the dialogic construct.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Standardization in education, influenced by Gnostic philosophies and driven by accountability practices prevalent in current reform policy, attempts to restructure the dichotomous and relational nature of pedagogy into a dualism. This dualistic repurposing engenders competition and hierarchies within educational practices in order to establish certainty and control, which diminishes opportunities for learning. Despite the fact that there is currently no consensus on whether accountability practices (i.e., high-stakes testing and standardization) have a positive impact on student achievement (Nichols, Glass, & Berliner, 2012), educational policy continues its efforts to mandate the exclusive use of technical pedagogy in classroom instruction. This approach to pedagogy emphasizes the replicability of content and practices, which devalues the individual and relational components of pedagogy (Giles, et al., 2012; Lovat, et al., 2011; O'Malley,

2009). Although research shows relational pedagogy to be vital to student success (e.g., Davis, 2006; Fan, 2012; Huan, et al., 2012), policy aimed at standardizing pedagogical practices minimizes its role within classroom.

When a critique of Gnosticism is considered, especially Voegelin's (2000b, 1990) concepts of existence-in-tension metaxy, current reforms to standardize education can be viewed as an attempt to control pedagogy. The introduction of Gnosticism into the conversation frames the purpose of standardization in terms of duality and competition, which favors the technical aspects of pedagogy and its products (i.e., test scores) over the process of relational pedagogy. The emphasis on reducing education practices to information retrieval and testing for the purposes of data collection is an effort to exert control over student outcomes (Au, 2007; Kim, 2010), which effectively minimizes the necessary individuality of the learning experience (Rubin, & Kazanjian, 2011).

Learning, as well as student achievement, is achieved by living in the delicate balance between the technical and relational components of pedagogy. Recognizing the metaxic condition of learning, that it occurs in the in-between reality of technical and relational pedagogy and requires the constant interaction between process and product, is essential to education practices. The uncertainty of metaxy is viewed as problematic for education reform, and underlines its efforts to control and predict its outcomes (Douglass, et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2002; Taubman, 2009). As a result, the balance between the technical and relational aspects of pedagogy, echoed in Voegelin's understanding of consciousnesses (2000b, 1990), is disrupted. Voegelin understands this disruption as threatening the very meaning of existence by depriving individuals of their humanity (1990). In education terms, the disruption of balance threatens the very meaning and

possibility of learning. Ellsworth (2005) expresses this sentiment by stating that:

> When we look at test scores or curriculum content, we are looking at only one
> dimension of the reality of learning. That other dimension of the reality of
> learning – its nondecomposable continuity of movement and sensation, its felt
> reality of the relation that is experience couched in matter – is as real as test
> scores or curriculum content. When we overlook this dimension of the reality of
> teaching and learning, we not only impoverish our understandings of what we do
> as teachers and students, but we also open ourselves . . . to doing harm. (p. 35)

In order to promote learning and achievement in the classroom, pedagogy must address the affective as well as the cognitive elements of meaning making (Watkins, 2005). Teachers and educators must begin to move pedagogy away from the sole focus of technique toward a more relational epistemology (Bowers, 2010).

This study examines the necessity of relationships to both learning and education practices on two levels. One, it explores the general relationship between technical and relational pedagogy inherent in learning. Two, it investigates the specific role of the teacher-student relationship and how it serves to facilitate a dialogue between the participants engaged in the pedagogical process. A post-structural framework grounds this study's understanding of learning and pedagogy as existing in Voegelin's description of relational metaxy (1990). Rather than controlling educational outcomes by placing meaning on what counts as learning (Osberg & Biesta, 2008), pedagogical metaxy strives to emphasize the uncertain yet necessary human element of education, the realization that the participants involved in learning are actively engaged in creating meaning (Biesta, 2004). Learning is not controlled by the curricular content or predicted outcomes; it lives

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in the "in-between" spaces of teachers, students, curriculum, and standards. It is a relational and dialogic pedagogy.

The perceptions and practices of teachers as they navigate the metaxic relationship between standards, curriculum, and the pedagogical participants (i.e., teachers and students) is the focus of this study. The decision to focus solely on teacher's perspectives is based on their specific situation between all of the pedagogical aspects in question. They live in the space where all of the elements of pedagogy converge. This unique position affords them relevant and necessary insight on how the metaxy between standards and relationships function in the learning environment.

A post-intentional phenomenological method (Vagle, 2014) will guide the research questions and data collection process. Briefly stated, post-intentional phenomenology regards all elements of an experience as social constructs, where each one has the ability to both impact and be impacted through relationship that exists between them (Vagle, 2009). Because of this social existence, elements cannot be removed or isolated from the situated relationship in which they exist. They are partial and situated, constantly being "constructed, deconstructed, blurred and disrupted" (Vagle, 2014, p. 113). Post-intentional phenomenology resists the urge to codify and concretize learning through one specific element of the pedagogical relationship. It perceives the structure of experiences to be multistable and variant (Ihde, 2008), allowing for all the actors involved in the metaxic relationship that is pedagogy to influence learning.

The research question(s) for the study are as follows:

- How might pedagogical tension take shape in theoretical, practical, and participatory contexts?

- How do teachers respond to the tension (or relationship) between monologic and dialogic pedagogy?

- How do teachers position themselves within the tension (or relationship) between the technical and relational aspects of pedagogy?

- How do teachers participate in the tension (or relationship) between the pedagogical actors?

Working Definitions

- Carnival – A "temporary liberation . . . from the established order" through a "suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions," allowing for a "feast of becoming, change, and renewal" (Bakhtin, 1968, p. 10). These moments of change create opportunities for expressions of relationship other than hierarchies. The suspension of hierarchies allows for new meanings to emerge (Sidorkin, 2005; Tam, 2010).

- Compassion – The attempt to provide "a space . . . to begin understanding the unique perspectives of others, and for others to respond" (Yacek, 2014, p. 100). These spaces are most frequently sought through dialogue (Blinne, 2014; Yacek, 2014), and are often the result of a recognition of inequity or imbalance between the self and the other (Zembylas, 2013).

- Dialogic pedagogy – A transactional style of teaching that allows for multiple perspectives (a plurality of consciousness) to influence the inquiry process important to education (Stewart, 2010). This focus stresses the importance of language in the learning environment (Bignell, 2011; Cuenca, 2011; McAuley, 2013). Dialogic pedagogy centers on processes that introduce "a variety of

perspectives, facilitating critical thought through people involved in mutual respect and shared discussion" (Bowers, 2005, p. 370).

- Gnosticism – A collection of religious ideas and practices traditionally labeled as heresy by the Catholic Church (Tiessen, 2007), in part because of their perceived humanist interpretations of the divinity of the Christ (Parvis, 2008). Gnosticism attempts to "destroy the order of being, which is experienced as defective and unjust, and through man's creative power to replace it with a perfect and just order" (Voegelin, 2000bp. 278). A dissatisfaction with the present, an insistence on radical dualism, and the belief in a secret knowledge are the practices Gnosticism uses to accomplish this goal.

- Humility – The acceptance of the unknowable. Far from being a surrender or reluctant acceptance, it is an active recognition, a "willingness to live with and learn from the unpredictable" (Seitz, 2004, p. xi), marked "at once by an active pursuit of . . . agency in the unpredictable and unknown" (Vagle, 2011, p. 363).

- Inventionalism – The dialogic act of "opening, . . . uncloseting, destabilizing foreclosionary structures so as to allow for passage toward the other" (Derrida, 1989, pp. 59-60). The recognition that one cannot account for or predict what the other brings to the event, resisting the idea that the other is something that can be produced, made or controlled (Miedema & Biesta, 2004).

- Metaxy – A description of lived reality as "in-between-ness," a relational and participatory event between self and other (Voegelin, 1990). Reality does not exist within the self or the other, but rather in the space, or interaction, between the two.

- Monologic pedagogy – A view of teaching and learning that is focused on the transmission of knowledge and seeks to control the discourse by focusing on the power of the teacher (Lyle, 2008). It expresses an understanding of truth and knowledge as referential and repeatable by others (Newsom, 2009). This repeatable truth encourages the development of systems for the purposes of certainty and unity (Newsom, 2009).

- Natality – The source of an individual's uniqueness and the recognition that every new individual brings with him or her "something which could not be expected" (Arendt, 1961, p. 170). Every person, when they are born, brings a new experience and an unexpected way of perceiving the world into which they enter (Biesta, 2010). This newness functions as, "the condition which grounds our ability to insert ourselves in and become part of the world" (Hayden, 2012, p. 246).

- Pedagogical tension – The notion that the space between pedagogical participants, created within relational interactions, is inherently uncertain and unpredictable. The relational and participatory "between-ness" (Voegelin, 1990) of pedagogy is constantly experienced as a "condition of tension, especially of longing for what is Beyond or being pulled by it" (Webb, 2005, p. 62).

- Standardization – The implementation of more homogenous pedagogical practices, management strategies, and curriculum frameworks for the purpose of increasing test scores. The accountability practices and gnostic influences that undergird standardization amount to a kind of "pedagogical fundamentalism," using a predetermined set of standards to deny the needs of the individual (both teachers and students) for the sake of conformity (O'Malley, 2009, p. 250).

- Relational pedagogy – The recognition that "learning and relationships are integrally intertwined and are pivotal to the success of schools, teachers, and students" (Bernstein-Yamashiro, & Noam, 2013, p. 28), suggesting that pedagogy is not defined by specific participants, methods, curricula, or ideas commonly associated with teaching and learning. Rather, pedagogy exists in the in-between spaces of all of these elements. It is created through intentional interactions, most noticeably within the teacher-student relationship

- Technical pedagogy – The skills and knowledge sets that are essential for education participants to compete and succeed globally, specifically what students are expected to know and what teachers must do to prepare to teach (Phillips, 2015). Examples of technical pedagogy concerns are identifying and measuring teacher capacity (Zhang & Stevens, 2013), mandating instructional alignment (Early, Rogge, & Deci, 2014), quantifying the impact of pedagogical relationships on measurable student achievement (e.g., Birch & Ladd 2007; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Roorda, Koomen, Spilt, & Oort, 2011), and identifying and measuring teacher dispositions (Alawiye & Williams, 2010).

- Unfinalizability – Bakhtinian (1984) notion that individuals are defined by their "their capacity to outgrow, as it were, from within and to render untrue any externalizing and finalizing definition of them" (p. 59). The recognition that dialogic interactions, at all times, contain an openness to unpredictability and change, where participants can never "know with certainty who the other is or can become" (Smith, 2010, p. 26).

II – LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining pedagogical metaxy involves identifying key elements that intersect and dialogue within both the educational and learning environment. Six elements are identified in this study as participating in the metaxic construction of pedagogy. They are monologic pedagogy, dialogic pedagogy, technical pedagogy, relational pedagogy, the teacher as pedagogical actor, and the student as pedagogical actor.

These six elements are dichotomized on three separate but intersecting continua. The monologic and dialogic pedagogies occupy the poles at the end of the theoretical continuum. The monologic pole defines the Gnostic influences behind the efforts to standardize pedagogy (Au, 2007; Kim, 2010). The dialogic pole, identified by the notions of natality (Arendt, 1961), inventionalism (Derrida, 1989) and unfinalizability (Bakhtin, 1984), provide a post-structural "push back" to standardization.
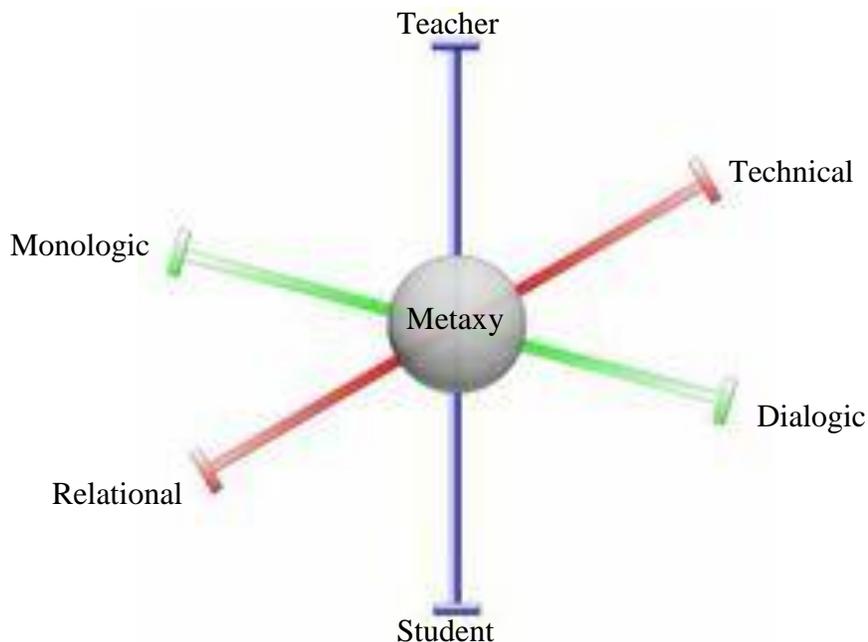
Figure 1. The three continua of pedagogical metaxy

The technical and relational components of pedagogy comprise a praxis continuum focused on the practical application of pedagogy in the classroom. The technical pole is defined by the skills, knowledge and dispositions necessary to teach and learn (Hostetler, 2002). Efficiency and achievement are the motivating factors for technical pedagogy, which is seen as focused on the pedagogical actors. The relational pole is categorized by the relational event of pedagogy as opposed to the actors (Bernstein-Yamashiro, & Noam, 2013). It highlights the situated nature of pedagogy, which influences the event along with the particular technique.

The final continuum focuses on the influence of two primary actors involved in classroom pedagogy, the teacher and the student. A student-centric pedagogy seeks to identify possible correlates between the relational component of teaching and student outcomes, namely achievement and behavior (Baker, 2006). The teacher-centric pole recognizes that student outcomes are influence by teachers' personal characteristics as well as content and pedagogy knowledge (Serdyukov & Ferguson, 2011). The remaining pages of this chapter focus on each of the three continua.

Monologic/Dialogic Pedagogy

Monologic pedagogy (Gnosticism in education). Monologic pedagogy is concerned with the transmission of knowledge and seeks to control the discourse by focusing on the power of the teacher (Lyle, 2008). It is grounded in a monologic understanding of truth, which is essentially propositional. Truth is referential and repeatable by others as either true or untrue (Newsom, 2009). Truth is understood as existing prior to error or untruth, and it remains pure while untruth is contaminated (King, 2003). Monologic truths also gravitate toward systems because they seek unity

(Newsom, 2009). Truth is seen as uniform where untruth is scattered and multiform (King, 2003). This monologic truth can be comprehended by a single consciousness; it is capable of being spoken by a single voice (Newsom, 2009).

Connections between gnostic ideas and education are evident in certain elements of standardized reform efforts (accountability practices and high-stakes testing), which contribute to a monologic view of pedagogy. I argue that the influence of these ideas are detrimental to the balance between the technical and relational components of pedagogy, which is necessary for student learning. Three specific ideas that are foundational to both the process and product of Gnosticism are the focus of this section. The first notion is the gnostic dissatisfaction with the present reality, an ever-increasing chaotic present that can only be resolved through human intervention (Raeder, 2007). This dissatisfaction leads to a gnostic utopianism, which is evident in standardization reform efforts. The second and third influences, a radically dualistic view of reality and the belief in a secret knowledge, are tied directly to the understanding of a dystopic and broken present.

Dissatisfaction with the present. The motivation for much of Gnostic theology and thought was a negative view of the present reality, the notion that the world is in a state of constant decline (Edgoose, 2006). This pessimistic view stems from the gnostic understanding of creation and the belief that a less-than-perfect being in a moment of selfishness created the existing world (Brakke, 2011). Through this imperfect and selfish creation narrative, humans find themselves separated from perfection and transcendence. Gnostics recognize that the world has been flawed since its creation, and that present suffering is the cause of an imperfect cosmos (Morris, 2008).

The imperfect state of the present is not humanity's fault, but rather is its burden

to bear. Humans have been placed in their present reality against their will, a "prison from which [they] want to escape" (Voegelin, 2000b, p. 255). They did not create their present reality, yet they must find a way out of it into the realm of transcendence where they truly belong (Brakke, 2011; Raeder, 2007; Tiessen, 2007). The present, then is viewed almost as a "mistake," something that was unintentional yet "must be rectified" (Brakke, 2011, p. 58).

In terms of education reform, the 1980s ushered in an era of unprecedented dissatisfaction with the education system, a "fundamental disappointment with public education and a pervasive belief that schools [were] not doing what they should to educate the population of the future" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008, p. 158). Berliner and Biddle (1995) trace the origins of this dissatisfaction to the political and economic shift that occurred in the decade immediately preceding 1980. The economic recession and skyrocketing inflation of the 1970s marked an alarming departure from the progressivism and optimism of the post-World War II era. Combined with the federal government's increased role in public education through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965, the newly elected conservative political power structure sought a way to relieve and resolve the problems facing the country.

Education reform has long been the American rallying cry for alleviating cultural anxieties and re-establishing hope and optimism (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Beginning with the Common School era in the 1840s, Horace Mann proclaimed the public education system as the answer to the moral deterioration plaguing the country due, in part, to an influx of immigrants (Slattery, 2013), likening the common school to "salvation" from the "social hell" that lay before the American populous (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 1).

This same grandiose language was front and center in the seminal report *A Nation at Risk*, which painted a very dystopic and dissatisfied picture of the present state of education. According to the report, educational achievement had declined sharply as evidenced by SAT and NAEP data. Additionally, the American economy was losing its competitive global advantage through the loss of labor-intensive, low-skill production, a process termed "de-industrialization" (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 141). The answer conveyed to these issues was a radical restructuring of the education system to allow Americans to compete in the burgeoning fields of science, engineering and technology. Thus there was a need to create disillusionment with the present education system in order to sway public opinion toward radical reform.

This disillusionment and dissatisfaction with the present was aided, in part, by the political unrest in education policy. The first half of the twentieth century expressed the notion that education was a system that could be monitored and manipulated scientifically. In terms of political science, it was thought of as a closed system, predictable and maintainable. Then came the 1960s, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Civil Rights movement, and "the politics of education . . . erupted in conflicts between contending groups" (Tyack & Cuban, 1995, p. 29). This unrest and disruption of the supposed closed system engendered a distrust in the public school system, which began to take on blame for larger social issues (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Seizing on the growing public dissatisfaction, the federal government began to paint a picture of a dystopic education system in need of reform.

Utopianism. Dystopian dissatisfaction alone can be cynical and nihilistic. Often, it is used as a motivation to strive for something better, something more utopic. This

utopic urge is described as "a universal impulse to measure life as it is by a life as it might or should be" (Papastephanou, 2008, p. 92). Utopian thinking embodies the notion of perfectability, a "form of speculative reflection about an ideal world . . . a way of thinking that is projected very much into the future and consequently subverts the present order of things" (Halpin, 2001, p. 115). Utopias are used to move the unsettled dissatisfaction created by dystopic illusions toward something more ideal.

Historically, education has always held fast to a utopian conviction that better schooling would lead to a better society (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). From Horace Mann's salvific promise to current calls for reform, schools have been thought of as "perfectable sites" (Fischman & McLaren, 2000, p. 168). The very notion of education, not just schools and schooling, has long been described as "*inherently* utopian, concerned as it with our desires and hopes for the future" (Webb, 2012, p. 595).

Dewey (1916) continued some of the same sentiments expressed by Horace Mann that better schooling would lead to a better society. Although much of what he expressed in terms of educational utopianism centered on a critique of the expansion of industrialism in schooling (Schutz, 2002), he insisted that actions "imbue the world with meaning" (Freeman-Moir, 2011, p. 206). Education is a process through which people are encouraged to filter their own experiences and ideas through discourse with the community, a place where "each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own" (Dewey, 1916, p .87).

Dewey argued that education devoted to action would foster democratic communities, allowing participants to work collaboratively to solve shared problems and highlight the uniqueness of the individual within society (Schutz, 2002). Dewey's

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emphasis pointed to the opportunity and responsibility of the individual to work within the community rather than have the community dictate the individual's actions. The success of democracy in education could be overcome through careful scientific inquiry. Although he never suggested that democracy could be perfected, he believed that increasingly perfect democracies could be achieved through democratic methods (Schutz, 2002). In this sense, Dewey promotes a utopian view of democratic education where the methods used to school individuals could bring about a more perfect society built on democratic ideals. In other words, through a careful and responsible use of scientific inquiry, one could reach ever closer to a perfect state of democracy. This notion of increased perfection has continued to dominate the educational landscape for the last 100 years.

The reliance on a utopian view of democracy can be detrimental to a society and its activities, especially with regard to education. Participants engaged in democratic processes must rely on a "'democratic faith,' the fundamental belief that democracy has a powerful meaning, that it can work, and that it is necessary if we are to maintain freedom and human dignity in our social affairs" (Apple & Beane, 2007, p. 7). This reliance on "democratic faith" puts the onus of success or failure on an ideal rather than the constituents of the society. Dewey's insistence on placing responsibility on the individual is replaced with adherence to a specific belief in an idea. The actions of individuals intended to be vetted by discourse with others in the community are judged instead by whether or not they meet the approved criteria of the democratic ideal. Inevitably, the uniqueness critical to democratic success outlined by Dewey is supplanted by the need to control and uphold the ideal. In other words, the reliance on participation of the

individual is given over to the necessity to maintain order if perfection is to be attained.

Utopian thinking has recently re-emerged as a key concept in radical pedagogy (Fischman & McLaren, 2000) after critics accused it of being simultaneously totalitarian and unrealizable. Proponents of educational utopianism counter the first of these claims by distinguishing between relative and absolute utopianism. This distinction, proposed by Manheim in 1940 (as cited in Webb, 2009), describes relative utopias as unrealizable within the existing order, whereas absolute utopias are unrealizable in any given order (p. 747). Absolute utopias are akin to flights of fancy and daydreams. Relative utopias, however, are possible if and when the existing order changes. Radical utopian pedagogies adhere to relative utopianism, determined to create more democratic spaces within education as a challenge to the neoliberal existing order (Fischman & McLaren, 2000; Webb, 2009).

Drawing largely from the work of Freire, radical utopian pedagogy are conceptualized as "an open-ended process of becoming" (Webb, 2012, p. 597) to counter the claims of totalitarianism. Freire (1996) described it as the process of humanization, the act of becoming more fully human. The utopian process of becoming more fully human serves as "an unconscious ontological pull from the future that drives us on our journey" (Webb, 2012, p. 596). This ontological pull resists finality, a desire to link utopian thinking to a specific event or finite historical moment (Fischman & McLaren, 2000). It refuses to "collapse the future into the present," thus creating a "singular monolithic vision" of utopianism that imposes itself on the unwilling present (Webb, 2009, p. 751).

Gnostic utopianism. This distinction between totalitarian utopianism, grounded in

finite historical moments, and the utopianism of radical and critical pedagogies is also the

distinguishing feature of gnostic utopianism. Unlike Dewey (1916) who argued for a

kind of democratic utopianism devoted to action and collaboration, or Freire (1996) who

suggested a radical utopianism devoted to openness and the process of humanization,

Gnostic utopianism is grounded in a desire for certainty and perfection (Bell, 2010). It

considers utopia to be a static state that is within human reach (Terreblanche, 2007),

which runs counter to Freire's process of becoming. Whereas Dewey stressed the

importance of collaboration to highlight the uniqueness of the individual (Schutz, 2002),

totalitarian utopianism sees the individual as the greatest challenge to perfection (Bell,

2010).

Gnosticism is concerned with human intervention into domains that were

previously considered to belong to God, specifically time and history (Gould & Reeves,

2001). As such, there is a need to assign temporal and even material qualities to utopian

ideals. Unlike radical utopianism that resists linking utopia to a specific or finite event,

Gnostic utopianism requires it. Education reforms that assign temporal or spatial

qualities to the future can be thought of as Gnostic.

One example of Gnostic utopianism in recent education reform is the 2001

reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, more commonly known

as No Child Left Behind. This reauthorization mandated that all American students

should be proficient in reading, math and science by the year 2013-2014 (Fritzberg,

2004). Additionally, proficiency levels were to be determined by the administration of

standardized tests (Levine & Levine, 2012; Rhodes, 2012). Thus there exists both a

temporal and material quality to the utopian ideal. All students will be deemed

educationally proficient by a specific date utilizing specific materials.

The problem with this type of standardized reform is twofold. One, it forces a

singular vision of the utopic future onto the present, which relegates it to the realm of

totalitarianism with regard to utopian thinking. It constricts utopian outcomes to only one

acceptable goal with temporal and material qualities, not allowing space for differences

or additional possibilities. Fishman and McLaren (2000) note that utopian educational

spaces "do not require the negation of difference . . . for their realization and fulfillment,"

which stands in direct opposition to the Gnostic utopianism of standardization (p. 168).

Consequently, the utopian future is expressed in terms of what will be rather than what

might be.

Two, at its core, Gnostic utopianism in education is concerned with control.

Whereas the radical educational utopianism expressed by Freire is concerned with

developing "solidarity with others" by struggling together in the classrooms and in

schools (Fischman & McLaren, 2000, p. 170), the utopianism of traditional education

reform is concerned with maintaining present control over the future. Hannah Arendt

(1961a) illustrates this point through the perceived relational roles embedded within

education. For Arendt, the responsibility of education is to create opportunities for new

individuals to become a person by teaching them how to enter into a community of

thought and action (Ljunggren, 2010). It is the responsibility of educators to instruct and

guide their students through the process of becoming participants in a democratic

community, a responsibility that lies at the heart of Arendt's crisis in education.

Educators must assume responsibility for a world that, though they themselves did not

make and may wish it otherwise, they must create a space for new individuals to bring new experiences into a pre-existing world as they see it (Biesta, 2010). The crisis comes when educators instead force their expectations for the future onto new individuals and ask them to conform to experiences that are dictated by others. Arendt states that:

> The role played by education in all political utopias from ancient times onward shows how natural it seems to start a new world with those who are by birth and nature new. So far as politics is concerned, this involves of course a serious misconception: instead of joining with one's equals in assuming the effort of persuasion and running the risk of failure, there is dictatorial intervention, based on the absolute superiority of the adult, and the attempt to produce the new as a *fait accompli*, that is, as though the new already existed. (1961b, pp. 176-177)

In other words, the adults and educators in a society aimed at creating a utopia force their views of what the future should hold onto their students. Education in this sense does not allow new generations to envision a future very different from the future as well as the present's hopes for the future (Higgins, 2010). The utopian mandate forces education to be conduits of the present's notions of change for the future, in essence "[cutting] the future down to the size of the present" (Rorty, 1999, p. 120).

Radical dualism. The Gnostic creation narrative, which sets the stage for the justification of a dissatisfaction with the present, is grounded in a radical dualism. In Gnostic thought, radical duality is expressed most noticeably through the belief in a complete and total separation of the spiritual world with the physical world (Johnson, 2004). One account of the Gnostic creation narrative describes how the transcendent being responsible for the creation of the material world separated the material from the

transcendent. Wisdom, one of the eternal and transcendent beings, produced a thought on her own, separate and apart from her male consort. The result of this independent action was the creation of the first pseudo-divine being that does not belong to the complete and perfect transcendent order (Brakke, 2011, p. 58). This pseudo, or false god, is referred to as the "demiurge" in Gnostic literature, and is responsible for creating the physical world (Morris, 2008). The presence of a pseudo god and his creation allows for the construction of a hierarchy, where Wisdom and the other perfectly transcendent beings are at the top. The physical world is at the bottom, with at least one iteration of pseudo-transcendence (the demiurge) inhabiting the space between the material and the transcendent. Whereas the transcendental world is thought of in terms of complete harmony, the material world is expressed as "disharmony," the complete and total opposite of transcendence (Brakke, 2011).

Although the concept of radical dualism was initially coined to describe the materiality and co-eternality of good and evil (e.g., God and Satan, transcendent and material), the term has come to represent any system that revolves around a central binary pairing (Martin, 2007). The Cartesian dualism of the mind and the body serves as the binary foundation for much of modern Western thought and cognitive development by expressing that "the soul through which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body . . ., and even if there were no body at all, it would not cease to be all that it is" (Descartes, 1998, p. 19). Not only are the two elements of existence distinct from one another, Descartes understands them as having a hierarchical relationship. The notion that the mind would continue to exist without the body gives it a more transcendental and eternal quality, suggesting that the mind is above the material.

This hierarchical construction, along with radical exclusivity that they embody, is what makes dualisms problematic. In order to recognize the issues inherent in dualisms, it is necessary to understand the difference between dichotomies and dualisms. The two descriptors are not synonymous. Plumwood (2002) explains that dichotomies involves making a division or determining a distinction. Dualisms attach to these distinction specific characteristics, or features, that are the result of domination. Plumwood describes dualism specifically as:

> a relation of separation and domination inscribed and naturalized in culture and characterized by radical exclusion, distancing and opposition between orders construed as systematically higher and lower, as inferior and superior, ruler and ruled, center and periphery. It treats the division as part of the natures of being construed as not merely different but as belonging to radically different orders or kinds, and hence not open to change. (p. 23)

This separation and domination is achieved by magnifying, distorting and emphasizing differences while simultaneously denying or trivializing any similarities. This complete and total separation intends to create a "major . . . division in reality between utterly different orders of things" (Plumwood, 2002, p. 25).

Bleazby (2013) describes the necessity of radical dualism in Western philosophy as being "fundamentally shaped by a desire for certainty . . . [which] has given rise to the notion of an ultimate, eternal, fixed reality" (p. 9). This desire for certainty conflicts with human experience which suggests that reality is anything but fixed and eternal. Dualisms provide certainty rather than subjectivity and doubt (Macfarlane, 2015). Reason, the human faculty that allows people to construct an absolute and resolute knowledge out of

subjective and temporal experience, provides a solution to the problem. Dewey (1916) echoed Descartes when he explained that "through reason, the individual is meant to be able to transcend their embodied situatedness and objectively observe a fixed, eternal reality" (p. 9). The development of Reason as the disembodied faculty of human knowledge construction is founded on the Cartesian principle that views experiential reality as fallible and constantly changing. In order to for Reason to have transcendental and absolute qualities, it must be separated from the experiential body and be placed above concrete materiality. This hierarchical separation creates the radical dualism between mind/Reason and body/experience.

Of particular concern to this study is the radical dualism that education makes between the teacher and the student. In general, this dualism persists in the distinction made between teacher-centered and student-centered learning approaches. These approaches to learning are often couched in binary terms, being defined in opposition to one another (Neumann, 2013). Student-centered learning is often described as "placing students at the center of the learning process and prioritizing their needs as individuals," while teacher-centered learning is thought of as being driven by an expert in a "specialist body of knowledge" that is transmitted to students in a manner the teacher chooses (Macfarlane, 2015, p. 105). Although multiple meanings exist for student-centered learning (Chung & Walsh, 2000), it is often expressed as students constructing knowledge by themselves in a manner that relegates the teacher to a facilitator of knowledge construction (Mascolo, 2009). By assigning the teacher to the role of facilitator, a moral judgment is conveyed in that the two styles of learning (teacher-centered and student-centered) are distinctly different, with one being labeled good and

the other bad (Macfarlane, 2015).

This logic of learning tends to be reductive, equating student-centered learning with a false understanding of constructivism (Neumann, 2013). In most constructivist approaches, learning is considered an "active process in which learners build up personal knowledge representations that are the products of their own learning experiences" (Lunenberg & Korthagen, 2005, p. 2). This constructivist learning approach is primarily focused on the actions of the students. Yet, in the teacher-centered versus student-centered dualism, knowledge construction is often defined in terms of the "source of power and authority in the classroom" (Mascolo, 2009, p. 7). By locating the learning process within the source of power, student construction of knowledge is often understood against the necessary weakening of the role of the teacher. Descriptors often highlight radical differences between the two learning styles. Teacher-centered approaches are defined as passive acquisition of knowledge through transmission, while student-centered approaches are understood as active knowledge construction that emphasize using and communicating knowledge (Huba & Freed, 2000). Mascolo (2009) highlights three specific issues with current conceptions of student-centered learning – 1) they promote active student engagement at the expense of active teaching, 2) they privilege individual experience over "linguistically-mediated cultural knowledge," 3) and they confuse desired outcomes of education with the developmental processes that generate those outcomes (p. 7).

More specifically, the teacher-student dualism impacts the ways in which educators approach teaching in secondary schools. Secondary education in the United States typically consists of middle schools and high schools. Students normally attend

these schools during adolescence, between the ages of eleven and nineteen. This

particular demarcation, adolescence, has a significant influence over how students are

often perceived, often as a subculture sharply distinct from adult culture (Finders, 1998).

Adolescence is thought of as a developmental stage in life (Lesko, 2012). The

people that occupy this stage, teenagers, are neither children nor are they adults. They

are in the process of becoming something they have yet to achieve. This developmental

label effectively "freezes students in time and space without agency, context, politics, or

power" (Vagle, 2011, p. 363). They are "encapsulated in an age-structuring system that

keeps them liminal, or timeless ('always becoming') in their adolescent years" (Lesko,

1996, p. 456).

The construction of adolescence as a distinct time period is a social construction

which is often regarded as a "natural" life cycle that is biologically determined (Finders,

1998, p. 255). In other words, certain social and political conditions helped establish the

construction of adolescence. Yet, it is often passed off as a naturally occurring life

process in life, something that cannot be avoided. This social construction of

adolescence is intended to serve the adult rather than the child. Its purpose is to

understand, categorize, label, control, measure and ultimately redirect individuals (Lesko,

2012; Vagle, 2011).

This developmental perception allows teachers (and other educators) to make

decisions for and about these students. Adolescents are seen as incomplete people who

cannot make decisions for themselves, primarily because they are overwhelmed with

uncontrollable hormones and lack the necessary critical thinking skills (Conklin, 2010;

Finders, 1998; Lesko, 2012). As a result, they "cannot represent themselves, but must be

represented" (Lesko, 1996, p. 456). This perceived need for representation, in part, creates the context for Arendt's (1961a) crisis in education. Adolescent students are seen as not able to function correctly or appropriately because of their developmental state. Thus, it becomes necessary for adults to decide for students what is best. This decision is made in the present, but always with future leanings. What is best for students now is so because it is what will be best for us in the future. Since students are not able to discern what is best for the future, adults must represent their interests in the present (Higgins, 2010).

This representative perception of adolescence, born out of the dualism that students are under development while adults are not, impacts the way teaching occurs in the secondary classroom. Typically, adolescent students are viewed in ways that limit or deny diversity (Finders, 1998). Teachers often refer to students in negative or pejorative terms, describing them as packs or herds (Conklin, 2010; Finders, 1998). This descriptor essentially strips students of individuality and assigns them a collective identity. Additionally, echoes of Nietzsche's (1974) critique of the "herd" mentality, claiming that "morality trains the individual to be a function of the herd and to ascribe value to himself only as a function" (p. 174). In education terms, the descriptions of adolescents as packs or herds made by teachers and educators places value on the individual only as a member of the collective. Students are expected to behave and perform a certain way or incur derogatory labels by their supervising adults (Lesko, 1996).

The denial of diversity and the incorporation of herd mentality allow educators and teach adolescents in a standardized and linear fashion (Conklin, 2010; Lesko, 2012). The view of adolescence as distinctly other and different from teachers is a "foundational

element of secondary schooling that helps make traditional ideas of teaching and curriculum reasonable and necessary" (Lesko, 2012, p. 190). These traditional ideas often involve standardized an authoritarian practices because education and learning are often viewed in a linear fashion. There is always a movement from the present toward the future. There is always a development from immaturity toward maturity. Those who have matured or become the future of what was once their present (teachers and adults) consider themselves to be in a position to determine how packs of adolescents will do the same. There is often one way of teaching to reach one common educational goal, and teachers often measure "themselves and their students against [this] singular standard" (Finders, 1998, p. 257).

Secret knowledge. A dualistic perception of reality, accompanied by a dissatisfaction with the present, requires a way to escape the material world and enter the transcendental world. For the Gnostic, this "way out" was embodied through a secret *gnosis,* or knowledge (Edgoose, 2006; Morris, 2008). Two elements are key to understanding this cornerstone from which the Gnostics were assigned their label. One, it was a specific body of knowledge that allowed humans to "transcend their present condition of imprisonment in a material body" (Brakke, 2011, p. 63). It was a constructed formula for salvation, which was based on altering one's self. Thus, the Gnostic presented himself as a prophet of sorts, proclaiming to possess knowledge concerning the salvation of humankind (Raeder, 2007).

Two, this salvific knowledge was said to be secret, closely guarded, and possessed by a few who were charged with handing it down to others (Tiessen, 2007). It was a secret only to be shared by those who had received it from a reliable source, closely

guarded in order to maintain its purity and salvific intent (Morris, 2008). It was not a naturally occurring knowledge that could be discovered in the present reality. Rather, the Gnostics understood that humanity had to be shown the way out of their present evil by a specific messenger (Voegelin, 2000b).

The influence of a Gnostic secret knowledge on education, closely tied to the notions of and salvation and protection, has materialized within the neoconservative shift in current education policy. The goal of these reforms is to closely guard what counts as knowledge in education in order to protect and save what is perceived as an erosion of Western thought and ideals, not just in education, but in our society as well (Apple, 2006, 2005; Buras & Apple, 2008). Apple (1998) describes this notion in the following way:

> High drop-out rates, a decline in functional literacy, a loss of standards and discipline, the failure to teach real knowledge and economically useful skills, poor scores on standardized tests . . ., we are told, have led to declining economic productivity, unemployment, poverty, a loss of international competitiveness, and so on. Return to a common culture, make schools more efficient, more responsive to the private sector. Do this, and our problems will be solved. (p. 5)

The premise is that the failing education system is to blame for the ills of society. If the "common culture" espoused in traditional Western ideology is to be saved, it must be saved through education. The neoconservative solution to this issue is to re-establish "order and control" and "traditional morality" (Hill, 2013, p. 7). The method of order for the sake of salvation is a closely guarded control over what counts as knowledge in education, most often expressed through the adoption of national and state standards.

The push for mandatory national and statewide curricula, although most often

expressed as a call for unifying and consolidating curriculum content, is also a response to something more fundamental to society and culture (Apple, 2005). It is a response to a perceived threat to intellectual and moral standards. Neoconservative critics argue that the influence of multicultural and liberal/progressive education reforms have eroded away the foundation of education (Buras & Apple, 2008), limiting both its accessibility and value (Apple, 2006). What is needed, critics insist, is a return to the past notions of a common culture through the consolidation of curriculum content through standards. These standards, then, ultimately function to provide "more rhetorical weight to the neoconservative movement to enhance control over official knowledge" (Apple, 2005, p.281), and are celebrated as "the key to unlocking the secrets of individual and societal success" (Clarke, 2015, p. 72).

The insistence that standards as the "secret" knowledge that can save the common culture is ultimately concerned with controlling knowledge. While the language of policy makers may stress the need for a common knowledge, what underlies this assertion is the equivalence of knowledge and power (Clarke, 2013). The standards, then, serve as a mechanism to reinforce a specific view of the common culture, embedded into existing power structures through a national or statewide curriculum (Buras & Apple, 2008). By establishing what counts as legitimate knowledge through policy, the belief is that the threats to the common culture and Western ideals will be allayed through a social legitimation of acceptable knowledge (Apple, 2006). In other words, by implementing common curricula and standards through education policy, neoconservative reforms hope to return to past iterations of their perceptions of a common culture by controlling the expectations and outcomes of knowledge. If societal

expressions of knowledge are thought to be achieved by consensus, then what is regarded as knowledge can be controlled.

Dialogic pedagogy. The communication and relational components of the teacher-student dynamic are grounded in the use of language and dialogue. Both dialogue and language are fundamental to the success of the teacher, the student, and the established learning relationship (Stewart, 2010). Recent educational research stresses the importance of language in both the learning environment (Bignell, 2011; Cuenca, 2011; McAuley, 2013) as well as teacher education (Hennessy, Mercer, & Warwick, 2011). The research literature commonly identifies this focus on language as dialogic learning or dialogic pedagogy.

The impetus for the dialogic focus on pedagogy and learning is grounded in the possibilities that discourse bring to the classroom. Bowers (2005) describes the dialogic process as one that "introduces a variety of perspectives, facilitating critical thought through people involved in mutual respect and shared discussion" (p. 370). The key element to learning is not the curricular content, but rather the process through which it is discussed. Language, or "talk," serves to mediate the "cognitive and cultural spaces between adult and child . . ., between what the child knows and understands and what he or she has yet to know and understand" (Alexander, 2013, p. 92). Pedagogy is concerned with what the participants bring to class in addition to what is being discussed. Consensus is not the objective (Bowers, 2005). Rather, success depends on what the teacher and the student brings to the dialogue, with understanding and learning being dependent on language and response (Stewart, 2010). Matusov (2009) insists that, under these conditions, pedagogy is always dialogic.

Language and dialogue within pedagogy shapes and structures thinking, shaping the "higher mental processes necessary for so much of the learning that takes place, or ought to take place, in school" (Alexander, 2013, p. 92). The pedagogical connection between language and higher-level thinking skills provides a Vygotskian framework for understanding dialogic pedagogy. Vygotsky (1978) insists that "all the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals" (p. 57). In other words, language and relationships are central to students' development and learning (Lyle, 2008).

Additionally, Vygotsky recognized the cultural influence behind language and dialogue in learning. Language is a specific cultural tool that has the potential to restructure the cognitive abilities of individuals in relationships (Petrova, 2013). All learning is situated within a specific social, cultural and historical context (Lyle, 2008) and is mediated through the use of language. It is not the act of communicating, but rather the use of language as a cultural tool that helps shape and construct meaning (Petrova, 2013). In turn, the process of constructing meaning, through dialogue grounded in cultural contexts, promotes the development of higher-level thinking skills.

The influence of high-stakes testing and curricular standardization impacts the effectiveness of dialogic pedagogy to utilize language and discourse to build higher-level thinking skills through dialogue. High-stakes testing environments pressure teachers into designing instructional content around the test, which reduces or eliminates the emphasis on dialogue and language (Stewart, 2010). Teaching for the test is described as having circular endpoints that are known in advance by the teacher and imposed by the curriculum. This structure makes dialogue impossible, because one of the relational participants knows the endpoint in advance (Matusov, 2009). Rather than build higher-

level thinking skills through language and communication, dialogue is reduced to transferring bits and pieces of isolated information (Stewart, 2010) that may or may not have relevant cultural connections. This process ignores the notion that constructing or making meaning is inherently dialogic. It serves to structure education as anti-dialogic (Matusov, 2009).

Responses to this criticism of high-stakes testing and curricular standardization look to the work of Freire and Bakhtin for pedagogical alternatives. Freire's work is often use to suggest that dialogue in the classroom serves an emancipatory and empowering function, forming the basis for social change and liberation (Bowers, 2005). Bakhtin's work serves to separate learning into two categories, monologic and dialogic, providing space for "seeing students as people who are users of language, who have expressed aims and goals" (Meacham, 2004, p. 83). Proponents of Freire's theories argue for a critical dialogic response to pedagogy in the classroom, while Bakhtin provides a more nuanced, post-structural approach to dialogic learning. For Freire, discussion provides for ethical procedures to learning, while Bakhtin focuses more on an ethical state of being (Bowers, 2005).

Freire and critical dialogic pedagogy. Freire (1996) defines dialogue as "the encounter between men, mediated by the world in order to name the world" (p. 69). It is the act of speaking to name the world that allows people to transform the world, thus dialogue is viewed in this sense as the primary means toward eliminating social inequalities (Jackson, 2008). Dialogic pedagogy in critical discourse is seen as an effort to bring "counter-hegemonic voices" to the classroom (Miles, 2012, p. 113). The dominant classroom discourse is often focused on the direction and control of student

learning, which often results in the power relationship between the teacher and student

obstructing genuine dialogue (Lyle, 2008). This perspective equates teaching with

learning, which assumes learners learn by being told. These practices do not engage the

social collective and perceives students as a group of disconnected individuals (Watkins,

2005).

Freire (1996) insists that nothing in the human consciousness occurs in isolation;

one learns from another in mutual regard, which serves to eliminate the sense of the

oppressor and the oppressed. Power and knowledge are not given by the teacher

authoritatively. They are communicated through interpersonal interactions that center on

knowledge and are mediated through the use of language (Bowers, 2005). Dialogic

interaction stresses the "intersubjective nature of language as a social system" and

assumes that "knowledge is something people do together rather than an individual

possession" (Lyle, 2008, p. 225). Critical dialogic pedagogy understands language and

communication as the means to remove hierarchical power structures with the teacher-

student relationship. By doing so, it serves to emancipate and empower the student.

Bakhtin and post-structural dialogic pedagogy. Bakhtin understands dialogic

pedagogy as being grounded in ways of being that are shaped by the ways of speaking

and actions (Gee, 1996). He suggests that it is imperative to invite students into dialogue

so that they may "understand for themselves" (Bakhtin, 2004, p. 15). Bakhtin's

pedagogy places "primacy on the . . . action or performance of language. In other words,

his pedagogy truly begins by seeing students as people who are users of language"

(Meacham, 2004, p. 83). Because human action is constrained by time and the

"unrepeatability of history" individuals are ultimately responsible for their action

(Cuenca, 2011, p. 44). As such, both the teacher and student are responsive to and responsible for the construction of knowledge (Stewart, 2010).

Bakhtin distinguishes between monologic and dialogic methods of pedagogy, insisting that the latter is necessary for the responsible construction of knowledge. His construction of dialogic pedagogy over and against monologic pedagogy is similar to Freire's critical perspective. By calling for a dialogic approach to teaching and learning, Bakhtin encourages a critical thinking and empowering pedagogy where teachers and students "work as individuals and members of collectives in political and politicized ways within and against institutions" (Morrell, 2004, p. 91).

Dialogic pedagogy creates a space for multiple voices to engage in meaning making collaboratively (Lyle, 2008). Bakhtin focuses on the conflicting forces of language and how it influences the meaning made during dialogue. Centripetal, or unifying forces, codify the meanings of words. Centrifugal forces pull on meanings once they enter into the dialogue (Stewart, 2010). These forces resist each other, creating the space necessary for collaboration while preventing one from dominating the other. Additionally, the presence of multiple consciousnesses resists the hierarchical nature of monologic pedagogy. It insists that learning is always discursive, both a process and product of a new meaning that potentially exists within the presence of multiple consciousnesses (Matusov, 2009). Dialogic pedagogy focuses on the building of knowledge through doing things with others (Watkins, 2005). Learning is mediated through language and communication, which relies on the teacher to "create interactive opportunities and encounters that directly and appropriately engineer such mediation" (Alexander, 2013, p. 92). Yet, this responsibility does not place the teacher in a position

of authority to control or direct learning, because dialogic pedagogy understands that meaning making is always mediated by the students' question (Matusov, 2009). By beginning the dialogic process with the student, Bakhtin allows the learner to play an active role in developing understanding and knowledge (Lyle, 2008).

Technical/Relational Pedagogy

  Technical pedagogy. The present age of globalization has brought the technical aspects of pedagogy, the skills and knowledge sets that are essential for education participants to compete and succeed globally, to the forefront of education reform (Scott, 2004). Technical pedagogy focuses on what students are expected to know and what teachers must do to prepare to teach (Phillips, 2015). In other words, it focuses on the specific content and processes related to both pedagogy and education.

  The practice and application of technical pedagogy is most recognizable through the implementation of standards, which is seen as an effort to increase technical efficiency and consistency with regard to learning objectives and outcomes (Liebtag, 2013). These objectives and outcomes are based on a defined set of knowledge and skills students need to acquire in order to be college and career ready (Phillips, 2015). While standards serve a comparative function, allowing for measures of quality control and efficiency to improve desired outcomes (Scott, 2004), they also serve to demonstrate learning in specific disciplines. They are descriptions for "the processes for information consumption and production that are important for young people to acquire" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008, p. 158). In short, standards specify what students are expected to know and be able to do (Polikoff, 2012).

  The expectation standards set for student acquisition of knowledge and skills

serves as the basis for what and how (as well as how well) teachers teach. Current

research on the technical aspects of teacher's ability focus on the concept of teacher

capacity (Grant, 2008; McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008; Zhang & Stevens, 2013).

Succinctly stated, teacher capacity describes teachers' "professionally informed

judgement and disposition to act" (Zhang & Stevens, 2013, p. 483). Teacher capacity

consists of the following three categories: teacher knowledge (subject matter as well as

pedagogical content), skills (planning and organizing instruction as well as the

implementation of technology) and dispositions (beliefs, attitudes and values)

(McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008). Other efforts at describing teacher capacity

distinguish between its conceptual and practical elements (Grossman, McDonald,

Hammerness, & Ronfeldt, 2008). The conceptual element focuses on the specific

framing and interpretation of practice, while the practical encompasses the various

strategies that facilitate student learning.

With respect to education reform, teacher capacity relates to teachers' abilities to

understand and act on the reforms that policy makers mandate (Zhang & Stevens, 2013).

For example, teacher capacity now references teachers' ability to parse standards in order

to understand the knowledge and skills that are expected of students (Phillips, 2015). The

push from the expectation of standards is to deepen teachers' knowledge to include both

pedagogical and content knowledge. In order for students to meet the accountability

requirements outlined in standards-based reforms, teachers must understand the

relationship between both sets of knowledge (Grant, 2008).

   Standards and standardization. The motivating factor behind technical

pedagogy, specifically with regard to standards, is efficiency. Efficiency is regarded as a

"science of exact measurement and precise standards in the interest of maintaining a predictable and orderly world" (Kliebard, 2004, p.76). The notion that efficiency can bring about a more predictable and orderly society links standards and standardization to utopian logic. By designing schools to be perfectable sites based on order and control for the purposes of leading the future away from the chaos of the present (Fischman & McLaren, 2000, Tyack & Cuban, 1995, Webb, 2012), standards embody the utopian ideal. The presence of efficiency models in education is grounded in both Taylor's scientific management theory (Kliebard, 2004) as well as Dewey's (1916) notion of social empowerment. The aim is to construct education as a system to "highlight the capacity of the child to solve problems and put insights into effect" for the good of the future society (Knoll, 2009, p.382).

The goal is to design an education system that will allow for comparisons among schools and individuals so that all students may achieve (Liss, 2013). The operative function with regard to standards is comparison; education systems must be structured in such a way as to allow for comparison between items (i.e. students and curriculum). While the implementation of standardized tests facilitate the comparison between students, the efficiency of the system depends upon the ability to compare teacher capacity. The ability to compare pedagogy and instruction is just as important, if not more important, than the ability to compare student performance. The mediating variable between standards and student success becomes instructional alignment (Polikoff, 2012).

The increase in the importance of standardized test scores and other standardized accountability measures has led to an increased awareness in the importance of teacher capacity (McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008). The emphasis is shifting from the

technique of students' knowledge production (i.e. standardized testing) to the technique of knowledge consumption. If all teachers teach the same content in the same way, then all students have the same opportunity to achieve and succeed. An increased awareness of technical pedagogy and instructional alignment leads, in part, to the standardization of education practices.

Standards and instructional alignment. Standardization in education involves the implementation of more homogenous pedagogical practices, management strategies, and curriculum frameworks for the purpose of increasing test scores. Standardization amounts to a kind of "pedagogical fundamentalism" by using a predetermined set of standards to deny the needs of the individual (both teachers and students) for the sake of conformity (O'Malley, 2009, p. 250). Yet, while standards form the perceived basis and impetus for standardization, they are not its equivalent. Standards "are about the ways in which we order ourselves, other people, things, processes, numbers, and even language itself. To put it slightly differently, standards are where language and world meet" (Busch, 2011, p. 3). They form the backbone of the ways in which we categorize and communicate with each other. It is in this dual responsibility, categorization (sorting) and communicating (explaining), where standards often fall prey to standardization. In the effort to reach agreement through communication on labels of categorization, standards often limit the impact of cultures, time and geography for the sake of equivalency (Timmermans & Epstein, 2010). What this means for educational standards is that while desiring to work toward positive change for *all* students, standardization fails to take into account the impact of standards on *each* individual. Timmermans and Epstein (2010) describe this oversight by stating that "the assumption that human

diversity can be controlled for often has consequences that are harmful to individuals" (p.78).

While the creation and use of standards is not synonymous with the standardization of practices and there is no evidence supporting a causal relationship between the two, Taubman (2009) insists that "it is impossible to separate standards from standardization. Particularly as they are used in education, standards must be standardized, since they function as measures for comparison" (p. 112). Current standards-based education policy mandates that schools show evidence of student academic improvement through the measurement of scores on standardized tests. These tests are purportedly designed measure students' academic abilities based on a set of education standards. Yet, because legislation such as No Child Left Behind requires that all states seeking federal monies for education use standardized testing to show proof of improved student test scores over time (Rothman, 2012), the tests often become crude proxies for the standards themselves (National Academy of Education, 2009). As a result, the concepts of standards and standardization become inextricably linked in both education policy and instructional implementation.

This link between standards and standardization impacts pedagogy through the pressure of instructional alignment to raise test scores. Polikoff (2012) understands instructional alignment as the "key mediating variable separating the policy of standards-based reform to the outcome of improved student achievement" (p. 341). He provides support for instructional alignment by tying it to the theory of coherence driving standards-based reform. Standards are constructed for core academic subjects to specify what students must know and be able to do. They also require explicit goals which are

measurable, often with standardized tests. The expectation is that teachers will follow suit by aligning their instruction with the standards and assessments, and learning will improve. Assessments are used to reinforce content and provide external motivation for teachers to teach the content.

Early, et al. (2014) describe instructional alignment as the extent to which students are "being asked to do and actually doing schoolwork that reflects academic standards," and "having opportunities to master the methods used on high stakes assessments such as their state's standardized tests" (p. 223). How well a teacher's instructional practice is aligned with the state's expected standards becomes a unit of analysis in the process of compliance with federal mandates. In other words, not only are students expected to show improvement on standardized tests, teachers are also expected to show how their instruction is aligned with the standardized tests as well. Although the evidence suggests that the association between alignment and student achievement is "very weak" (Polikoff & Porter, 2014, p. 16), and that there is approximately a 28% agreement between standards (what is expected to be taught) and assessments (what is actually tested) (Polikoff, 2012), instructional practices continue to be standardized under the guise of alignment.

Standards precipitate the standardization of educational practices through instructional alignment in two distinct ways. The first, the notion of transferability, considers the essential nature of standards to be outside of and unaffected by any contextual or cultural environment (Timmermans & Epstein, 2010). The second, implementation through policy mandates, highlights in how the standardization and alignment of instruction specifically impacts curriculum and pedagogy in the classroom.

Transferability. **S**tandards are often mistakenly thought of as existing outside of and immune to contextual or cultural factors, that they are "objects transferred from one community of practice to another, which have profoundly transformative effects without being transformed themselves" (Dunn, 2005, pp. 176-177). The notion is that standards are the same regardless of outside factors such as socioeconomic class, race, gender, or other cultural designators. In essence, the standards appeal to some sort of transcendental structure that exists outside the context of both the school and the student. They have the ability to transition between contexts without fear of losing their intended meaning.

Supporters of educational standards point to their uniformity as a strength, claiming that they "are the same for all students, regardless of their backgrounds or where they live" (Rothman, 2011, p. 178). Advocates of standards-based reform efforts, such as No Child Left Behind, consider them to be critical in the work of increasing equity in the education system (Kornhaber, Griffith, & Tyler, 2014). The fact that standards are the same for all students provides a sense of equal footing, an equitable starting point for education. Yet, results of this goal over the past decade of standards-based reform efforts are decidedly mixed. Research suggests that discrepancies in achievement between racial/ethnic groups and students from differing socioeconomic backgrounds have remained stable despite the implementation of standards-based reforms. Minority students still underperform when compared to white students (Roach, & Elliott, 2009).

Dunn (2005) suggests that standards serve as a way for "normative governmentality" to "integrate new geographic spaces and populations" by means other than "overt coercion" (p. 175). Institutions of control (such as education) attempt to use standards to remove or ignore differences between people in an effort to appear less

threatening to individual rights. The governing body acts as a normative institution, providing standards that meet what is considered normal, and provide opportunities for individuals to meet them so that they may function successfully in society. In this regard, standards are not seen as coercive or forced from the outside, but rather "promise to act as internal mechanisms for self-improvement" (Dunn, 2005, p. 176).

Because standards operate from a position of transferability and are therefore unaffected by situational differences, the institutions they serve can lay claim to their ability to operate on the level of self-critique and self-improvement. In other words, standards can critique individuals without themselves being critiqued. For example, standards-based reforms purport a commitment to providing all learners with equal educational resources, thus ensuring a fundamental level of democratic equality to all its citizens (Kornhaber, et al., 2014). Claiming the use of equal resources (based on the transferability of standards), policy makers are able to shift the blame away from the institution and onto the individual. The disparity in student outcomes is said to be a reflection of student abilities or other factors outside the scope of education (Kornhaber, et al., 2014). In other words, educational institutions have the responsibility to provide equal resources but ultimately cannot be responsible for factors that may influence learning but are outside of their control. This statement is based on the notion that standards, and thus education, are unaffected by outside forces.

Ultimately, the persistence that educational standards are not affected by contextual or cultural elements negatively impacts instruction and learning in the classroom. Dunn (2005) continues her argument against normative governmentality and standards by stating that:

Although normative governmentality claims to be totalizing and to able to

encompass whatever it touches inside its own system, it is often unable to digest

social forms, cultural values, and infrastructures that are truly foreign to it. This

is particularly true at the level of the person. (pp. 189-190)

For students, standards have a limiting effect on thought, creativity, self-reflection and

critical reasoning. For teachers, allegiance to the test and its resulting accountability

result in a loss of creativity and control. Teachers report greater levels of anxiety,

attrition and the displeasure of being graded on the ability to show growth in student test

scores (Rubin, & Kazanjian, 2011).

Standards implementation often results in "deculturalization and

disempowerment" along with a loss of individuality (Kim, 2010, p. 14). Because they

claim an immunity to differences and individuality, standards serve to homogenize

educational experiences and oppose diversity. This opposition creates problems of

deculutralization and disempowerment of minority cultures and viewpoints, forcing them

to assimilate into the knowledge and values of the dominant culture (Kim, 2010).

Implementation. The early stages of standards-based reforms began as a reaction

to the vague and unchallenging efforts focused on assessing minimum competencies,

which had done little to improve teaching or learning in the classroom (National

Academy of Education, 2009). Central to this critique was the perceived decline in

America's competitive edge when measured against other nations' educational efforts, a

notion that was first detailed in the 1980s with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (Paik,

Zhang, Lundeberg, Eberhardt, Shin, & Zhang, 2011). The report laid the groundwork for

the call to raise academic expectations and the standard to which student achievement is

held. Reformers and critics took issue with the incoherent structure of education that relied on textbook-based curriculum and basic skills tests, neither of which was challenging to student learning. What was needed was a coherent structure that could provide a set of standards that could identify what every student should know and be able to do (National Academy of Education, 2009). This perceived need ultimately led to the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and the later creation of the Common Core State Standards Initiative in 2010 (Rothman, 2012; Vinovskis, 2009).

Implementation of these coherent structures and standards has resulted in the increasing standardization of instructional practices for two reasons. First, there is confusion between exactly what standards are and what function they serve in education. In the early stages of standards-based reform efforts, Ravitch (1995) defined standards as "both a goal (what should be done) and a measure of progress toward that goal (how well it was done)" (p. 7). The emphases in this dichotomy were labeled content standards and performance standards, both of which are based on very different theories of what standards are and how they should function (National Academy of Education, 2009). Content standards focus on the specific knowledge and skills students need to master in order to be successful (Conley, 2014). Performance standards are measures of what students are expected to know and be able to do in order to demonstrate proficiency in the skills and knowledge outlined in the content standards (National Academy of Education, 2009).

There has been considerable confusion between educators and policy makers as to how to distinguish and account for each of these categories of standards. Content standards are considered to be synonymous with inputs, and thus are tied to curriculum

decisions (Taubman, 2009). Performance standards, on the other hand, "define degrees of mastery or levels of attainment. They answer the question: 'How good is good enough?" (Ravitch, 1995, p. 12). These standards are definable, concrete, and measurable, whereas content standards are less so, which leads to a tendency to "muddle content or input standards with what is learned or what is demonstrated" (Taubman, 2009, p. 110). This confusion often results in performance standards replacing content standards in terms of measuring learning. In the current accountability and audit culture of education, standardized testing becomes the sole measure of students' mastery of performance standards (National Academy of Education, 2009; Taubman, 2009).

The focus on performance standards, specifically how they are assessed through standardized tests, contributes significantly to curricular or content control, which is the second way standards implementation results in pedagogical standardization. Au (2007) conducted a metasynthesis of 49 previous studies on high-stakes testing, and found that over 80% of the studies contained themes of content change whether by contraction or expansion. Content contraction is also described as narrowing the curriculum, or what is commonly referred to as teaching to the test (Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Rubin, & Kazanjian, 2011). Curriculum narrowing is an attempt to standardize the curricular form of how knowledge and concepts are taught in the class. Teachers often adopt pedagogical practices that more closely align to the forms of content contained on the tests (Au, 2011). Examples of these practices include fragmenting knowledge into small, individuated and isolated test pieces, an increase in teacher-centered instruction associated with lecturing, and the direct transmission of test-related facts (Au, 2007).

Summary. Although standardization is rooted in the implementation of standards, there is no direct causal relationship between the two. The creation and implementation of standards themselves do not guarantee or necessitate the standardization of pedagogical practices. Yet, as Taubman (2009) pointed out, standards and standardization have become inextricably linked together in education. One reason for this link is the understanding of the nature of educational standards, that they exist separate and apart from any context, unaffected by cultural or individual differences (Dunn, 2005; Timmermans & Epstein, 2010). By ascribing almost an *a priori* quality to them, standards are granted the ability to critique individual student performance without themselves being critiqued (Kornhaber, et al., 2014). Their impact on the individual is often negative, resulting in a loss of individuality through deculturalization for the student (Kim, 2010).

Teachers feel the effects of standardization through the pressure to align instruction to standardized tests. Polikoff (2012) considers instructional alignment to be the key mediating factor between standards and achievement. Instructional alignment often results in curriculum narrowing and adapting pedagogical strategies that coincide with the expectations of the test (Au, 2011; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Rubin, & Kazanjian, 2011). The end result is a standardization of practice for the sole purpose of increasing test scores. The effect of pedagogical alignment for the purpose of standardization impacts more than just the product of test scores. It has a significant effect on the components of relational pedagogy, their construction, placement, use and expectation within the learning environment.

Relational pedagogy. Critics of standardization respond to its neoliberal and neoconservative underpinnings by highlighting the more relational and situational elements of pedagogy (Aspelin, 2014; Murphy & Brown, 2012; Spector, 2015). This relational pedagogy is often viewed over and against its technical counterpart, defined as the "other" with respect to pedagogy. In other words, educators define relational pedagogy as the antithesis to standardized pedagogy. For example, Lysaker and Furuness (2011) claim that an exclusively technical pedagogy aimed at skill building and "knowledge banking" leads to compartmentalization, where learners are passive followers of expert directives (p. 184). Relational pedagogy, on the other hand, incorporates students' individual knowledge and experience directly into the curriculum, recognizing that "knowledge of the world is mediated by our relationships with those around us" (p. 187).

Aspelin (2014) cites von Wright's dichotomy involving pedagogy as well. The terms "punctual" and "relational" are used contrapuntally, with the punctual definition serving as the context for the meaning of relational. According to von Wright, a punctual view of pedagogy focuses on the acquisition of knowledge, with the student occupying a specific developmental position and the teacher striving to make the student reach a predetermined goal. A relational pedagogy positions the student in a state of becoming, as someone who is involved in a process with the teacher (p. 236).

Regardless of the language, the intent of relational pedagogy seems to be to counter what some consider to be "managerialist approaches [to education] that have emerged as a result of neoliberal policies" (Murphy & Brown, 2012, p. 644). These approaches tend to serve as a disconnect between students and subject matter, choosing

instead to reduce pedagogy to rote memorization of facts to serve accountability measures of student achievement (Scott, 2004). Relational approaches to pedagogy offer an alternative to this type of "market exchange model" (Murphy & Brown, 2012, p. 653).

The issue with these definitions of relational pedagogy is they have not successfully established the second anchor, or pole, for the technical/relational continuum. Instead, many relational definitions focus on reconceptualizing the teacher's perception of the student. For example, von Wright's (as cited in Aspelin, 2014) shift from a punctual pedagogy to a relational one relies on the teacher changing his/her perspective of the student. The punctual teacher sees the student as a finite object who is tasked with mastering a goal. The relational teacher sees the student as an individual in the process of becoming (p. 236). Both pedagogical perspectives focus on the actions of the participants in the relationship, which is an aspect of technical pedagogy. The punctual perspective focuses on the student, whereas the relational perspective focuses on the teacher. The actions of participants is an element of technical pedagogy.

In order for relational pedagogy to be considered as the spectral opposite of technical pedagogy, it must be grounded in the relationship itself rather than in its technique or its participants. That is, a relational pedagogy must define the concept of relationship in education. Aspelin (2014) considers the relationship to be closely tied to the anthropological notion of self. Humans exist in relationships, and the individual is a representation or an aspect of that relationship (p. 235). Pedagogies that exist in relationship are not bound by the constraints of technique, by elements of skill, time, space, or other matter. Rather, they "materialize moment to moment," responding to the relationship (Spector, 2015, p. 448). Aspelin (2014) refers to this quality of relational

pedagogy as the "space between the poles" (p. 235).

The elements that make relational pedagogy distinct from its technical counterpart will be discussed in greater detail in the following section on the participatory continuum. Much of the literature on relational pedagogy is contained within research on the teacher-student relationship (e.g, Giles, 2011a; Giles, et al., 2012; Margonis, 2011; Saevi, 2011). Relationships and the participants of which they consist are inextricably entangled that they often are described simultaneously. To better understand the aspects of relational pedagogy, it is necessary to examine the research on the teacher-student relationship.

Pedagogical Actors (Teacher/Student Relationship)

Research on the teacher-student relationship suggests that it is an important component for both effective pedagogy (Hattie, 2009) and for student achievement (Fan, 2012; Huan, et al., 2012). Not only are these relationships important for academic success, but they also impact students' social and emotional development (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). The teacher-student relationship tends to create a personal investment that motivates students to perform well academically (Bernstein-Yamashiro, & Noam, 2013). Effective relationships can have a positive impact on students' development as well as ameliorate some risk factors associated with poor academic performance (Hamre & Pianta, 2006; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, Swanson, & Reiser, 2008).

Teacher-student relational research tends to focus on one of the two participants in the relationship, the student or the teacher. The student-centric research seeks to identify possible correlates between the relational component of teaching and student outcomes, namely achievement and behavior (Baker, 2006; Crosnoe, Johnson, & Elder,

2004). While a causal relationship is not established between the two variables, most research agrees that the teacher-student relationship serves as a mediator between student success and engagement (e.g., Hughes, Luo, Kwok, & Loyd, 2008; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Valiente, et al., 2008; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). The defining characteristic of student-centric relational research is that it is focused primarily on how the pedagogical relationship impacts student performance outcomes, namely test scores.

The second focus, the teacher-centric research, attempts to determine what qualities of teachers and teaching contribute to the success of effective pedagogical relationships. Although a variety of descriptors are often used to identify these qualities (i.e., personality traits, behaviors, or characteristics), the term "disposition" has become widely used when referring to teacher inputs. One reason for the prevalence of this term is due to its inclusion in the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards (2015). Since CAEP requires educator prep programs to account for teacher disposition in their candidate quality, selection and recruitment, much of the dispotional research focuses on pre-service teachers (e.g., Alawiye & Williams, 2010; Newberry, 2010; Rike & Sharp, 2008; Ripski, LoCasale-Crocuh, & Decker, 2011; Yucel, Kocak, & Cula, 2010).

In addition to these two discussion and research categories of teacher-student relationships, a third category has emerged over the past decade, one focused on the relationship rather than one particular participant. This research is decidedly more phenomenological, choosing to study the whole relationship instead of the individual outcomes or inputs. It intends to shift the attention "away from functionality of the space between to an inherent connectedness that is integral to the relationship" (Giles, et al.,

2012, p. 216). The following pages of this literature review will focus on each of these research interests, beginning with student-centric relational research, continuing with teacher-centric relational research, and concluding with holistic relational research.

Student-centric relational research. The prevalence of student-centric research regarding pedagogical relationships has increased substantially over the last fifteen years (Pianta, Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003). The specific focus of this research is on the product or output of teacher-student relationships, which "treat[s] students and learning variables as outcomes that are facilitated by these relational practices" (Cornelius-White, 2007, p. 115). The goal is often to examine the correlational effects of teacher-student interactions on a particular outcome variable such as behavior or achievement (e.g., Birch & Ladd 2007; Crosnoe, et al., 2004; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Roorda, et al., 2011). Drawing from attachment theory (Bowlby, 1982) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), researchers develop quantifiable instruments to measure the impact of the teacher-student relationship on learning (Ang, 2005; Pianta, 1999; Pianta, et al., 1995). Engagement is often discussed as a mediator between the pedagogical relationship and measurable student achievement (e.g., Hughes, et al., 2008; Klem & Connell, 2004; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007).

Theoretical perspectives. The foundation of teacher-student relationship research rests on the theories of attachment (e.g., Baker, 2006; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Bowlby, 1982; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta, 1999) and self-determination (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000; Shih, 2008; Sun & Chen, 2010; Wentzel, 2010). Bowlby first developed the notion of attachment theory in 1969 to describe the mother/infant relationship (Colmer, Rutherford, & Murphy, 2011). The theory suggests that interactions with care-giving

adults are central to the development a child's ability to construct social and relational

systems (Baker, 2006; Bowlby, 1982). Children learn about themselves and others while

developing patterns of relating and emotional regulation through their primary care-

giving relationship. These patterns are then replicated in their relationships with other

people (Colmer, et al., 2011). Connections to education are made through the teacher-

student relationship (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Positive pedagogical relationships provide

students with elements of a positive primary care-giving relationship, which can

influence how students behave in and adjust to the social environment of the school

(Baker, 2006; Hamre & PIanta, 2001). These positive relationships are generally

characterized as warm and supportive, providing students with a sense of security

(Hughes, 2011).

Attachment theory has been influential in the construction of the tools used to

quantify and measure teacher-student relationships. Pianta bases much of the

development of his measurable characteristics of teacher-student relationships (Birch &

Ladd, 1997; Pianta, et al., 1995). In addition to defining the teacher-student relationship,

Pianta (1999) uses attachment theory to qualify it as either effective or ineffective.

Descriptors of student behavior such as "avoidant," "ambivalent," and "disorganized"

that are commonly used in research to describe problem behavior (i.e. Birch & Ladd,

1997) are products of Pianta's use of attachment theory in the teacher-student relationship

(1999, p. 54).

Self-determination theory is commonly discussed alongside attachment theory in

teacher-student research (Wentzel, 2010). Ryan and Deci (2000) describe this theory as

an approach to understanding "people's inherent growth tendencies and innate

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psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation" (p. 68). They identify

three concepts – competence, relatedness and autonomy as the psychological needs that

must be met. Teacher-student relational research suggests that students will engage

positively in the learning process when these needs, most notably relatedness, are met

(Wentzel, 2010). Feelings of relatedness help connect students to the goals valued by

teachers, and "encourage desires to contribute in positive ways to the overall functioning

of the social group" (Wentzel, 2010, p. 76).

When students are intrinsically motivated to learn, they engage more fully in the

learning process, both behaviorally and emotionally (Shih, 2008). Self-determination

theory helps explain the interactions between external "controlling agencies" (Sun &

Chen, 2010, p. 365) and the need for autonomy in the classroom. The curriculum, school

policy, and assessment systems all function as controlling agencies within the school.

The issue with these agencies, according to Sun & Chen, is that they "demand students to

behave in certain ways to be successful in school. The learner, on the other hand, is

expected to become . . . educated who will be able to *motivate herself*, hopefully without

an external controlling agent" (2010, p. 365). The teacher-student relationship impacts

this push for autonomy in the midst of controlling agents by offering support for students

by way of interpersonal involvement and structure (Wentzel, 2010). Students who

perceive higher levels of autonomy support provided through teacher-student

relationships tend to adjust better to the social and academic environment (Shih, 2008).

Quantifiable measures and tools. An important characteristic of student-centric

relational research is the development and implementation of quantifiable measures and

tools for assessing the teacher-student relationship. One of the most widely known and

used instruments is the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale, developed by Pianta in the early 1990s (Pianta, 1999; Pianta, et al., 1995). The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale is a 28-item questionnaire completed by teachers for the purposes of describing their relationship with one particular student. The instrument assesses the teacher's perception of pedagogical relationships in order to provide educators with a contextual focus for development and school adjustment. The measure also uses attachment theory together with research on the importance of early school experiences to help predict the trajectories of students' school progress (Pianta, 1999, p. 94). It has been used to collect data on the teacher-student relationship in numerous studies since its inception (e.g., Baker, 2006; Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Buyse, Verschueren, Doumen, Van Damme, & Maes, 2008; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Saft & Pianta, 2001; Valiente, et al., 2008).

One limitation of the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale is that it was designed for preschool through third grade contexts in order to measure the initial stages of the teacher-student relationships. Additional instruments have been developed to extend the utility of quantifiable relational data beyond third grade. For example, Ang (2005) developed the Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory, a 16-iten Likert type questionnaire similar to Pianta's original tool, in order to collect data on upper-elementary and middle school teachers. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System-Secondary also measures the effect of teacher-student interactions with adolescents (Allen, Gregory, Mikami, Lun, Hamre, & Pianta, 2013). Based on similar theories and rationales developed originally by Pianta, this instrument measures the correlations of teacher-student interaction quality with student achievement.

Other measures modify the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale for use in qualitative research. Pianta (1999) developed the Teacher Relationship Interview as a semi-structure interview protocol to collect teacher-student interaction data. Fumoto (2011) also conducted a phenomenological study on the teacher-student relationship using the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale as a framework for collecting data.

Student behavior and academic achievement. The development and implementation of quantifiable tools for measuring the teacher-student relationship focuses primarily on two specific outcomes, behavior and academic achievement (e.g., Baker, 2006; Crosnoe, et al., 2004; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Pianta, 1999). A seminal study conducted by Hamre and Pianta (2001) examined how kindergarten teachers' perceptions of relationships with students predicted a variety of school outcomes through eighth grade. Their findings indicated that pedagogical relationships are important correlates of students' social adjustment to the school environment through second grade. They state that "children's abilities to form warm, trusting, and low-conflict relationships with teachers in the early elementary years are salient markers of children's adaptation to the social environment and . . . may forecast academic success" (Hamre & Pianta, 2001, p. 626).

The connection between relationships and behavioral outcomes relies on three defining characteristics – closeness, dependency and conflict (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2006, 2001; Pianta, 1999; Pianta, et al., 1995). Birch and Ladd (1997) examined how these three characteristics were related to students' adjustment to school. Their results indicated a strong correlation between dependency and difficulties with school adjustment. This correlation was evidenced by poorer academic performance,

more negative attitudes toward school and a less positive engagement with the school environment. Conflict was associated with students' school liking and school avoidance, as well as students' cooperation and participation. School liking and strong academic performance were also linked with students' closeness (pp. 74-76).

Closeness refers to the degree of warmth and open communication that can serve as a support for students. When relationships are viewed as warm and supportive, students engage in and respond to the social and academic expectations established by the teacher (Watt & Richardson, 2013). Dependency measures the possessive behaviors of children that are evidences of an overreliance on the teacher as a source of security or support. Dependency and closeness are often contrasted with one another. Pedagogical relationships that interfere with students' abilities to adjust to the school environment are often described as dependent (Birch & Ladd, 1997). Conflict describes behaviors that can be characterized by a lack of support or antagonistic interactions. In classrooms where there is evidence of more relational respect, coupled with fewer resistant behaviors, there are higher student achievement outcomes (Hattie, 2009).

Two of the three indicators, dependency and conflict, are often viewed negatively. Higher occurrences of conflict and dependency can have negative effects on students' learning outcomes, or what Hamre & Pianta (2001) refer to as "relational negativity" (p. 634). Negativity in the relationship, as evidenced by conflict and overdependency, is a significant indicator for future behavioral and academic outcomes (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). In addition to affecting student outcomes, these negative associations can also impact teacher behaviors (Cornelius-White, 2007; Roorda, et al., 2011).

Prevention and intervention. The impact of relational negativity and its outcomes within the teacher-student relationship is often expressed through school leaders' efforts to develop and implement preventative measures and interventions in response to the data. Students who have difficulty forming supportive relationships with teachers are at a greater risk or school failure (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). Conversely, supportive pedagogical relationships are sometimes described as a buffer, specifically for students with some risk factors associated with poor performance (Valiente, et al., 2008). For example, high-quality teacher-student relationships buffer students from negative effects of insecure attachment on academic achievement outcomes (O'Connor & McCartney, 2007).

The term risk in the educational setting refers to a "probability linking a predictor, such as poor academic skills, with an outcome, such as dropping out of school" (Pianta, 1999, p. 11). Pianta places risk within the wider context of prevention, which allows educators to focus on impact of the teacher-student relationship as a preventative measure and views risk factors as associated with outcomes. The effects of risk factors that ordinarily lead to a negative outcome can be mitigated and reduced through protective measures. The teacher-student relationship is one such protective measure that can influence or change predicted outcomes of risk factors. Pianta views students' "relationships with teachers [as] an essential part of the classroom experience . . . and a potential resource for improving . . . outcomes" (1999, p. 21).

Positive teacher-student relationships serve as a resource for at risk students, while conflict between teachers and students may exacerbate the risk. Thus, pedagogical relationships may be a direct focus for interventions (Hamre & Pianta, 2006). For

example, the teacher-student relationship may be used as an intervention to counter the negative effects of children with internalizing behavior problems (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008). Students who exhibit these behaviors typically have difficulty establishing relationships because of disruptions in their relational network (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). Students with histories of insecurity in primary care-giving relationships are viewed as opportunities for intervention through the pedagogical relationship (Baker, et al., 2008; Hughes, Cavell, & Jackson, 1999).

Additional research supports the use of interventions from the teacher component of the pedagogical relationship. Teachers tend to show preference for students who exhibit desired behaviors, thus leading to more supportive relationships (Baker et al., 2008; Hughes & Kwok, 2007; Valiente et al., 2008). Yet relational research also suggests a difference in teacher perception of aggressive or under-controlled behavior between ethnicities (i.e. African-American students are seen as more aggressive than are White or Hispanic students) (Hughes & Kwok, 2007, Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010). Taken together, these two research findings add to the evidence that social experiences, including the teacher-student relationship, may contribute to widening racial disparities within schools (Hughes & Kwok, 2007). By creating interventions designed specifically to address teachers' tacit or explicit preferential treatment of students, educators can use pedagogical relationships to improve social and behavioral outcomes for students (O'Connor & McCartney, 2007).

Student engagement. Much of the student-centric relational research focuses on student engagement as a mediating factor between pedagogical relationships and student achievement. Student engagement "is best understood in a way that recognizes students'

internal thoughts and beliefs about being engaged, as well as their external experiences with the various aspects of student life" (Corso, Bundick, Quaglia, & Haywood, 2013, p. 52). While it can be difficult to isolate the teacher-student relationship variable with respect to academic performance (Wentzel, 2010), researchers can link the relationship to student engagement (e.g., Hughes, et al., 2008; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Valiente, et al., 2008; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Klem and Connell (2004) claim that teacher support is important to student engagement, stating that "students who perceive teachers as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment . . . are more likely to report engagement in school" (p. 270). This level of engagement can then be linked directly to academic achievement (Gerber, Mans-Kemp, & Schlechter, 2013; Reyes, Brackett, Rivers, White, & Salovey, 2012; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). The teacher-student relationship has also been shown to mediate the relationship between effortful control and academic achievement (Valiente, et al., 2008).

Teacher-student relationships share stronger associations with engagement than with achievement because the relationship itself is a measure of social adjustment rather than cognitive ability (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Roorda, et al., 2010). This association is based in part on self-determination theory, where teachers create interpersonal relationships for students that influence levels of engagement (Wentzel, 2010). These relationships help create optimal learning outcomes for students by providing them opportunities to develop a sense of competency and autonomy (Wang & Holcombe, 2010).

One way pedagogical relationships influence student engagement, and thus achievement, is through relational expectations. High-quality teacher-student

relationships help facilitate individual goal achievement while holding high expectations for student success (Watt & Richardson, 2013). Valuing student mastery over student performance is one relational example of the link between teacher-student relationships and goal achievement (Wang & Holcombe, 2010). By focusing on emphasizing individual mastery and improvement rather than charting how a student measures up to external benchmarks, teachers can stimulate student engagement through their interpersonal interactions.

Teacher-centric relational research. Teacher-centric relational research focuses on topics similar to student-centric research, namely behaviors and achievement (e.g., Chong, Huan, Quek, Yeo, & Ang, 2010; Corso, et al., 2013; Phillippo, 2012; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011), yet recognizes that student outcomes are influence by teachers' personal characteristics as well as content and pedagogy knowledge (Serdyukov & Ferguson, 2011; Stronge, 2007). This research suggests that teacher personal characteristics and affective attributes are important to the emotional work of teaching (Newberry, 2010), and that they may aid in creating a healthy and productive teacher-student relationship (Reeve, 2006). Not only are student outcomes affected by the professional qualifications of teachers, but they may also be "greatly influenced . . . by [teachers'] dispositions that affect decision making and behaviors and, consequently, student learning outcomes and behaviors" (Schussler, Bercaw, & Stooksberry, 2008b, p. 108).

These personal attributes, or dispositions, have a significant influence on school effectiveness and achievement (Alawiye & Williams, 2010). For example, engagement, achievement and school adjustment have all been shown to be linked to teacher inputs in

the pedagogical relationship. Social support in schools, which comes in part from the quality of the teacher-student relationship, is positively associated with student achievement (Chong, et al., 2010). Student engagement, also affected by students' perceptions of social support in the classroom, is influenced in part by teacher behaviors and dispositions. Students who feel supported, respected, and inspired by the relationships they share with their teachers are more likely to be engaged in learning (Corso, et al., 2013). Additionally, student perceptions of positive and supportive teacher-student relationships, characterized by fewer negative interactions, is a significant predictor of school adjustment (Chong, et al., 2010).

The term "disposition" is broadly used to describe the personal characteristics and attributes of teachers that impact student learning. Although some studies continue to use terms such as characteristics (e.g., Reeve, 2006; Serdyukov & Ferguson, 2011; Stronge, 2007; Walker, 2008) or traits (e.g., de Jong, Mainhard, Tartwijk, Veldman, Verloop, & Wubbels, 2014; Lee & Kemple, 2014), the term disposition is more widely used to describe the teacher inputs that influence the teacher-student relationship for two reasons. One, much of the research devoted to teacher dispositions focuses on pre-service teachers (e.g., Alawiye & Williams, 2010; Newberry, 2010; Rike & Sharp, 2008; Ripski, et al., 2011; Yucel, et al., 2010). Two, the motivation for the focus on pre-service teachers is in part a response to the CAEP requirements. CAEP (2015), which serves as the accreditation body for teacher education programs, requires that "educator preparation providers establish and monitor . . . dispositions beyond academic ability" (Standard 3.3). Not only must programs establish and monitor dispositions, they must also measure them and report data showing how these non-academic factors are used to predict pre-service

teachers' performance.

CAEP and its predecessor (the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) create the research agenda that drives much of the work on teacher disposition. This research is generally aimed at supporting identifiable dispositional qualities, translating them into observable behaviors, and designing and validating means to assess them (Harrison, Smithey, McAffey, & Weiner, 2006). While pre-service teacher disposition and their impact on teacher preparation programs has not eclipsed that of content and pedagogical knowledge, its inclusion into the CAEP standards has substantially increased its presence in both the research literature and discourse.

Defining disposition. Although CAEP has included teacher dispositions in its requirements for successful teaching and preparation, it is still unclear as to what exactly is meant by the term "disposition." Broadly defined, dispositions are "generally constructed as the behaviors and attitudes held by teachers . . . [that] guide teachers' actions in and out of the classroom" (Shoffner, Sedberry, Alsup, & Johnson, 2014, p. 175). Decision regarding exactly what behaviors and attitudes that guide which actions is far from unanimous. Researchers continue to debate over qualities that describe dispositions, whether or not it manifests itself internally or externally, and whether or not it is a permanent and fixed trait as opposed to a malleable one.

Rike and Sharp (2008) identified over 25 descriptors considered important in defining an effective teacher dispositions that influences student learning and achievement. Stronge (2007) lists six, and Fumoto (2011) only four. These descriptors include fairness (Rike & Sharp, 2008; Stronge, 2007; Walker, 2008), empathy (Fumoto, 2011; Hattie, 2009; Rike & Sharp, 2008; Stronge, 2007; Walker, 2008), relatedness

(Reeve, 2006; Stronge, 2007) and respect (Cranley-Gallagher & Mayer, 2006; Rike & Sharp, 2008; Stronge, 2007; Walker 2008). But these descriptors are not necessarily definitions of teacher disposition. Rather, they are descriptions of observable qualities teacher dispositions. For example, Stronge (2007) emphasize caring as an effective teaching disposition. Teachers express caring through listening to students, paying attention to students and understanding what they are trying to say. According to Stronge, this act of listening is an example of sympathy, where teachers show they care about students' lives in general (2007, p. 23). The difficulty researchers have with this description of disposition is identifying exactly what is the disposition. Is it listening, which is an act? Or is it sympathy, which is a behavior or attitude?

This example highlights the discussion as to whether dispositions are internal personality traits or external actions. Shoffner et al.'s (2014) definition implies that they are internal, while Stronge's (2007) example of caring seems to imply that actions are dispositions. Schussler, Bercaw, & Stooksberry (2008a) suggest that it is the internal qualities that determine teacher dispositions. They view disposition as an internal filter through which teachers view, reflect and act on the information and experiences that are a part of the teaching context, defining dispositions as "the *inclinations* of a person to behave in particular ways, the *context* of a situation, and a person's *awareness* of his or her inclinations and what the context requires for desired outcomes to be reached (italics in original)" (Stooksberry, Schussler, & Bercaw, 2009, p. 722). Although the external context and desired outcomes are part of the definition, the focus is on a person's inclinations and awareness as the genesis of dispositions. Schussler (2006) elaborates by describing this internalization as "the point of origin from which a teacher's knowledge

and behaviors emanate . . . a guiding source for a teacher's ability to process knowledge and act in particular ways" (p. 259).

Thornton (2006) shifts the point of focus from the internal qualities to the outward expression to define dispositions. While she agrees with Stooksberry et al. (2009) regarding the presence of an internal filter, Thornton insists the emphasis of dispositional definitions be on the action. She suggests that dispositions are "manifested within relationships as meaning-making occurs with others and they are evident through interactions in the form of discourse" (Thornton, 2006, p. 62). Dispositions are external because they are based on actions and relationships that occur within the classroom. They come from observations that occur within the classroom. Not only are they observable and evident in the interactions between teachers and students, they are also present in interactions with content and pedagogy. Thus, for Thornton, the debate over dispositions does not revolve around which traits make the best teachers. Rather, it is the observable actions that determines the disposition. In other words, dispositions only occur in action.

The disagreement over the location of teacher dispositions is closely connected to the debate concerning their ontological nature. The core issue is whether or not dispositions are inherent or taught, and whether or not they are fixed or malleable. Educational research has historically agreed with the notion that they can be taught. Dewey (1922) emphasized the importance of acquiring and developing dispositions. He considered them to be fundamentally different from innate characteristics and promoted the idea of teaching and cultivating dispositions. This notion implies that dispositions are not fixed, but rather are malleable (Diez, 2006). Research claiming that dispositions can

be affected or changed stress the importance of their qualities being determined in local settings, such as the school, district or community (Brewer, Lindquist, & Altemueller, 2011; Cummins & Asempapa, 2013).

Dispositions in the pedagogical relationship. Despite the fact that a consensus has yet to be reached on a concise definition of teacher disposition, research suggest that it is a vital part of the teacher-student relationship (e.g., Newberry, 2010; Phillippo, 2012; Reeve, 2006; Rike & Sharp, 2008; Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011; Walker, 2008). Dispositional qualities often associated with the teacher-student relationship include teacher caring, relational trust and respect. Teacher caring is most often described as a process where teachers care for students as individuals in order to teach them well (Phillippo, 2012). Evidence of caring can be expressed by valuing students' ideas, efforts, spaces and work (Fumoto, 2011) and listening and understanding student (Stronge, 2007). Relational trust is based on interpersonal relationships where teachers model vulnerability to their students (Phillippo, 2012). Teachers know their students both formally and informally, while allowing students to know them as well (Reeve, 2006; Stronge, 2007; Walker, 2008). Respect is understood as a voluntary, conditional response to the desire for equality in the relationship, (Cranley-Gallagher & Mayer, 2006; Goodman, 2009).

One common thread running through each of these dispositions is the idea of reflective capacity. Dottin (2011) refers to reflective capacity as "habits of pedagogical mindfulness and thoughtfulness . . . that render the professional actions and conduct more intelligent" (p. 406). Teachers act on their dispositions when they apply their thinking to things already known for the purposes of improving the relational context of the learning

environment. Dewey (1916) characterized dispositions in a similar fashion, claiming that they "should not be of the prescriptive, declarative, virtue-centered, or character-focused kind, but should be rooted in the construct of reflective intelligence" (p. 196).

Schussler, at al. (2008a) highlight three domains of dispositions that are closely linked to the idea of reflective capacity. The three dispositional domains are intellectual, cultural and moral (p. 40). The intellectual domain is the most easily identifiable and common domain, relating to content and pedagogy. The cultural domain recognizes the desire to meet the needs of diverse learners. The moral domain encompasses an awareness of one's own values, as well as the ability to think on these values. Additionally, it involves the process of considering possible outcomes of actions in concert with the responsibility one has to care for others. Although the intellectual domain is the most recognizable of the three, Schussler et al. (2008a) suggest that teachers' moral and cultural domains underlie their dispositions within the intellectual domain. In other words, teachers' perceptions of diversity, fairness and consequence, and responsibility undergird many of their intellectual activity in the classroom, whether they are aware of it or not.

Dispositional research focused on assessing teachers' specific qualities combine the notions of Thornton's (2006) observable actions and Schussler, et al.'s (2008a) intellectual/reflective capacity. Thorton's insistence that dispositions are "evident through interactions" provide an opportunity for educators to both assess and reflect intellectually on teaching practices, whether as a part of a classroom exercise or fieldwork experience (Brewer, et al., 2011; Cummins & Asempapa, 2013). These particular research method designs focus on recording student thoughts and experiences

that will serve as information for future reflective exercises. While the goal is often to assess both individual and program improvement (Miller & Maninger, 2012; Pang, Nichols, Terwilliger, & Walsh, 2014; Rike & Sharp, 2008), the notion that dispositional change can be monitored is accomplished through the use of instruments designed to engage pre-service students in reflective practice.

This research based on the idea that elements of teacher disposition are best "manifested within relationships as meaning-making occurs with others" (Thornton, 2006, p. 62) begins a transition away from research on isolated elements that make an effective teacher-student relationship to the relationship itself. Even though it is still based in determining specific qualities that affect the relationship itself, the recognition that they are made known within relationships is a turn to the phenomenological. Pedagogical relational research that attempts to study the phenomenology of the relationship, rather than its inputs or outcomes, is a relatively recent but important development in the corpus of relational literature.

Holistic relational research. A more holistic approach to research on the teacher-student relationship examines the place of the relationship in the learning process. It is the recognition that "learning and relationships are integrally intertwined and are pivotal to the success of schools, teachers, and students" (Bernstein-Yamashiro, & Noam, 2013, p. 28). Relationships are not a tool or skill that can be purposed to achieve a specific end, as is the case with more student-centric approaches to research. "Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique," as Palmer (1998) suggests, "good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10). Yet, holistic relational research would argue that good teaching relies on more than the identity and integrity of

the teacher, as is the case with more teacher-centric relational research. Hobson and

Morrison-Saunders (2013) insist that "in any relationship it is the whole person that is

involved, not a segment" (p. 775).

Individualizing the relational experience. The issue with compartmentalizing

the pedagogical relationship in research is that it alters the relational context of the

experience. Rather than examining the relationship as it exists in the classroom or school

building, the focus shifts to specific evidences of teaching or learning (Tompkins, 2005).

In other words, the relationship is broken down into its individual components and

participants. Teachers are assessed on what they bring to the relationship and how these

qualities or dispositions impact student learning (Kelly, 2012). Teachers are expected to

contribute positively to the teacher-student relationship as a means to enhance student

learning. Yet students are not expected to reciprocate. They are only assessed on what

they take away from the learning experience, not on the experience itself. Even though

students define teacher-student relationships as "connections that emerge when a student .

. . initiates conversations with teachers" (Bernstein-Yamashiro, & Noam, 2013, p. 28)

and see themselves as integral to the relationship's success, they are not assessed on their

participation or initiation.

When the teacher-student relationship is conceptualized in an individual manner,

the focus shifts from the relationship to "an interpersonal space across which students and

teachers traverse" (Giles, et al., 2012, p. 215). The relational space becomes a business

transaction, the delivery of goods from an education supplier to a client (Tompkins,

2005), a compartmentalization of the relational experience into what one individual

brings to the relationship (the teacher) and what the other individual takes away from it

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(the student). The result is an objectification of the participants, the relationship and the transactional nature that privileges technique and efficiency over the experience (Giles, et al., 2012).

Restoring the relational focus. The goal of holistic relational research is to provide evidence that can support a move away from "thing-oriented" pedagogy toward one that is more "person-centered" (Margonis, 2011, p. 434). Rather than perceive relationships as a compilation of distinct and fixed pieces (i.e., teachers, students, transactions), they are thought of as situational and experiential. The language of relational practices speaks in expression and experience rather than explanation. Holistic pedagogy sees education as intentional relational practice resting on ethical pedagogy, directed towards the uniquely experienced life of the child to support the entire experience (Saevi, 2011). By "focusing on the character of meaningful educational relationships and not on the specific human traits students are said to possess or upon the traits a pedagogy is designed to produce" (Margonis, 2011, p. 436), Holistic research seeks to restore the focus to the relationship as an experience.

The phenomenological research findings on teacher-student relationships do not differ greatly from those of student-centric or teacher-centric research in terms of concepts and structure. Like the previous research discussion, holistic relationship research highlights conflict/behavior (Giles, 2010, 2011a; Berstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013), teacher dispositions (Giles, 2010, 2011b) and student success (Rayle, 2006) as important factors in the relationship. Unlike other research efforts, holistic relational research understands the relationship to compose the entirety of teacher-student interactions and not just a tool or skill that aids in learning. For example, Giles, et al.

(2012) insist that students and teachers are always in relationship, that its very presence supersedes any pedagogy or learning. They state that "the ontological nature of the relationship means that the relationship is always-already an integral part of both the teacher's and the student's everyday worlds" (p. 223). Teachers and students are constantly in relationships with one another, regardless of the context or parameters of the situation. Whether labeled as information providing, instruction, facilitation, guided practice or mentoring (Beutel, 2010), the teacher-student interaction is always present.

Not only are relationships always present in the pedagogical context, they also always matter (Giles, 2011a). Relationships matter when the teacher shows concern, not just for the student, but about the student. As a result, students become aware of that the teacher is concerned for the whole being and not just for their academic success (Rayle, 2006). These relationships tend to create a personal investment and connection that motivates students to perform well academically (Berstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). "When the teacher-student relationship matters to both teacher and student, they show a caring and concern that connects them relationally" (Giles, 2011a, p. 83).

Like student-centric research, holistic relational research identifies conflict as a source of relational tension. Whereas student-centric research describes conflict as behaviors that can be characterized by a lack of support or antagonistic interactions (Birch & Ladd, 1997), holistic relational research understands it as a difference in what matters. Conflict arises in relationships when there is a disagreement about what matters most or when the relationships does not appear to matter (Giles, et al., 2012). When students perceive a strong pedagogical relationship between them and their teachers, they often do not want to let them down. Their academic behavior becomes a way that they

show they are maintaining their side of the relationship (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013). But when there is a feeling of indifference, that the relationship does not matter (either to the teacher or to the student), this feeling can create a lack of safety within the relationship (Giles, 2011a). Participants begin to wonder about their place within the relationship, viewing the other as a threat. The response is often to distance one's self from the relationship for reasons of safety, which is often expressed through actions of conflict (Giles, 2011a).

Like teacher-centric relational research, holistic relational research considers teacher dispositions to play a significant role in the teacher-student relationship. The teacher's disposition influences the place of the student within the relationship (Giles, et al., 2012). Inputs-based research identifies dispositions as "behaviors and attitudes held by teachers" (Shoffner et al., 2014, p. 175). Holistic research, however, understands dispositions to be connected to one's being-in-the-world (Giles, 2011b). This connection relies on the interaction of the whole person, not just individual parts (Hobson, & Morrison-Saunders, 2013). Dispositions also connect whole persons through communicative actions as ways of being through relationship (Thornton, 2006). Giles (2011b) suggests that dispositions are "communication through the body in its whole sense that is felt by others. Everyday experiences of relating are communication that is primordial to how we are. Such communication calls out the reciprocity and influence of relating with others" (p. 70).

Dispositions are not a list of traits that can be measured and corrected, as pre-service teacher assessment research would indicate (e.g., Brewer, et al., 2011; Cummins & Asempapa, 2013; Miller & Maninger, 2012; Pang, et al., 2014; Rike & Sharp, 2008).

Rather, they involve a "wrestling for a 'way-to-be' amid the uncertainty of a very present and fluid reality" (Giles, et al., 2012, p. 230). In other words, they are not qualities teachers possess that can are both fixed and fixable. Instead, they are responses to a dynamic reality that requires change in order to communicate and relate. As the situation changes, so too, does the disposition.

III – METHOD

Methodology

This study utilized a post-intentional phenomenological methodology to frame the collection and analysis of empirical evidence regarding teacher perceptions of the impact of standardization on the pedagogical relationship. Using the work of Merleau-Ponty (2002), Ihde (2008) and Vagle (2014), post-intentional phenomenology reframes the search for the essence of a phenomenon, both its intentionality and lifeworld, within the post-structural commitment that sees knowledge as "partial, situated, endlessly deferred, and circulating through relations" (Vagle, 2014, pp. 111-112). This turn toward the post-structural allows for perceptions of experiences that encourage and welcome variation, to be described simultaneously as having a concrete structure and being multistable (Ihde, 2008).

Critics of phenomenology accuse the methodology of being tied to a fixed and present reality (St. Pierre, 2014). Phenomenology, like other qualitative methodologies, remains intricately tied to the Cartesian subject/object binary and prioritizes epistemology over ontology (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). This epistemic priority provides for a phenomenological essence to be perceivable and universal, thus allowing an "empirical description of 'actual,' primary experience and to a particular ontology" (St. Pierre, 2014, p. 651). Since post-structuralists refute the existence of a fixed and particular ontology, phenomenology is cannot serve as a post-qualitative methodology.

While this particular post-structural critique of phenomenology is valid, it primarily considers a traditional view credited to Husserl and Heidegger. By reframing the concept of intentionality, post-intentional phenomenology rejects the Cartesian

dualism of traditional phenomenology in favor of a more post-structural perspective that is varied and situational. Additionally, post-intentional phenomenology mirrors Voegelin's concept of metaxy to describe the fluid and uncertain nature of the existence of meaning. This chapter begins by defining and describing phenomenology as both a philosophy and a method, particularly with regard to the characteristics of intentionality and lifeworld. Next, the dualism of descriptive/interpretive phenomenology is examined by comparing Husserl's transcendental phenomenology with Heidegger's hermeneutic/interpretive phenomenology. This dichotomy, its misunderstandings and misgivings, sets the stage for the possibility of alternative methods to phenomenology, which includes post-intentional phenomenology. A description of post-intentional phenomenology in relation to metaxic existence-in-tension frames the particular methods that will guide the empirical data collection and analysis of this study.

Phenomenology defined. Phenomenology is a unique term in social science research in that it describes both a particular a method and a philosophy. It is the study of how things are being and becoming, as opposed to how individuals construct things or how mathematical sciences represent things (Vagle, 2014). Phenomenology is considered a descriptive philosophy that aims to get at the essence of pure experience. It is the attempt to capture experience in its "primordial origin . . . without interpreting, explaining, or theorizing" (van Manen, 2014, p. 89).

Phenomenological methods involve the study of the first-person perspective of human experience that aims to describe completely the world as it is presented through these experiences (Detmer, 2013; Luft & Overgaard, 2012). To explore a phenomenon is to understand its unique and particular meaning for those experiencing it (Smith &

Bekker, 2011). It is not a practice that involves retreating into individual introspection and relativism that treats each experience as an isolated phenomenon, or as a scientific explanation that represents experience (Vagle, 2014). Rather, phenomenological research asks its participants to reflect on the world as they experience it, to change or refine their point of view, and to broaden the way they look at the world (Gallagher & Francesconi, 2012).

Philosophically, phenomenology understands this reflective practice as centered on the act of creating and being. It does not attempt to explain a pre-existing truth or being. It is not, as Merleau-Ponty insists, "the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, like art, the act of bringing, truth into being" (2002, p. xxiii). Phenomenology examines the nature of how things are both being and becoming (Vagle, 2014). Merleau-Ponty continues by claiming that there is no pre-existing reason separate from the world. The world does not begin by being possible; it is not a problem behind which exists a known quantity accessible through deduction. The pre-existing reason, the cornerstone of science, does not exist separate from the world; it is the world itself. Merleau-Ponty states that "it is actual or real like the world of which it is a part, and no explanatory hypothesis is clearer than the act whereby we take up the unfinished world in an effort to complete and conceive it" (2002, p. xxii). Phenomenology is the act that afford the individual living in the world to participate in its completion through the process of creating perceptions of experiences.

At the core of both phenomenological research and philosophy is the notion of "lived experience." Merleau-Ponty (2002) spoke of the importance of this lived experience by claiming that, "the world is not what I think, but what I live through"

(p.xvi-xvii). If the desire is to study the world as it exists through lived experience, the research must begin with an authentic and direct description of the experience as it is seen. Van Manen (2014) characterizes the notion of the lived experience as "announc[ing] the intent to explore directly the originary or prereflective dimensions of human existence: life as we live it" (p. 39). It is what Husserl referenced in his oft quoted exclamation "back to the things themselves" (Husserl, 2001, p. 168).

    ***Husserl's phenomenological foundation.** Husserl, widely regarded as the father of phenomenology, developed his radical perspective on research in part as a reaction to scientism, or the idea that everything knowable can be explained in scientific terms and thus investigated using empirical methods (Detmer, 2013). His reaction to and ultimate rejection of scientism was not directed at the use of empirical methods; Husserl considered empirical evidence necessary for research. Rather, his issue was with the prejudices of positivism, which distorted science and its outcomes by narrowly restricting what counted as empirical data (Moran, 2013). The only valid and acceptable data for scientific knowledge was that which was collected through the senses.

    Husserl not only found the definition of acceptable empirical data to be lacking, he also took issue with the propositional way in which science systematized knowledge. Science would put forth proofs or theories in the form of propositions, collecting sensory evidence to either accept or refute the proposition. Unlike the natural objects that serve as evidence, propositions are about something and must either be true or false (Cairns, 2013). For Husserl, knowledge begins from experience rather than propositions about experience (Moran, 2013). Scientific knowledge, however, was based on proposition and the probability of evidence to prove it either true or false. This knowledge was not a

description of the evidence itself, but rather a proof of something that stood outside of the experience. It consisted of "evident consequences of propositions which are, for their part, evident truths or probabilities – of propositions, that is to say, whose 'correspondence' with their subject matters is immediately evident" (Cairns, 2013, p. 2). In short, science strove to create knowledge that was about something rather than of something. Husserl sought to return to the study of things, of the experiences and the knowledge they held rather than constructing systems that were about things. He maintained that knowledge begins with experience (Moran, 2013).

Husserl was concerned with logical and mathematical objects, which were different from physical or sensational objects. His research led him to the ontological question of establishing truths about such objects. Logical and mathematical objects had no physical structure or evidences that could be claimed by sensory perception. How then, could we establish a foundational or ontological knowledge of them? The popular approach to mathematics and logic in the early twentieth century was to ground logical and mathematical truths in psychology. The understanding was that all reality was ultimately physical, and anything that appears to be nonphysical must have properties of something that is physical. Logical objects are objects of thought, and thus must have properties similar of the mind. Thus, logical objects can be reduced to psychological laws, which are reducible to physical laws, a process referred to as psychologism (Detmer, 2013).

Additionally, Husserl claimed that psychological truths were a posteriori whereas logical truths were a priori (Detmer, 2013). Empirical generalizations are contingent and responsive to change based on further evidence. That is, an empirical statement can

never account for all of the possible evidence that could be presented. It refers only to the evidence collected. Whereas Husserl recognized the multiplicity of possible evidences within a given experience, he asserted that science had limited itself to only one acceptable form, sensory data (Moran, 2013). As such, it can only speak to what is and never to what must be. Psychological truths fall into this category because they can only be known after experience. Conversely, logical truths do not require experience or evidence for confirmation; they exist in spite of any possible evidence collection. Empirical laws (including psychological truths) are descriptive, speaking to what it, and are non-normative. Logical laws are prescriptive, speaking to what should be, and are thus normative (Detmer, 2013).

Philosophically, Husserl's phenomenology is a rejection of and departure from the Enlightenment view of reason that was established primarily on the Cartesian dualism of mind and body, subject and object. This view of reason held that meaning resided in the mind and was separate from the real, sensory world. Appearances and perceptions are created in the mind and not thought of as real (Vagle, 2014). The only way to determine what is real is to collect sensory data objectively in order to discern what can be counted as knowledge. Husserl concern was that this approach to understanding what is real did not ultimately explain the meaning of reality. He insisted that it was necessary to look past the sensory content of an experiences and objects in order to grasp its meaning, which is itself not sensory (Detmer, 2013).

Phenomenology asserts that appearances and perceptions are real, that they belong to the being of experience. That which science declared psychological and thus bound by the rules of scientism was actually, according to Husserl, ontological and part

of the being of things. Meaning was intricately bound within and inseparable from the

experience itself. In order to arrive at meaning, the experience itself must be examined

rather than propositions about it. Husserl set out to study "the world as it is lived, not the

world as it is measured, transformed, represented, correlated, categorized, compared and

broken down" (Vagle, 2014, p. 22). He devised the concepts of intentionality and

lifeworld as a way to arrive at meaning from the things themselves.

    Intentionality. Human experiences and mental acts are related to something in

the world, and these relationships create perceptions that have specific meaning

(Converse, 2012; Luft & Overgaard, 2012). This relationship, or intentionality, expresses

the "inseperable connectedness between subjects (humans) and objects (animate,

inanimate, and ideas)" (Vagle, 2014, p. 27). Intentionality recognizes that every thought

is a thought *of* something (Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy, & Sixmith, 2013). It is the

"between space," the intangible connection between subject and object that exists

relationally. It is the marriage between perception and sense. To think of something is to

inextricably bind the person to that which is thought of. This bond is intentionality.

    The concept of intentionality, although articulated by Husserl, originated with

Brentano (Moran, 2013). According to Brentano, to know an object is to interact with it

in such a way as not to change it. This interaction, the experience of the object, is more

evident than is the object itself (Converse, 2012). We are aware of this intentional object

and at the same time are aware of our awareness of it (Detmer, 2013). There is no

separation of our interaction with or perception of the object and our awareness of this

interaction/perception; the two occur simultaneously in one conscious act.

    Husserl's denial of Cartesian dualism distinguished the concept of intentionality

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from naturalistic or psychologistic interpretations. Intentionality is not a psychological relationship between a mental act and its tangible counterpart. It does not describe the connection between something worldly with something other-worldly, as in a proposition. Rather, it "refers to the manner in which objects disclose themselves to awareness as transcending the act of awareness itself" (Moran, 2013, p. 53). Whether or not an object exists or has a definable meaning is not contingent upon our perception of it. The meaning or existence is not connected to the act of perception; it is part of the object itself. When we perceive an object, we are perceiving it entirely.

In other words, the distinguishing feature of the act of perceiving is that all perceptions point to or intend an object. There is no causal relation between the intentional act and the intentional object. The object does not cause our perception, nor does our perception of it cause meaning. For Husserl, this lack of causation was necessary to separate phenomenology from the practices of modern science, especially psychologism. Scientific explanations, including psychologism, operated on the basis of causation, which meant that nonsensory objects exist because they are thought of (Detmer, 2013). Husserl disagreed, claiming that the intentional link between a person and an object is completely different than any causal interaction between the two. The intentional link between perception and object is unaffected by causal relationships.

Lifeworld. Lifeworlds are the social and cultural worlds into which humans are born and in which they experience the objects of their perceptions, the world as it is immediately experienced (Barber, 2012; van Manen, 1997). They encompass participants' intersubjective relationships with others along with the relational intentionality with other things (Vagle, 2014). Experiences within the lifeworld are seen

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through an intensely connected "interweaving between life and the world" (Bredmar, 2013, p. 2). Although participants experience things within a lifeworld, they are not necessarily aware of it. Thus, the lifeworld includes both the actual experience and the pre-reflective notion of being in the world. It is only in the act of perceiving a particular experience that participants can achieve a reflective awareness of it (van Manen, 1997).

The study of a particular phenomenon cannot be understood separate and apart from its lifeworld. Participants within lifeworlds interact with others and the lifeworld itself based on intentionality. In other words, they relate to and respond to situations and assume that other participants will relate to the same world in a similar manner; they anticipate others' responses (Barber, 2012). They represent a system of intentionalities within intentionalities, an incubator of sorts for constructing perceptions and meaning from experiences. Phenomenology is a study of both the participant at the same time that it is a study of the participant's relationship to his or her context (Bredmar, 2013).

The concept of lifeworld is not only difficult to define, but can also be problematic. If it is understood that the lifeworld encompasses the prereflective experience that can only be known when the participant is removed from it in some way, then how can we be sure that post-reflective interpretations of experiences are valid? Wilson (2014) states that:

> It follows that applying language to describe lifeworld can only happen when removed in some way from it. Therefore, the concept of lifeworld can itself be problematic if we accept that in the very telling of it, this pre-reflective awareness may already have slipped from our grasp. (p. 30)

Philosophically, phenomenology appears to be claiming that it might actually be

impossible to investigate the prereflective lifeworld. Since every iteration, investigation or description of the lifeworld comes after the fact and removed from the experience, can one claim to actually study the lifeworld? Although this confusion is relevant, it must be noted that phenomenology studies how a particular phenomenon exists and appears in a lifeworld. The unit of analysis is no more the lifeworld itself any more than it is the individual. In other words, the unit of study is not one particular aspect of the phenomenon (e.g., lifeworld, intentionality, participants). Rather, the unit of analysis is the phenomenon completely (Vagle, 2014).

Descriptive/interpretive duality. The complexities inherent within the definitions of phenomenology give rise to a number of attempts to categorize and describe types of phenomenological research. Although phenomenology historically resists a homogenous description as a method with one specific ontological and epistemological focus (Meyer-Drawe, 1997), researchers and practitioners have attempted to classify its major ideas into two distinct camps. The first category, descriptive phenomenology, is attributed to the early work of Husserl (Luft & Overgaard, 2012). It is generally seen as eidetic and reductive, and its aim is to discover the essence of experience (Converse, 2012; Tuohy, et al., 2013).

For Husserl and descriptive phenomenology, the goal is to identify and describe the essential structures of a particular experience, the elements of a thing that make it that specific thing rather than some other thing (Detmer, 2013). The fact that experiences have specific elements, or essences, means that they can be described as having general characteristics rather than dismissively as individual experiences. These essence or essences comprise the meaning of the phenomenon. Thus, the goal of the research is to

describe things as they appear to the consciousness, which is understood as the median between people and the world (Tuohy, et al., 2013).

This description of things as they appear to the consciousness is the cornerstone of Husserl's descriptive phenomenology in the sense that it rejoined what Descartes severed centuries earlier. Husserl explained that what is thought about, what is present to consciousness, must be understood as a part of consciousness (Detmer, 2013). There is no distinction between the subjective "I" and the object in question, no separation of subjects from the world. Through consciousness, the subject is always connected meaningfully with everything else in the world. This consciousness is always *of* something (Vagle, 2014). The phenomenon under study is believed to be reality, and the goal of research is to discover or uncover the essence of this reality (Converse, 2012).

Husserl's descriptive phenomenology is an epistemological query, an attempt to understand what constitutes knowledge of experiences and how participants come to know these things. Even though he attempted to reestablish the subject/object connection that Descartes had separated, his critics did not think he went far enough. His claim that consciousness is always of something places the genesis of the consciousness with the subject. In other words, the relationship between the two still proceeds from the individual, the subjective ego, out to the world (Vagle, 2014). The distinction between the subject and object was still present.

Heidegger, one of Husserl's students and early critics of descriptive phenomenology, shifted the focus away from epistemological concerns toward ontological ones (Vagle, 2014). Rather than view phenomenology as a search for the essence of experience, Heidegger asserts that it was about understanding participants'

perspectives and interpretation of experiences that matters, giving rise to the interpretive branch of phenomenology. For Heidegger, humans exist in a world they experience and interpret. All understanding is interpreted from a particular perspective, even the natural scientific method (Converse, 2012). Heidegger places beings at the center of the phenomenological question, making it less about consciousness and more about what it is to be in the world in various intentional ways (Vagle, 2014). Intended meanings are conceived in being and language, which exist within intersubjective relations. The goal of interpretive phenomenology is to reflect on lived experience. The reflective piece is a discursive process tied to language and sensitive to devices that make possible the description of experiences. Lived experience means that phenomenology "reflects on the prereflective or prepredicative life of human existence as living through it (van Manen, 2014, p. 26). Interpretive phenomenology understands that phenomena are not directed from subjects out into the world. Rather, they come into being through language as humans relate to things they find in the world (Vagle, 2014).

The issue with classifying phenomenology as being either descriptive or interpretive, epistemologically or ontologically grounded, revolves around the centrality of the phenomenon itself. A descriptive inquiry would seem to be more faithful to the phenomenon, yet moves the focus from the experience of an object to the essence of the object. Husserl claims that objects are always given in experiences as essences. No matter how the object is perceived, the element that gives the object its essence unifies all perceptions so that the different presentations refer to the same object (Detmer, 2013). The aim of the study is to get at what makes the experience unique, and then to describe these elements regardless of how they are perceived. These descriptions are then taken to

be transcendent and directly applicable to the object in any given experience. The focus is on ascertaining specific elements through eidetic reduction and not the experience itself.

Interpretive phenomenology attempts to correct this oversight by including the perspective of the participant in the study. It is a way of describing phenomena as they appear to the person experiencing them (Tuohy, et al., 2013). The person within the experience cannot be separated from it. Thus, the perceptions of the experience are vital to understanding and communicating the experience. With this move, interpretive phenomenology moves the focus away from describing an experience toward understanding how participants live in it.

The disagreement between the root focus and subsequent phenomenological dichotomy appear to create an either/or situation for potential research. If the concern is descriptive, the focus of the research must be on discerning what are the eidetic qualities of the experience. Or the participant's perspective is deemed essential to the research, and the purpose of the study is to get at the meaning behind the lived experience. Despite this binary, additional voices in phenomenological research are searching for yet another way. Central to this searching is a dissatisfaction with the choice, and a belief that phenomenological research is about something other than essences and perceptions. Vagle (2010b) understands the study of phenomenology to be focused on the "intentional relationship, not the individual subjects and their subjective constructions of meaning" (p. 397). The goal of the research is to return to intentionality, the connection between the participant and the world. The question is not focused on describing what it is about an experience that makes it so, or understanding how one may or may not perceive the

experience. Rather, the inquiry is situated in the in-between space, the thing that inextricably connects the participant with the experience. It is this connection and its situatedness that is at the center of a post-intentional phenomenology.

Post-intentional phenomenology. Vagle (2014) circumvents the phenomenological dichotomy by reconceiving both the philosophy and method through a post-structural lens that sees knowledge as "partial, situated, endlessly deferred, and circulating through relations" (pp. 111-112). The key to situating phenomenology post-structurally requires a departure from the egocentrism on early phenomenology, especially Husserl. This requirement actually draws on the early criticism of Husserl's work, extending the notion that he did not do enough to repair the Cartesian subject/object split.

Ihde (2008) provides a concise historical link between Husserl and post-intentional phenomenology. For Husserl, phenomenology was transcendental, centered on a philosophy of experience and of consciousness. Heidegger shifted it to a historical-cultural language-based focus with the merging of hermeneutics with phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty rejected Husserl's disembodied transcendental phenomenology in favor of an existential focus (p. 3). With this existential shift, Merleau-Ponty (2002) and Ihde (2003) substitute embodiment for Husserl's subjectivity. The term embodiment understands that bodies serve as our access the world, to others, and our experiences with both entities. It also insists that bodies cannot be transcendental, only existential (Vagle, 2014).

Post-intentional intentionality. The shift to embodiment impacts two specific elements of phenomenological research, the first being the understanding of

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intentionality. Although intentionality is closely associated with consciousness in phenomenology and often understood as the link between participants and objects of experience, a post-intentional perspective views it as neither in consciousness nor in the world. It is the "meaning link people have to the world in which they find themselves" (Vagle, 2010a, p. 399). Merelau-Ponty (2002) described these intentionality connections as threads that connect all meaning and that run through all relations. Unlike Merleau-Ponty, post-intentional phenomenology sees these threads as partial and situated, constantly being "constructed, deconstructed, blurred and disrupted" (Vagle, 2014, p. 113). In other words, intentionalities do not exist separate and apart from bodies. They neither belong to the world nor do they exist outside the world transcendentally. Instead, they are brought into being through the relations embodied subjects have with the world. Since they do not exist until the moment of interaction between subject and object, intentionalities cannot be categorized, defined, or traced. Vagle (2014) explains it in this way:

> One cannot start with the stable subject and try to follow that subject's intending toward and with the world. The very subject is both constructed and constructing, not dissolved. She is both agent and acted upon: what is available for that subject is both a manifestation of the social and is made possible by that subject's intending. This both /and move is important to a post-intentional conception as it complicates the subject just enough to keep the focus on the intentionalities, but does not fall prey to the view that all that circulates are intentionalities – that is, these intentionalities are brought into being by embodied subjects. (pp. 113-114).

Embodied subjects are social participants, meaning they both affect and are affected by

their experiences with the world. There is no such thing as a stable subject nor a stable object. All elements of an experience are social, having the ability to both impact and be impacted by the intentionality that is created through the relationship. Because of this social existence, intentionalities cannot be pinned down and defined completely. The researcher aspires only to "make some fleeting sense of it as he or she reflects on it" (Vagle, 2009, p. 586). Post-intentional phenomenology resists a stable, concrete intentionality, yet still embraces it as the connections that run through human relations with experiences in the world (Vagle, 2010a).

The second element closely tied to the shift from subjectivity to embodiment is variational theory. When looking at any phenomenon, one must place it within its possibilities, its variations. Husserl recognized the potential for multiplicity when studying people's experiences. Yet, he remained focused on the essence of the experience, and considered it to be unaffected by the presence of multiple perceptions. According to Husserl, the essence of an object is invariant, no matter the presence of different perspectival presentations of it. Not only is it invariant, but the essence is the unifying force that allows all of the different presentations to refer to the same object (Detmer, 2013). Post-intentional phenomenology departs from Husserl's construct of invariant essences and perceives the structure of experiences to be multistable and variant (Ihde, 2008). Variations between similar experiences occur, not because their essences are similar, but because both the subject and the object are situated. Since they are both situated, intentionalities are situated and thus vary in accordance with the number of possible situations that can occur between the subject and the object. By "posting" phenomenology, the researcher can focus on the situation, the experience itself in all its

varied possibilities, rather than on the transcendental essence or perspective of the participant.

Post-intentional phenomenology as existence-in-tension. The perception of intentionality as situated as varied is similar to Voegelin's (1990, 2000b) understanding of metaxy and meaning as existence-in-tension. Human conscious existence for Voegelin is a participatory event between two poles or consciousnesses (Mitchell, 2002). What defines meaning is not the presence of the poles themselves, but the tension that exists between them (Voegelin, 1990). The meaning of existence is defined through the interaction and negotiation between the poles. As such, meaning cannot be defined concretely as an absolute certainty because of the relational space that exists between the two poles. His use of the term metaxy describes the uncertainty and limitless possibilities that can occur in this in-between space.

The post-intentional phenomenology view of intentionalities is also metaxic. The social and experiential elements inherent within intentionalities recognizes that meaning is created within the relationship between intentional participants (Vagle, 2009). As such, its resistance to concretization and essentializing reduction bring an awareness of metaxy in phenomenological research. Intentionality is understood as the connection participants engaged in a particular phenomenon have with both each other and with the experience they share (Vagle, 2010a). Because the participants as well as their experiences are variant, intentionalities are variant, unstable, and uncertain. For Voegelin, the reduction of the transcendent to the realm of the immanent or material is an attempt to provide humanity with the pretense of understanding reality with certainty (Mitchell, 2002). This pretense is an impossibility because of the metaxic nature of the relationship between poles of consciousnesses. Post-intentionality echoes this same

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understanding through its description of the situatedness of both the subject and object of intentionalities as well as the intentionality itself.

Method

"Phenomenological method," van Manen (2014) writes, "is driven by a pathos: being swept up in a spell of wonder about phenomena as they appear, show, present, or give themselves to us" (p. 26). How one goes about researching a particular phenomenon is ultimately guided by the phenomenon itself. Expressed another way, Janesick (2003) cautions researchers to avoid "methodolatry," which she defines as a "preoccupation with selecting and defending methods to the exclusion of the actual substances of the story being told" (p. 64). Phenomenological research, first and foremost, is about the experience, or the substance of the story. While there are tools that the researcher can and will use to gather and analyze data in an attempt to understand the experience, they do not assume authority or primacy over the experience itself.

Phenomenon of the study. This study considered teachers' perceptions of pedagogical tension, informed by Voegelin's (1990) concept of metaxy, and how this tension takes shape in particular educational contexts. Three specific educational contexts were identified as existing in metaxy prior to the data collection. These three contexts were comprised of six elements: technical pedagogy, relational pedagogy, monologic pedagogy, dialogic pedagogy, the teacher and the student. While there may certainly be more than these elements within the definition and construct of pedagogy, these six were described in the literature review as having certain relational components necessary for metaxy.

These six elements are situated in dichotomous relationships with each other

along three separate, but intersecting continua. The monologic and dialogic elements comprise the poles of a theoretical continuum. The technical and relational elements define the poles of the praxis continuum, while the teacher and student elements function as the poles of the pedagogical actor continuum. These three continua, together with their six poles, exist in a delicate but necessary pedagogical tension. Each pole exists in tension with its partner along each continuum. Each continuum simultaneously exists in tension with the other two, creating a situated and ever-changing intersection point. This point is the phenomenological event of pedagogical metaxy. Pedagogical metaxy highlights the inherent tension that comes from the lived reality of "in-between-ness." It recognizes that pedagogy is not a binary choice based on hierarchical dualisms, but rather a dichotomous (and somewhat symbiotic) relationship between two necessary elements. It is this tension, this metaxy, which framed this study and the following research questions:

- How might pedagogical tension take shape in theoretical, practical, and participatory contexts?
  - How do teachers respond to the tension (or relationship) between monologic and dialogic pedagogy?
  - How do teachers position themselves within the tension (or relationship) between the technical and relational aspects of pedagogy?
  - How do teachers participate in the tension (or relationship) between the pedagogical actors?

These research questions intentionally focused only on teachers' perceptions of the phenomenon of pedagogical tension in the learning environment for two specific

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reasons. One, they examined teacher perceptions of metaxy within pedagogy in general rather than the relationships that reside within this tension in specific. The purpose was to investigate the prevalence of this tension in everyday education interactions, concentrating on the moments where teachers perceived metaxy. Teachers occupy a unique position at the intersection of the three metaxic continue discussed in the literature review. This position affords them metaxic opportunities not available to other pedagogical actors. As such, the study did not consider other participants' perceptions or roles within specific relationships (i.e., students, administrators, parents, etc.).

Two, the study was not intended to be a measure of the quality of the relational components of pedagogy. The focus was on teachers' perceptions of relational pedagogy and tension, rather than on their effectiveness of successfully promoting relationships within the learning environment. The primary method of data collection was interviews, both individual and collaborative. Other methods, such as classroom observation, that determine the efficacy of the relational components were not used to collect data. Although these methods and foci may be beneficial to the presence and importance of pedagogical metaxy, they were not the focus of this study. The study's primary concern was how teachers perceive the role of metaxy in their understanding of pedagogy.

Reflexivity in research. Post-intentional phenomenological methods require a reflexive and open stance, described by Dahlberg, Dahlberg and Nystrom (2008) as "having the capacity to be surprised and sensitive to the unpredicted and unexpected" (p. 98). Heidegger referred to this openness as a "curiosity," a way of seeing that "expresses the tendency towards a peculiar way of letting the world be encountered by us in perception" (p. 214). Openness and reflexivity allow for meaning to be grounded in

intentionality in ways that are not exclusively tied to the researcher's work. Reflexive research maintains an open position in order to "let the phenomenon demonstrate how it can and should be studied, how it is, and what meanings there are" (Daghlberg, Dahlberg, & Nystrom, 2008, p. 98).

Openness also takes into consideration the particular post-structural elements of this study's theoretical framework – natality, unfinalizability and inventionalism. By remaining open to the inventive and unfinalized nature of intentionality, the researcher allows the meaning to reveal itself constantly, and in new ways. Meaning is always, already woven into the experiences of the phenomenon (Vagle, 2009). This constant revelation of meaning in the process of reflexive phenomenological research is guided by the notion of "reflexive researcher positioning." This positioning, a way of situating one's self to the data openly and reflexively, is not to be confused with researcher positionality, which primarily deals with pre-conceptions and notions the researcher brings to the data. An open position in research relies on celebrating the tension, resisting reductionism, and encouraging reflexivity.

Celebrating the tension centers on epistemological concerns necessary for defining with certainty the process of knowing and what constitutes knowledge (Gringeri, Barusch, & Cambron, 2013). Lather (2006) encourages the exploration of "ambiguity" and "undecidabilities" that are the manifestations of "a world in process" (p. 789). It is a recognition that the scientificity of science constantly shifts and is delineated by its "conditions of possibility" (Lather, 2009, p. 344). The overriding importance of meaning-making and context in qualitative research (Lather, 2004b) forces the inclusion of possibilities and limits into the epistemological conversation. Rather than resting on

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absolute certainty, qualitative theory embraces the tension within "constitutive unknowingness" and "what it means to document becoming" (Lather, 2009, p. 354).

Resisting reductionism considers the role of axiological claims in concert with epistemology. The recognition that all research is value-laden (Yilmaz, 2013) and that nothing exist outside of ideology - including the production of social knowledge (Lather, 2004b) - is critical for qualitative research. It is an understanding that values have power (Lather, 2009). Rather than adhere to a narrow definition of research as determined by an outside, objective source (Lather, 2004a), the research is allowed to define itself by "elaborations of the conditions that determine the objects of a science and the data about them" (Lather, 2006, p. 787).

Allowing the research to define itself highlights the need to encourage reflexivity in order to "problematize inquiry, to redefine objects as more in networks than in single sites" (Lather, 2013, p. 638). It is a move away from science and research as means of delineation and demarcation toward a method of inclusion. The goal for research becomes to foster an understanding of reflection in action rather than a narrow translation of research into practice (Lather, 2006). It is a rejection of the systematicity and objectivity that govern a positivist view of knowledge in favor of a method that works "with empirical material in a way that pays attention to language" (Lather, 2009, p. 789). The aim is to represent reality as a collection of interpretations and possibilities as opposed to the demonstrative singularity of positivist truth.

Reflexivity in research is not about recording what the participant says in order to decode (or code) the responses in some pre-determined fashion. Nor should it be for the purpose of the researcher to gather data regarding a pre-conceived notion. Reflexive

research does not dismiss the "pre" of anything. Instead, it encourages both parties to reflect beforehand, so that they may recognize preconceptions and predeterminations in order to participate in the intentionality jointly. It is not "my" perception that the researcher brings to the research. It is not "your" perception that the researcher collects and codes. It is "our" perception, created within the recognition that we exists in a relational context, bound only by the connections that tie us together and to this experience.

The ways in which meaning is created within the intentionality is relies heavily upon the reflective actions of its participants. Reflective actions, or reflexivity, refers to the awareness of how "complex socially-constructed ways" in which meaning is understood within the qualitative research process (Vagle, 2014, p. 131). Lather (1993) describes reflexivity as "not a matter of looking harder or more closely, but of seeing what frames our seeing-spaces of constructed visibility and incitements to see which constitute power/knowledge" (p. 675). The practice of reflexivity in data analysis is an attempt to recognize and challenge the ways in which meaning is constructed.

The aim of this study's research method was to actively remain open and reflexive throughout the entire process. Rather than adhere to a formal set of steps and protocols, the method described below focused on adopting a phenomenologically reflexive attitude toward the acts of collecting and analyzing data. This attitude is a response to the natural attitude Husserl (2001a) used to describe scientific investigations. Husserl considered natural attitudes as taking for granted the world as it was perceived, as if daily experiences were self-evident. This tacit perception served as the cornerstone for his conception of the lifeworld and the need to go back to the things themselves.

Conversely, by recognizing that we exist within a particular lifeworld as embodied subjects who live and react through daily experiences, we shift our perceptions away from a natural way of seeing the world toward a phenomenologically reflexive attitude. Dahlberg et al. (2008) perceive this attitude as a way of "describing the world the way it is experienced by humans, what it means for humans to have a world, and how humans relate to this world, to each other, to different situations – to all possible 'things' of the world" (p. 36). The method of this study utilized a phenomenologically reflexive attitude through three specific means: researcher reflexivity, participant reflexivity, and analytical reflexivity.

Researcher reflexivity. A phenomenologically reflexive attitude relies on the practice of bridling, which is a derivative of the broader phenomenological practice of bracketing. Bracketing attempts to address the issue of positionality in phenomenological research by focusing on the non-experiential existence of objects of experience. Introduced by Husserl, the notion of bracketing is a way to highlight questions of existence, the fact that the objects we examine as they appear to us are free from any ontological dissection or postulations. Husserl calls for a bracketing of the "contingent particulars" or "irrelevant details" that may be attached to a specific object or experience in order to focus instead on its essence (Detmer, 2013, p. 64). It is described as a process by which the researcher removes all prior knowledge of the phenomenon under study in order to be fully present in the specific concrete situation (Luft & Overgaard, 2012).

Bridling in phenomena. Bridling is a reflexive and open approach to bracketing. Unlike bracketing, which seeks to "remove, set aside, or render the researcher non-influential" in the study, bridling "animates and illuminates the researcher more fully in

his or her intentional relationship with the phenomenon" (Vagle, 2009, p. 592). It recognizes the difficult balance between finding and giving meaning to the data. Dahlberg (2006) explains the act of bridling by noting that:

> We should be aware that the meaning that we discover belongs to the phenomenon, and we should avoid supplying the understanding with meaning that does not belong there. We must pay attention to how, in what way, we make the phenomena and their meanings explicit. (p. 15)

This approach to phenomenological research and researcher positionality keeps the researcher "in check," resisting the urge to finalize what is unfinalizable.

Like bracketing, bridling involves restraining pre-understandings so that they do not limit the research openness. Yet, unlike bracketing, it is an active and on-going process that interacts with the phenomenon throughout the entire study (Vagle, 2009). Bridling assists the researcher in maintaining the relationship with the phenomenon in question rather than focusing exclusively on his or her pre-understandings. Dahlberg (2006) insists that it is impossible to cut off entirely one's pre-understandings from phenomenological research, but is necessary for the researcher to be aware of them and their influence on the phenomenon. Rather than attempt to exercise them entirely from the study (which is impossible), bridling allows the researcher to "loose them up in order to give us that elbow room that we need to see what is happening when we understand phenomena and their meanings" (p. 16). In this sense, bridling allows the researcher to be aware of his or her pre-understandings while simultaneously remaining open to the natal and inventional possibilities of the phenomenon.

Bridling in practice. I spent five years as a science teacher in the middle school classroom. Prior to becoming a teacher, I worked with adolescents for eight years in a different setting. My desire to become a teacher was largely based on continuing my work with teenagers as they navigated the challenges of adolescence. Plus, I had an extensive university science background, so teaching science seemed like a good fit for me. I was excited to both teach the content to my students as well as interact with them on a daily basis.

My first year in the classroom was disorienting. I had a particular understanding of learning as a process rather than a product. I saw learning as "not a thing you can point to but a process that takes place in a describable context in which participants are in a transactional relationship with each other and, therefore, mutually affect each other's learning experience" (Sarason, 2004, p. 36). Learning was something that happened with and among the relationships established in the classroom. But my classroom experience showed me a different understanding of learning, one measured by test scores. While these measurements did not deny the plausibility of relational learning, the relational components were limited in the classroom, in part because they were difficult to measure. It seemed that what could be captured and recorded on paper was the only adequate measure of learning. Thus, any pedagogical skill or practice that could effort to improve the paper product was elevated in importance to the detriment of other potentially useful techniques. What I observed was not that relationships were deemed unimportant or unnecessary. Rather, their lack of measurability impacted the amount of resources dedicated to them in favor of those techniques that were (supposedly) measureable.

This experience serves as anecdotal motivation for this study and, as such, serves

as my statement of researcher positionality. I am a classroom teacher who has witnessed firsthand the impact of standardized practices on pedagogical tension. I am aware of the potential of my particular classroom experiences to influence the selection and categorization of pertinent data based on preconceptions regarding the role of technical pedagogy and relational pedagogy. I also understand the potential for reactivity as recognized by Maxwell (2013) as an impulse to "control for" the desired result from the data set (p. 124). In other words, my positionality as a teacher may lend credence to certain data over others based on prior personal experience, which in turn could influence the outcomes and conclusions of the study.

    Participant reflexivity (data collection). Participant reflexivity is an often overlooked and under-utilized element in qualitative research. Interviews tend to be the most common form of data collection in qualitative research (Smith & Bekker, 2011). Although multiple participants are often interviewed, the researcher tends to construct meaning from the interview data independent of his or her participants. Even though validity measures, such as respondent validation (Gibbs, 2007), can help establish agreement between participants and the researcher regarding the data analysis, opportunities for reflexivity for both the interviewer and the interviewee are often missing. In other words, the researcher may be mindful of his or her positions when analyzing the data, but the finished product is often presented to the interviewee as a measure of good faith rather than an invitation for reflection. The process of reflexivity is weakened by the fact that both interview participants do not engage in it. This study's data collection process was organized and conducted in an effort to actively engage participant reflexivity.

The data collection process consisted of six interactions. Three of the interactions involved one-on-one interactions between the researcher and one individual teacher. The remaining interactions were collaborative interviews between the researcher and all participants. Each interaction contained two elements, a journal exercise followed by an interview. Vagle (2014) encourages the use of reflexive journals as a practice in post-intentional phenomenological research. Both the researcher and the participant engaged in the journal exercises as a means of establishing a reflexive common ground for the interview. Additionally, the researcher's journal served as an act of bridling, an attempt to actively engage with the phenomenon throughout the entire data collection and analysis process.

This pre-interview journaling activity was also a nod to Derrida's (1976) insistence that "there is nothing outside the text" (p. 163). If indeed there is nothing in terms of meaning outside the context, then it stands to reason that both interview participants should play a role in constructing the context of the interview. By only allowing the researcher to engage in reflexive practice before the interview, there is a limit to the role the participant plays in the construction of the context.

The data collection interactions took place throughout the school calendar's fall semester, beginning in late August and the concluding in January, before the start of the spring semester. The first collaborative interaction occurred in August, the week before the students arrived, during the teachers' preparation week. The individual interactions were conducted from the beginning of September through the middle of October. These interactions were spaced approximately ten days apart to allow time for participant reflexivity. The final two collaborative interactions occurred in early December and

early January respectively. The month between the two interactions was allocated for

additional participant reflections.

Table 1

Data Collection Summary

	Participants	**Research Question**	**Focus**	**Data Points**
Interaction One *Collaborative* (Mid-August – during teacher preparation week)	All research participants	How might pedagogical tension take shape in theoretical, practical, and participatory contexts?	Pedagogical Metaxy	5 – 1 researcher journal, 3 participant journals, 1 interview transcript
Interaction Two *Interpersonal* (Early September)	Researcher and individual participant	How do teachers position themselves within the tension (or relationship) between the technical and relational aspects of pedagogy?	Practical – Technical/Relational Pedagogy	7 – 1 researcher journal, 3 participant journals, 3 interview transcripts
Interaction Three *Intrapersonal* (Mid-September)	Researcher and individual participant	How do teachers participate in the tension (or relationship) between the pedagogical actors?	Participatory – Teacher/Student Actors	7 – 1 researcher journal, 3 participant journals, 3 interview transcripts
Interaction Four *Extra-personal* (Early October)	Researcher and individual participant	How do teachers respond to the tension (or relationship) between	Theoretical – Monologic/Dialogic Pedagogy	7 – 1 researcher journal, 3 participant journals, 3 interview

		monologic and dialogic pedagogy?		transcripts
Interaction Five *Collaborative* (Early December)	All research participants	How might pedagogical tension take shape in theoretical, practical, and participatory contexts?	Recognition of the "other" as a response to pedagogical tension	5 – 1 researcher journal, 3 participant journals, 1 interview transcript
Interaction Six *Collaborative* (Early January)	All research participants	How might pedagogical tension take shape in theoretical, practical, and participatory contexts?	The role of compassion and humility in pedagogy	5 – 1 researcher journal, 3 participant journals, 1 interview transcript

The journal exercise for each individual interaction was delivered to each participant approximately one (ten days) week before the scheduled interview. The interview followed a semi-structured guided interview protocol, relying on main questions and accompanying probes that varied to fit the progression of the conversation (Lichtman, 2010). The primary questions for each interview came directly from the reflective journal prompts. Follow-up questions were also asked when additional information or clarity was needed for answers given to the initial questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

This protocol was repeated two additional times with each participant for a total of three sets of interactions for each individual. Each participant was asked to complete a journal exercise and interview for each interaction. The researcher also completed a journal exercise for each interaction (although not for each participant during each

interaction). These three interactions yielded a total of 21 data points – 12 journal entries and 9 interview transcripts.

The content of each of these interactions focused on one of the three metaxic continua described in the study's framework. Rather than use the language of monologic/dialogic and technical/relational to describe the continua, the three interactions utilized Lysaker and Furuness' (2011) set of relationships for constructing relational/dialogic pedagogy – inter, intra and extra personal (p. 189). The first interaction, the interpersonal, centered on the participants' understanding of themselves as teachers, specifically their pedagogical preferences. This focus drew from Palmer's (1998) notion that teachers teach who they are and Schussler's (2006) internalizations of intentions and awareness. The dichotomy of technical and relational pedagogy served as the context for both the journal exercise and the interview, examining the research question: How do teachers position themselves within the tension between the technical and relational aspects of pedagogy?

The second interaction followed the same protocol as the first, except the content of both activities focused on the intrapersonal relationship between the teacher and student. The reflexive intent of this interaction was to explore where the teacher sees his/her role within the interpersonal dynamic of pedagogy. The subject of teachers' participation in the tension between pedagogical actors was the topic of this interaction.

The third interaction centered on the question of extra-personal pedagogical relationships, specifically as they pertained to the monologic/dialogic theoretical continuum. Because the theoretical constructs exist (or at least were created) outside the immediate pedagogical environment, the discussion with the participants concentrated on

how teachers respond to the tension between monologic and dialogic pedagogy.

The sequence of interactions was intentional. The data collection began situated within the individual, broadened to include other actors, and ended with an examination of tensions outside of the teacher-student relationship. Another way of thinking about the movement of the interactions is that they began as an examination of the teacher-self construct, followed by a discussion focused on the teacher-student relationship itself. The conclusion of this set of interactions explored the teacher-system construct.

The three collaborative interactions that bookend the one-on-one interviews were similar in protocol, but different in content and function. As with the individual interactions, all four participants (research and three teachers) were asked to complete a journal exercise prior to each group interview. The purpose of the first collaborative interview was twofold. One, it invited the participants to discuss the nature pedagogy as varied and situated, incorporating the study's post-structural framework into the interview process. Two, the interview provided a space for the participants to introduce themselves to one another, both personally and professionally. It also allowed the participants to discuss their motives for becoming a teacher, what elements of pedagogy they considered to be necessary, and how they encountered and responded to change throughout their teaching careers.

The remaining two collaborative experiences provided the participants an opportunity to reflect on the data analysis process. Each participant completed journal exercises designed to reflect on their understandings of the elements of metaxy presented in the data. Although these final interactions served as an exercise in respondent validation (Gibbs, 2007), they were an intentional effort to remain committed to the

notions of openness, natality, unfinalizability and inventionalism. By allowing all the

participants to come together and share in a common experience with the analysis of

previous interactions, these interviews provided the opportunity for new meanings and

understandings of the phenomenon to surface. The first of these two collaborative

interactions focused on the expressions of metaxy that came about through the initial

analysis of the individual interactions. The second interaction concentrated on specific

elements of teacher responses to metaxy that became evident through the reflexive

process. This final interaction was sought to provide clarity and description from the

participants as to the nature of compassion and humility in pedagogical tension.

  Analytic reflexivity. Analysis of the collected data was grounded in Merleau-

Ponty's (2002) understanding of phenomenology as embodiment, which he described as a

need to:

> Reawaken our experience of the world as it appears to us through our body, and in
>
> so far as we are in the world with our body. But by thus remaking contact with
>
> the body and with the world, we shall also rediscover ourself, since, perceiving as
>
> we do with our body, the body is a natural self, as it were, the subject of
>
> perception. (p. 239)

For Merleau-Ponty, there can be no separation of experience and perception, no

detachment of the body from the world. One cannot isolate the perception of an

experience from the act of experiencing it by dissolving the bond between subject and

object. Any attempt to do so would be anathema to phenomenological research, as the

bond between subject and object is understood as intentionality, the source of the

phenomenon.

This study's data functioned as embodied stories in an effort to illuminate teachers' experiences with pedagogical metaxy. The decision to lean on Merleau-Ponty's insistence of embodiment was an effort to resist analyzing the data in explanatory or speculative terms. To suggest a linear causality or provide a systematic explanation from the data would deny this presentation of the meaning (Dahlberg, et al., 2008). The aim of the study was to allow for the meaning of the phenomenon to be fully present, fleeting as it may be.

The data were analyzed using elements of Dahlberg, et al.'s (2008) reflective lifeworld research analysis, Vagle's (2014) post-intentional strategies, and Ellsworth's (2005) understanding of pedagogy as relation to self, other, and the world. Dahlberg, et al. (2008) describe reflective lifeworld analysis as a synthesis in "the way that the different parts, the meanings, particularities and uniqueness are related to each other and to the whole of the research" (p. 233). They emphasize an analytical process labeled whole-part-whole to present the meaning embedded within the phenomenon. Their whole-part-whole analytical method aligns with Merleau-Ponty's insistence of embodied perception through its imperative of understanding each part in terms of the whole, "but also that the whole is understood in terms of its parts" (Dahlberg, et al., 2008, p.236). There is no cleaving of the parts from the whole, just as there is no perception of the body without the body.

Whole-part-whole analysis begins with an initial reading of the text in its entirety multiple times in order to get a sense of it as a whole. It is key for the researcher to practice openness during these readings, guarding against making assumptions about the data. Dahlberg, et al. (2008) draw specific attention to the notion of "otherness" during

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the preliminary whole readings, reminding the researcher to actively look for "something new or something in a new way rather than confirm what is already known" (p. 238).

The result of the initial whole readings yielded a relational and situated "otherness" of pedagogy as described by the participants in the data. This "otherness" echoed Ellsworth's (2005) description of the "embodied experiences" of pedagogy (p. 2). These pedagogical experiences involve a relationship between the self, others, and the world. These three relational components of embodied pedagogy were used to separate the data into its initial parts. Elements of relation to self, to others, and to the world were identified in the first four interactions.

Each of these parts were then analyzed using Vagle's (2014) post-intentional "self-reflexive" strategies. These strategies focused on the following:

- Moments when they/we instinctively connect with what they/we observe and moments in which they/we instinctively disconnect.

- Our assumptions of normality.

- Our bottom lines, that is those beliefs, perceptions, perspectives, opinions that we refuse to shed.

- Moments in which they/we were shocked by what they/we observed. (p. 132)

These four strategies served to "uncover underlying, shifting, changing knowledges that are at work in all intentional relations, and can begin to embrace post-structural arguments such as all knowing being partial and fleeting" (Vagle, 2014, p. 132). Their explicit questions of normality pushed to the forefront this study's post-structural framework in an effort to examine the potential natality within the data. Examining the interactions between tacit beliefs and experiences that were/are shocking allowed for the

unfinalizable and inventional qualities of the "other" to be present in the meanings.

Once the parts were analyzed using Vagle's strategies, a new whole of understanding pedagogy as metaxy was crafted. This new whole focused on the presence of tension and how the collected data gave play to, or put flesh on the bones of the theory of pedagogical metaxy. This process, borrowed from Merleau-Ponty's (2002) description of philosophy, did not emphasize "the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, like art, the act of bringing, truth into being" (p. xxiii). This new whole from the data intended to bring into being the truth of pedagogical metaxy.

This analysis of pedagogy as metaxy was presented to the participants in the second collaborative interaction. Their responses to these conclusions prompted a second whole-part-whole analysis of the entire data set. Whereas the original analysis centered on teachers' descriptions and understandings of pedagogical metaxy, the second analysis included teachers' efforts at responding to or engaging with this tension. In other words, the participant responses during the second collaborative interaction suggested that the initial analysis was incomplete. There was more to pedagogical metaxy than just recognition. Teachers' responses to the tension were a necessary part of their awareness and understanding.

Vagle's (2014) strategies were used once more to separate the whole into parts. The inclusion of teacher responses yielded a distinction between assumptions made about the other and a recognition of the other. This distinction will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The data were then reconstructed into a new whole centered around moments of pedagogical tension and how teachers choose to respond to them. This new whole was brought before the group for one final collaborative interaction. The data

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from this interaction were analyzed using Spencer, Ritchie, O'Connor, Morrell, and Ormston's (2013) framework analysis, since key thematic ideas existed prior to collection. Responses were coded conceptually (Gibbs, 2007), in an effort to ensure participant agreement with the final analysis and to remain faithful to the study's reflexive commitment.

Participant selection. Three middle school science teachers were selected for this study. This small sample size was intentional to allow for context rich, in-depth collection of data (Creswell, 2013; Miles, et al., 2014). The number of participants was chosen based on the reflexive framework of the data collection and analysis process. Each participant could potentially account for 9 data points. Combined with the researcher reflections, three participants provided for 36 data points. In order to allow for a thorough and efficient analysis, the data points were capped at 36. In all, 28 data points were eventually collected throughout the research process, 12 interview transcripts and 16 journal entries.

Rationale for participant selection. The rationale behind the selection of middle school as the setting for the study was, in part, based on the notions of adolescence and secondary education discussed in the literature review. The developmental approach to teaching and learning in middle school is a socially constructed binary that was established by and for adults (Lesko, 2012). Adolescent students are often portrayed in unflattering ways (herd mentality, derogatory labels for those that do not perform according to established norms) that deny diversity and individuality in favor of conformity and control (Finders, 1998; Lesko, 1996). The result is often a standardized learning experience that is intended to accomplish educational goals set by adults with

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little or no thought to the present experience of the student (Lesko, 2012; Vagle, 2011). Students must be represented by adults because they are not able to represent themselves (Lesko, 1996).

This representative perception of education is the result of a dualistic understanding of teachers and students. Its presence in the middle school classroom is deemed necessary because of the perceived biological process of adolescence (Finders, 1998). Hormones and a lack of critical thinking skills are used to justify structuring the teacher-student relationship as a dualism. The students are physiologically unable to learn in a more dichotomous setting. This study purposefully sought out middle school teachers to examine the presence of metaxy in secondary education despite systemic efforts to remove it.

Additionally, prior research that suggests that the transition to and through middle school is particularly difficult for students and negatively affects their performance and motivations (Eccles, Midgley, Wigfield, Buchanan, Reuman, Flanagan, & MacIver, 1993). Middle schools, when compared to elementary schools, are often criticized for their impersonal structure and atmosphere, due in part to the increase in student-teacher ratios (Davis, 2006). Middle school students also reported feelings of anonymity with their teachers, describing their teachers as less friendly, less supportive and less caring than their elementary teachers (Lynch & Cicchetti, 1997). Students' negative perceptions of their middle school teachers suggests a change in the structure or positionality of the student-teacher relationship. Based on prior research, there seems to be a need for studies devoted to the student-teacher relationship at the middle school level.

Science teachers were selected as participants in keeping with Vagle's (2009) and

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Dahlberg's (2006) expectations for bridling in phenomenological research. The purpose of bridling is to highlight more fully the researcher's intentional relationship with the phenomenon in question, to "scrutinize the involvement with . . . the investigated phenomenon and its meanings" (Dahlberg, 2006, p. 16). Given that the researcher's primary teaching experience was in the science classroom, this shared experience provided the intentional relationship in which to explore the presence of and responses to metaxy in context-specific ways.

This intentional relationship of the science classroom between the researcher and the participants lends further credence to what Dahlberg (2006) describes as "inter-subjective relationships" (p. 16). Phenomenological research involves a "search for meaning" by "diving below the surface and finding the deeper underlying and intentional meanings that are being born . . . in the relationship between subject and phenomenon" (Dahlberg, 2006, p. 16). This search is only one of the relational connections intervolved in phenomenology. The inter-subjective relationship recognizes that researchers do not "distantly register meanings," but rather are intricately involved in creating meaning (Dahlberg, 2006, p. 16). The shared relationship of the science classroom allowed for this inter-subjective relationship to be more fully involved in the data collection and analysis.

Teachers were selected as participants in this study in an effort to reinforce and reiterate their necessity in the dialogic conversation that is public education. Teachers occupy a unique position in education in that they are one of only two dialogic actors who participate in the teacher-student relationship, while also navigating between technical and relational pedagogies. Their simultaneous location along multiple continua

provided valuable insight into the intentionalities that are created in the opportunities for meaning-making and learning.

Current reform efforts to standardize education through the control of the technical elements of pedagogy marginalizes the role of the teacher in pedagogical interactions (Taylor, 2013; Scherer, 2012). Marginalizing the role of one participant in a dialogue threatens the tension and metaxy necessary for learning. As Voegelin (1990) noted, any attempt to remove the tension between dialogic forces threatens to "destroy the meaning of existence, because it deprives man of his specific humanity" (p. 280). Teachers' humanity is a necessary part of the dialogic interaction that gives meaning to learning. This study provided an opportunity for the participants to reflect on their individuality and humanity within the dialogic interaction that is pedagogy. This inclusion sought to increase the profile of teachers' perception in light of reform efforts while also reminding the participants of their own specific humanity.

Selection of participants. The three participants chosen for this study were selected through purposive sampling. Sampling in qualitative research is often purposive and theory driven (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). In phenomenological research, purposive sampling is determined by the particular phenomenon being explored. It is essential for the participants in the sample to have experience with the phenomenon being explored, an interest in understanding its nature and meanings, and a willingness to participate in the data collection process (Moustakas, 1994). Additionally, the specific qualities or criteria defined by the phenomenon provide the basis for criterion sampling, where all cases must meet specific criteria in order to participate in the study (Creswell, 2013), while also helping to ensure that the individuals selected will be representative of

the average member of the larger middle school teacher population (Maxwell, 2013).

The participants in the study consisted of teachers selected from the faculty of one middle school campus who met the following criteria:

1. Participants must teach in a public school setting

2. Participants must be certified to teach secondary science

3. Participants must teach a 6th, 7th or 8th grade science curriculum

Along with essential criteria, researchers often identify secondary criteria that can help determine or identify study participants. Examples of common secondary criteria are age, race, gender, ethical and/or social factors, and religion (Moustakas, 1994). The two secondary criteria that informed the participant selection for this study were gender and ethnicity. According to a 2006 study conducted by Diaz, Pelletier, and Provenzo (as cited in Schmitz, Nourse, & Ross, 2012), minority teachers make up less than 10% of the public school workforce. The number of male teachers has also decreased (Shen, Wegenke, & Cooley, 2003), which means that the majority of public school teachers are white females. As effort was made to recruit diverse participants from the faculty of the selected middle school in accordance with the study's secondary selection criteria.

The first participant, Phoebe (pseudonym), was a White female with more than 15 years' experience teaching, the last seven in middle school. Prior to teaching middle school science, she had taught high school sciences in another state. She had experience teaching both seventh and eighth grade science, and had recently been promoted to department chair. She was beginning her third year at the selected campus when the study commenced.

David (pseudonym) was an Asian male with 9 years of experience. He had taught

eighth grade science his entire career, the past seven at the selected site. Filip

(pseudonym) was a White male with nearly 15 years' experience in the classroom. He

began his teaching career at the elementary school level before transitioning to middle

school. He had taught both math and science at the selected site. He had been teaching

at this particular campus for nearly 10 years, the last 6 in science. All three teachers were

certified by the state to teach middle school science.

Site selection. This study explored pedagogical tensions within the setting of one

Central Texas middle school. The decision to select participants from one school was an

effort to maintain consistency within the research context. The more diverse the

characteristics of the study, the more difficult it can be for the researcher to "find

common experiences and the overall essence of the experience for all participants"

(Creswell, 2013, p. 150). It is important to establish continuity within the context of the

experience or phenomenon, and then look for variants within the individual participants

(Englander, 2012). Selecting participants from one middle school campus provided the

contextual consistency for this study which allowed the researcher to focus on achieving

diversity with respect to the participant secondary criteria.

The Central Texas middle school selected for this study operated within a

suburban district located 20 miles from a major city center. According to the 2014-2015

Texas Academic Performance Report, the district served approximately 48,000 students.

The demographic breakdown of the student population across the district was as follows:

8.6% African American, 30.3% Hispanic, 42.7% White, 0.4% Native American, 13.5%

Asian, 0.2% Pacific Islander, and 4.3% reporting two or more races. The site selected,

one of ten middle schools in the district, reported similar student demographics: 9.5%

African American, 28.8% Hispanic, 49.1% White, 0.3% Native American, 7.3% Asian, 0.2% Pacific Islander, and 4.7% reporting two or more races.

The teacher demographic data for the district disproportionately favored White teachers, especially when compared to the student data. Of the 3300 teachers employed by the district: 3.7% were African American, 15.4% were Hispanic, 76.2% were White, 0.7% identified as Native American, 2.6% were Asian, 0.1% were Pacific Islander, and 1.4% identified as two or more races. The average teaching experience for the district was 11 years. The middle school employed 105 of the district's teachers. The demographic breakdown was as follows: 7.8% African American, 10.9% Hispanic, 76.9% White, 2.2% Asian, and 2.2% two or more races. 66.9% of the school's teachers were female, and 33.1% were male. The majority of teachers had fewer years' experience than the district average of 11 years.

Validity. The following measures were implemented to ensure the validity and dependability of the study. Validity is regarded as "methodological congruence" between appropriate procedures and the experiential concerns that "provide insight in terms of plausibility and illumination about a specific topic" (Janesick, 2003, p. 70). The key is to focus on sustained engagement with both the phenomenon and participants, which requires the researcher to remain open and sensitive to the phenomenon (Vagle, 2014).

Respondent validation was used to ensure that the interview transcripts accurately and authentically convey the sentiments expressed by the participants. The purpose of respondent validation will be to allow participants check the accuracy of the transcript to make sure it accurately reflects their view of the issued being studied (Gibbs, 2007). Participants were invited to engage with the transcripts, to question or accept their

accuracy, request an additional interview to modify, refute or challenge the original data, or request that all or part of their information be excluded from the study. Providing participant feedback on the data ensured that what was be used in the research was an authentic and acceptable representation of the participants' viewpoints.

Constant comparison was an additional validation measure that used during the study's analysis. This measure helped maintain the consistency and accuracy of codes during the coding process, providing a central framework of themes and definitions with which differences and variations within data sets were compared. This central framework was an effort to guard against the possibility of definitional drift while coding data from multiple interviews (Gibbs, 2007).

Third, discrepant evidence and negative cases were utilized to help ensure validity. Instances that ran counter to themes expressed the literature and other data sets were not ignored or discounted, but rather rigorously examined to see if they contain important information or perspectives that are relevant or necessary for the study's conclusions. Peer review and critique of the study, specifically the findings and conclusions, also helped keep the findings honest with regard to discrepant evidence (Maxwell, 2013).

Limitations. The sole focus on teacher participants for data collection in this study limited the exploration of the relational components of pedagogies (technical and relational) and dialogic participants (e.g., teachers, students, administrators, policy makers, communities, etc.). The argument can be made that, by focusing on only one participant, the study provides an incomplete description of the dialogisms inherent in pedagogy. The focus of this study was not to examine the totality of dialogic pedagogy

within the education setting. Rather, the intent was to research the teacher's perception

of dialogic spaces and tensions within education (i.e., teacher-student relationships and

technical/relational pedagogies) and how their perspectives influences teaching practices.

The guiding question for the research was: how do teachers perceive the ways in which

tensions take shape in pedagogy? Thus, it was beyond the scope of this study to examine

the perceptions or interactions of other potential dialogic participants. Future studies may

focus on other participants (e.g., students, community members, administrators, and

policy makers) as well as their potential interactions and relationships.

A second limitation of this particular study was the decision to focus on the

middle school setting. The selection of middle school teachers was based on two criteria.

One, the practice of bridling in phenomenological research necessitated the selection of

middle school teachers. The researcher's teaching experience was limited to middle

school. In order to bridle the experience, participants with similar experiences had to be

selected to ensure an authentic interaction with the phenomenon throughout the research

(Vagle, 2009). Two, much of the research regarding teacher-student relationships and

dialogisms in pedagogy is focused on the primary or early elementary grades (e.g, Baker,

et al., 2008; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Buyse, et al., 2006; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hughes, et

al., 2008; Hughes, et al., 1999; O'Conner & McCartney, 2007; Pianta, 1999; Pianta,

Hamre, & Stuhlman, 2003; Saft & Pinata, 2001). Fewer studies focus on the dialogic

components to education in the middle grades (e.g., Davis, 2006; Crosnoe, et al., 2004;

Huan, et al., 2012; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). Additionally, there is literature on the

comparison of and transition between elementary and middle school education (e.g.,

Davis, 2006; Hanewald, 2013). This study sought to add to the literature on the

dialogical and relational components of the middle grades.

Third, the study's focus on science teachers limited the broader possibilities of metaxy in pedagogy. There may be ways that English language arts, social studies, or math teachers experience this tension that are unique to their specific curriculum content and discipline. These unique encounters have the distinct possibility of constructing a different view of how teachers perceive metaxy that is not readily present in the science context.

IV – DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using Dahlberg et al.'s (2008) whole-part-whole approach to reflective lifeworld research. Vagle's (2014) post-intentional phenomenology and Ellsworth's (2005) relational pedagogy provided additional guidance during the analysis. According to Vagle (2014), intentionalities exist as examples of "inseparable connectedness between subjects and objects in the world" (p. 27). Merleau-Ponty's (2002) concept of embodiment puts flesh on this inseparable connectedness by claiming that "the body is the vehicle of being in the world . . . and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a definite environment" (2002, p. 94). There can be no separation between a person and the world, between the subject and object. Bakhtin (1984) takes this idea of relationship between person and world and applies it to the relationship between person and person: "a person's consciousness awakens wrapped in another's consciousness" (p. 138).

Ellsworth's (2005) description of pedagogy as experiences of relation between self, others and the world placed these embodied consciousnesses and intentionalities within the context of teaching and learning. The primary research question – how might pedagogical tension take shape in theoretical, practical and participatory contexts – incorporated the notions of intentionality and relationality within pedagogy. Pedagogical tension suggests that pedagogy is not defined by specific participants, methods, curricula, or ideas commonly associated with teaching and learning. Rather, pedagogy exists in the in-between spaces of all of these elements. As such, it has the physical presence of in-between-ness (Hughes, 2004; Mitchell, 2002). The aim was to question how teachers perceived and operated within educational systems in ways that recognized and

participated in these embodiments of pedagogy.

The initial data set was pulled into parts, or themes, based on the participants' expressions and descriptions of intentionality and relationality. Each secondary, or supporting, question was tied to a particular context identified in the primary research question as well as to one of Ellsworth's (2005) conditions of relationality. Teachers' responses to external elements of tension (Ellsworth's relation to the world) examined the theoretical nature of pedagogical tension. Teachers' positioning of themselves (Ellsworth's relation to the self) within pedagogy investigated the practical tension within pedagogy. Teachers' interactions with students (Ellsworth's relation to the other) questioned the participatory tension within pedagogy.

Thematic Overview

The participants expressed their understandings of pedagogy by first describing the purpose of learning. They used dualistic terminology to underscore their understandings of the theoretical tensions within pedagogy. This dualism pitted a process-oriented purpose for learning, identified by the role of the teacher, over and against a product-oriented purpose for learning, exemplified through standardized testing. These two purposes stood at odds with one another, requiring teachers to resolve the tension by eliminating one in favor of the other. According to the participants, pedagogical tension often took shape in theoretical contexts through dualisms, competition and elimination.

The second theme pulled from the data focused on teachers' understanding of the locus of learning as an embodiment of practical tension. The participants recognized a tension between a locus of learning focused on the teacher and one focused on policy-

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mandated standards-based curriculum. This tension centered on who or what was responsible for the curriculum. The teachers' responded to this tension by shifting the locus of learning away from content toward the teacher-student relationship. Pedagogical tension, in this practical sense, was not eliminated as with the theoretical context. Instead, it was redirected or reassigned.

This response to the practical context of pedagogical tension impacted its participatory nature as well. The teachers' description of the participatory nature of pedagogy centered on the assumption of others, namely students. The responsibility for the teacher-student relationship was located exclusively within the teacher, which ultimately led to egocentric decisions about both student learning and the function of the pedagogical relationship. These decisions were based on teacher reflection rather than on the relationship, which resulted teachers' assumptions of the other.

These three themes, taken together, suggest that pedagogical tension cannot or does not take shape within the learning environment. A fourth and final theme, however, interwoven within perceptions that engendered assumptions, suggested that teachers were actually aware of and participated in pedagogical tensions within the classroom. In the midst their perceptions of learning that led to assumptions of the other, the participants simultaneously described a view of the pedagogical relationship based on a recognition of the other. In other words, a pedagogical tension did indeed exist within the participants' perception of the teacher-student relationship.

Teachers' recognition of the other was predicated on consideration of the student as an individual. The participants stressed the need to relinquish control in order to re-establish a relational dichotomy. This dichotomy was made possible through a teaching

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practice focused on compassion and humility. Teaching with compassion and humility allowed pedagogical tension to take shape within the learning environment through the teacher-student relationship.

Purpose of Learning

The participants' understanding of the purpose of learning exemplified the dualistic structure of process versus product in education. Their descriptions of learning recognized competing purposes of learning and assigned value to each one. These values then allowed them to construct a hierarchy of learning purposes, thereby determining one to be more important than the other. Whereas the dominant discourse in educational research identifies accountability systems and instructional strategies focused on the products of learning (Douglass, et al., 2012; Polikoff, 2012; National Academy of Education, 2009) to the exclusion of its processes, all three participants described a dualistic understanding of learning that prioritized the process over the product.

Competing purposes. The rationale behind emphasizing the process over the product was driven in large part by a developmental perception of learning. All three participants believed their role in the learning process was to, as Filip stated, "foster the growth of the student." Phoebe commented that her students are "just kids" and that it was her job "to shape them into being better adults . . . [and] develop them as a person while supporting their strengths." Filip described his responsibility to help his students "grow as people," while David commented that the purpose of learning was to "prepare [students] for something . . . whether that means for us high school or the next grade level, or just as an adult or person." The goal of teaching, in their minds, was to contribute to the development of the student as they to adulthood. David summarized it

best by saying "my biggest, most important thing, the main reason I teach . . . is for their future." This forward thinking, combined with a developmental understanding of learning, underscored a perception of learning that was very much process-oriented.

The teachers also recognized a product-oriented understanding of learning, identified most closely with grades and testing. Unlike process-oriented learning, which the participants expressed as a function of teaching, the product-oriented learning came from somewhere other than the teacher. Grades and test scores were things that "the rest of society views as important" according to Phoebe. She intimated that these were among the evidences of learning that were most important to students and parents. David echoed these thoughts by noting that "some kids are stuck on grades. Some parents are stuck on grades." He continued by expanding this thought to include decisions made on a state and district level, remarking that "a lot of people in education just like to look at data and see and try to use that information to maybe adjust teaching, adjust learning, [and] adjust test questions." In this sense, data collected from the products of learning were used to qualify what counts as learning and how effective learning takes place. According to David, this product-oriented approach to learning dictated what was to happen in the classroom: "It comes from top down . . . and now we're expected to do certain things, in a certain time, in a certain way."

Perceptions of roles. The view of learning as a competition between product and process influenced how the teachers perceived both their role and the role of testing within education. Each purpose of learning was connected to a specific educational role, the teacher or the test. This connection helped shape the participants' perception of both the purpose and the role. Learning as a process was connected to the teacher, while

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learning as a product was associated with standardized tests.

Teachers' role in learning. The participants largely viewed the teacher's role in the classroom as nurturing, which supported their commitment to learning as a developmental process. All three participants commented on the teachers' responsibility to foster growth in their students. This growth was intended to achieve a specific aim, according to Filip. He suggested that teaching "has to be for a reason, to make students a better member of society." Phoebe echoed this sentiment, comparing student growth and societal participation to a journey:

> Really, the teacher's job in the end is to help guide the journey of [a] student from where you get them to where they're going to be going. . . . Your role as a teacher is to help support and move them in a positive direction, move them in a direction that's going to be most helpful to them. So, help them develop as a person while supporting their strengths, whatever their life path is.

For Phoebe, the process of learning was central to teaching. Hers was not the task of defining the product of learning and working to acquire it, either for herself or for the student. Rather, she considered her role to be that of supporting her students "as they move on in their journey . . . to present as many pathways as I can."

The participants each identified a specific focus of teaching they considered to be important to the learning process. David discussed the importance of instilling in his students "better habits by the time they leave my classroom." He explained his position more fully by adding: "In my opinion, eighth-grade science stuff, yes, it's great to know. But, if they have their habits and one day it clicks, they're going to get that information on their own again with their other classes. I really believe that." In other words, David

considered the process of creating and practicing good habits to be of paramount importance. The content was secondary in many ways to the habits of learning. He provided a rationale for his thinking by suggesting that habits were transferable whereas content was not as readily transferable. "If we can work on [students'] habits, if we have better habits in class and a better habit of learning or a better habit of thinking, then [students] can go to any classroom teacher and have a better chance of succeeding."

David focused on his students' actions to communicate his understanding of learning as a process. He considered it his mission to help his students learn that there are consequences to one's actions. He continually stressed to his students to "learn that your decisions matter." For David, developing good habits was about realizing that, at some point in life, people will be judged or evaluated:

> In real life, I need you to understand that you're going to get judged at some
> point. Someone's going to decide whether or not to hire you. That's their
> judgement based on your presentation of yourself. . . . All those decisions matter.
> And, at some point, you're going to have to start worrying . . . about how you
> present yourself.

He concluded his comments by reemphasizing the students' future. The process of learning, the development of good habits and the focus on consequences all impacted the student's future.

Similar to David, Phoebe focused on actions and how they can have an impact on students. Unlike David's focus on consequences and evaluation/judgement, Phoebe's efforts were more formative. "I'm preparing them to go out in the world," she remarked, "I'm training them how to act professionally and how to act in society, not just how they

act in [their] family." For Phoebe, the world was bigger than students' current experiences. Someone must teach them what may be expected of them when they leave the small world they know and enter into the larger society. Teaching students these expectations was a process in which Phoebe saw herself as a trainer. "I'm training them how to act in the larger world, and hopefully, with compassion and understanding and with an idea that they're going to improve and get better." Whereas David focused on the process of preparing students to be able to give an account of themselves, Phoebe emphasized the process of belonging. Both teachers recognized that society/the world would eventually expect more from their students. It became their responsibility to prepare them for what might possibly lie ahead. Learning, for them, was a process.

Filip echoed the same sentiments as Phoebe and David in the sense that the reason for education was "to make the student a better member of society." His role as a teacher in this regard was to give students the necessary knowledge and skills for effective participation in society. These knowledges and skills included elements of how to behave and function in society, as well as content-specific information. For Filip, nurturing the "growth of [students'] minds, their knowledge and skill base" was as important as "teaching [students] manners and apologizing for being mean." In many respects, these two sets of knowledge were combined in his classroom. Filip's perception of science content as being "knowledge-based" allowed for "students' opinions about topics [to] take a larger role during class." The sharing of student opinions generated more small-group interaction in class, which created more opportunities for students to interact with one another. By teaching the content in this way, Filip could use the class time to also teach his students how to interact with other people in an appropriate manner.

The role of testing in learning. All three participants equated standardized

testing with the product-oriented perception of learning. Learning as a product was most

explicitly described as a system of evaluation which impacted both students and teachers.

Phoebe recognized that her students equated tests with grades rather than with learning,

that they "take these tests to get a good grade." Filip saw the test as the product driving

teacher evaluation. Although he viewed his responsibility to the process of learning as

important, he recognized that "the [state curriculum is] the whole reason [I'm] here."

The curriculum is what the students are tested over and ultimately over what the teachers

are evaluated. "It's all about the test scores," Filip remarked when discussing teacher

evaluation.

The fact that the test served an evaluative purpose influenced other important

aspects of teaching and learning, notably the curriculum. David described the connection

between the test and curriculum in this way, "with our limited time, we are told we need

to teach certain topics, because they will be tested later." This mandated curriculum was

looked upon with a reluctant acceptance. "Whether we agree that this is the best or not

the best [curriculum]," David continued, "Our hands are tied as far as what we can

teach."

The teachers responded to these curriculum and testing mandates in different

ways. Phoebe described her efforts to focus on the test while maintaining a perception of

learning as a process. She understood that "right now the measure of success in academia

is the test. So, it shapes my instruction in the way that I want [the students] to be

successful, so they can feel good about what they are doing." The importance of the test

played a factor in what information Phoebe communicated to her students (i.e. the

curriculum), but it did not change her perception of learning as a process. She continued by saying:

> I would be doing them a disservice if I didn't try to teach them how to be successful on [the test]. . . . This is the information that the district wants you to know, and I know that you want to have good grades, and I know you want to make your parents proud . . . so this is the information we are going to learn.

Standardized tests were only one measure of learning for Phoebe. Even though she was "skeptical of the value" of the test, she recognized its importance to education and ultimately to her students. Neglecting the test would be counterproductive to her desire to help her students succeed. Rather than let it work against her desires, Phoebe allowed the test to become a part of her pedagogical process. She expressed that the test "influences me in the way that I design lessons – that I include that information. But it doesn't change my whole teaching career. My focus has always been moving them forward, intellectually."

Whereas Phoebe found a way to reconcile the product-oriented purpose of standardized testing with her own understanding of the process of learning, Filip's response was one of reluctant accedence. He recognized that "testing drives how teaching is done," contrasting it with other pedagogical options: "[I]t seems like there's one direction to go to, right towards testing and whatnot, rather than building concepts and cross-curricular ideas." He described his pedagogical preference as "holistic" and "long-term," preferring to start with "what [students] know and slowly build from there." His personal teaching style was "student-focused rather than standard-focused." The focus on standards and testing prevented him from his preferred teaching style. Instead

of building on holistic concepts, he felt his teaching was restricted to knowledge

transmission: "here's what I want [students] to know, and I'm [taking] what I want them

to know and give[ing] it to them."

For Filip, the emphasis on standards and testing rather than holistic, student-

focused teaching required a change in teaching styles. Although he continued to work

toward long-term teaching goals, Filip noted that "since I have to do the particular testing

or whatever, I might use a different approach to learning than I would if I had come up

with . . . my own performance evaluation." He described how a performance evaluation

would consist of projects that students put together, and if "they can explain it really well

and [have] great conclusions in their project, that would tell me they know about [the

concept]." Since the standardized test was multiple-choice, Filip saw "quizzes and

homework that approach that testing [style]" as a more effective and efficient teaching

strategy to use with his students.

Despite the accedence and changes to his approach to teaching, Filip still

maintained a resolve similar to Phoebe that his responsibility was to make his students

successful. If the test was the measure of success, then he wanted his students to do well

on it, even if that meant changing his teaching style. He acknowledged that his students

"probably still get some learning out of both of the ways." Regardless of the method

used, students were going to learn. This statement was in keeping with his goal for

teaching and learning, which was "to nurture the knowledge and skills and the growth of

the students." Filip considered that goal to be the most important of his responsibilities.

The particular method of teaching remained secondary.

Teachers' response to competition. Teachers responded to the tension between the product-oriented and process-oriented perceptions of learning by constructing a dualism. This dualism resulted from having to modify or change their approaches to teaching due to the testing mandate. Filip spoke of the changes to his evaluation strategies in competitive terms, "performance evaluation *versus* multiple choice test evaluation" (italics added). Phoebe further enhanced this dualism by recognizing two separate sets of curricula, one for the test and one that is more important. She revealed this curricular dualism within the context of wanting students to succeed on the test:

> I understand that those tests are more important outside of this classroom. I
> understand that the ability to do well on a test is what [students] are going to be
> judged by when they get older. I get that. I understand that and I want them to do
> well. *But more so, the stuff you can't test, to me, that's the importance of
> teaching*. (italics added)

Phoebe genuinely wanted her students to succeed on the test, but mainly because it was how the education system operated. It was what they needed to do in order to participate in the larger world, which is what Phoebe expressed as her purpose for learning. But no matter the emphasis placed on student success, Phoebe could not reconcile the test with her purpose of learning. "The purpose should be on what you're learning," she insisted, "The focus should be on the joy of learning, and how this is expanding you as a person, not on getting this test." Her reluctance to equate the product of the test with the process of the "joy of learning" created a dualism between information learned for a test and "the stuff you can't test." According to Phoebe, the "stuff" that is untestable is more important.

David was the most direct in his refusal to reconcile the mandate of the test with his personal understanding of teaching. He remarked that "the main reason why I teach . . . is for their future." Anything that stood in the way of him working toward what he considered to be in the best interest of the students' future was seen as a hindrance. His perception of teaching that "focuses narrowly on test questions . . . underserve[s] our kids." He considered the way the test functioned in education as a hindrance to learning and stated that "I'm not going to sacrifice [students'] future for the sake of the test, in a sense, if I had to choose between the two."

This statement, along with its more subtle iterations voiced by the other participants, equated to a removal of tension. When considered within this study's main research focus of examining how pedagogical tension might take shape in theoretical, practical and participatory contexts, these statements expressed a desire to eliminate tension from pedagogy. Rather than work towards a perspective of learning that encompassed the possibility of both a process and a product, the participants continued to describe the purpose of education in dualistic and competitive terms. Phoebe expressed this competitive stance with regard to the test:

> Kids come with all kinds of different experiences, and learning should be measured in more than just a [standardized] test. . . . There's more to it than just what you can put on a piece of paper. That's just the way we measure it, but it doesn't mean learning hasn't happened. Now as far as the state goes, that's how you are measuring learning. I think that it's been that way and I don't think that's changing, but in a very practical sense I don't believe that tests necessarily measure learning.

For Phoebe, the purpose of learning as a product did not exist because its method of measurement is flawed. Learning as a product did not actually occur because standardized tests did not measure learning. From this perspective, Phoebe eliminated the possibility of learning as a product, thereby leaving learning as a process as the only plausible pedagogical reality.

Gnostic connections. Even though the teachers spoke of their desire and determination to put the welfare of their students first by focusing on the standardized test, creating the illusion of compromise, the seeds of dualism and competition subverted their efforts. Their notions preference to content ("the stuff that can't be tested"), better approaches to teaching (student-focused as opposed to standard-focused), and evaluations of learning (performance versus multiple choice) were examples of dualistic thinking. This perception and line of thought exemplified the Gnostic desire toward radical dualism. The teachers created a central binary pairing (the test and everything else) that permeated the theoretical (what is testable vs. what cannot be tested), the practical (multiple choice vs. performance) and the relational (teaching for the test vs. teaching as a form of nurturing for students' future) components of pedagogy. The teachers then constructed a hierarchy from this binary by placing value and preference on one element of the pairing over the other (Plumwood, 2002).

For example, Phoebe considered the focus of teaching to be on what the students are learning and not the test. This decision was based on her desire to "move [students] forward in their love of learning, expanding their view." In her words, the goal of education was to expand views and increase the desire to learn. Standardized tests were a hindrance to students as they work toward accomplishing this goal, as Phoebe indicated

by her skepticism regarding "the value of those tests." Her solution was to work "really hard on getting [students] to see that the test is a byproduct and a consequence" of learning. The real love of learning took precedence over the test. David cemented the turn toward a radical dualism by eliminating the focus entirely on the test if necessary. When a choice has to be made between his process-oriented learning for students' futures and the product-oriented test, he chose to focus on learning as a process.

Additionally, radical dualisms in Gnosticism express a desire to control situations by eliminating what is uncontrollable (Raeder, 2007). David acknowledged that "teachers don't have too much control when you consider what we're being told we have to teach, what's important in our subject," referencing both state and district mandates for curricular expectations. These elements of pedagogy were outside of David's control. When presented with an opportunity in which the state-mandated curriculum stood in contrast to his mission for learning, David assumed control of the situation by removing what was uncontrollable. He chose to focus on what he considered to be important to the students' future. In this sense, David's approach to pedagogy was thoroughly Gnostic. Within the framework of this study's research question, the participants described how pedagogical tension may take shape in theoretical contexts by constructing binaries in order to eliminate tension.

Locus of Learning

The issue of control that permeated how the teachers responded to tension within the purpose of learning also framed their perceptions regarding locus, or origin of learning. All three participants voiced concern over who or what was in control of and responsible for student learning. Ultimately, they all agreed that the teacher was

responsible for creating learning opportunities, but recognized the influence of outside forces (notably education policy, policy makers and curriculum) on shaping and dictating the learning environment as well. These competing interests served to establish a tension within the locus of learning between the teacher and policy-driven curriculum.

Teachers as the locus of learning. The participants' understanding of teachers as the locus of learning began with their definitions of learning. All three participants equated learning to the acquisition of new knowledge. Filip explained it as "acquiring knowledge, gaining new skills, advancing your current skills . . ., new knowledge and building on what you already know." Phoebe agreed with Filip by describing learning as "an acquisition of information that I integrate into my own existing framework." Both teachers thought it necessary for prior learning, or a "mental framework," to be present in order for learning to occur. Phoebe added to this framework by stressing the future usefulness of learning. To her, the presentation and acquisition of new knowledge was not learning "unless the students are able to fit [new knowledge] into their current paradigm, and then use that information later on." Learning, according to Phoebe, "is being able to take that new information and access it, and then using it to inform future behavior or future thoughts." David continued this thought by suggesting that learning does not only occur when information is brand new. "It could be anything that helps even solidify," he intimated, "I think that's learning, too, solidifying something that you already might have thought. I think that learning can happen from some confirmation."

The constant in all three expressions of learning was the interaction of some thought, knowledge, or information, with previously existing thoughts. In order for this type of learning to occur, new or previously "un-thought of" knowledge must be

introduced to students. This introduction was the teachers' responsibility, which led to the belief that teachers were the locus of learning. For one, David felt like the teacher was in control of the new information the students received. "[Teachers] have to be able to . . . give what information we feel like is important to be able to properly understand the topics that we're supposed to teach." The teacher was responsible for deciding what new information was presented. Since learning was defined as the interaction between existing frameworks and new information, the teacher acted as the locus of learning by deciding what new information to present.

Phoebe approached teacher locality as a means to help students incorporate new knowledge into existing frameworks. It was her responsibility to question how to deliver new information in a way that allowed students to internalize it: "How are you going to give [students] a framework? How are they going to practice that in order to make their own knowledge, in order to come to their own conclusions?" Phoebe considered it paramount for the student to be invested in the learning process, "to actively work to understand the material." In order for the student to be in a position to engage with new information, the teacher must plan ahead and think about these opportunities prior to the presentation. The teacher's responsibility was to provide a "scaffolding for [students] to . . . take ideas, combine them, and come up with new ideas and then . . . guide them toward taking the next step in creating their own pathways to understand that."

Filip's description of the teacher as the locus of learning mirrored Phoebe's example. His chief concern was the facilitation of the interaction between new knowledge and existing frameworks. He considered it imperative to "pre-plan [lessons] and build in . . . new knowledge and new skills" into the lesson plan. This planning

ahead allowed him to craft "the best experience [for students]" while remaining focused on "facilitating learning." He viewed his primary responsibility to be "a facilitator rather than a presenter, giving the kids the opportunity [to learn]."

The participants named three essential requirements for teachers to be considered the locus of learning, the first being content knowledge. David, Filip and Phoebe all agreed that knowing the content or subject matter was a non-negotiable for teachers. Filip stated that teachers "have to be super knowledgeable about what you're teaching so that you really know what [students] understand about it." Phoebe added "I would go as far as to say you have to know it backward and forward . . . in order for you to present it in different ways." David reiterated the importance of content knowledge from a level of teacher confidence: "I feel like the only way as a teacher you can stand up there and be confident in your stuff is to know your stuff." The "stuff" David referred to went beyond what was expected of the curriculum for a particular grade. He felt it was necessary for teachers to know what was coming next for their students so they can continue to succeed. "I know where [students] need to be, so I'm going to take [them] to where they need to be now, in a way that sets [them] up to succeed then." Filip agreed with David by saying "I have to know what they need to know, and I have to know where they're heading." This forward-thinking understanding of content reflected David's commitment to teaching for students' future. In this sense, his establishing the teacher as the locus of learning contributed to the future success of the student.

Second, the participants discussed the need for teachers to be reflective in their practice. Phoebe described a process of reflective journaling where she would take notes on what worked and what did not work with a lesson. This practice allowed for a "more

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well-rounded observation" of student understanding and a "more well-rounded analysis of what was going on in the class." David expressed the same purpose for reflection, describing his process as observing "what happened in class one day . . . and then doing your own little analysis, like a thought experiment."

These reflective practices were developed largely through experience, although some formal training opportunities provided additional avenues for reflection. Fillip noted how his reflective practice was a combination of his own "experience . . . based on prior knowledge." His prior knowledge, which he collected from formal training opportunities, gave him insight into his experience. He then used these opportunities to shape his teaching through reflection: "It's only been twelve years [I've been] teaching. But after every lesson in the lesson plans I go 'what worked? What didn't work?'" Phoebe also spoke of combining reflection with formal training opportunities. She mentioned the need to evolve her understanding of the "student-teacher-classroom dynamic because at each stage of life you're view on those things changes." She paired this evolution and reflection with formal content classes. She remarked "I take classes just to nurture my brain. . . . I need that brain stimulation. . . . It rejuvenates me in order to understand what I teach better and to improve my practice."

Third, teachers spoke of the importance of classroom structure and management in order for learning to occur. They considered these things to be the sole responsibility of the teacher. It was up to the teacher to provide the optimal learning environment. David succinctly expressed this notion by saying that "[the teacher has] got to create an environment that allows [students] to maximize their learning."

One way teachers established this environment was by implementing structures

and systems. David described systems as "opportunities, at the beginning of the year, just to understand [that] this is the way I do things." These systems and structures were his way of establishing fairness in the classroom. They were a "basic part" of how the teacher communicated:

> How you are in your classroom and how you treat the class. . . . [Students are] more likely to do the academic portion if they perceive that you are fair. Fairness is a huge deal for [students]. Once you find that out, you've got to find ways in your classroom to do your job . . . and treat the [students] in a way that they perceive as fair.

Phoebe agreed with David's purpose for providing structures in the learning environment, except she replaced the word fairness with trust. She considered it crucial for students to trust teachers, and "in order for them to trust you, they have to know you have their best interests at heart, and that you're truly invested in creating a safe, comfortable environment for them." The way teachers engendered trust in the learning environment was "by having structures in place and having all your pieces together when you're doing your lessons."

Phoebe's insistence on having "all your pieces together" was a reference to the need for effective classroom management. The participants included the use of classroom management strategies in conjunction with structures for providing safe, trusting and fair learning environments. Phoebe mentioned "procedures" and "routines" as important pieces to managing the classroom. Routines were important because, without them, students were left "without any sense of security, because you're not creating any sense of community or you're not creating any sense of shared

responsibility." Establishing consistent routines allowed teachers to provide a safe and secure environment. Procedures were regarded by Phoebe as "those technical aspects" of copies, passing out papers, formulating clear lesson plans and planning ahead of time how to handle off-task behavior that "you have to get together to make an impact on the student." Without these procedures, the potential for learning diminished, and it was the teacher's responsibility to see that they were handled properly.

Filip also discussed the importance of "time management and diffusing bad behavior before it kills your class" along with the more mundane elements of "paper flow or supply management" for successful learning. Like David and Phoebe, he also connected these teaching elements to the ideas of fairness and trust between teachers and students. "For one thing, a [student] has to feel like they're treated fair. So the skill is handling their disgruntles . . . or diffusing their anger." The ability to manage student behavior was crucial for Filip's understanding of establishing a fair classroom.

These elements of teaching – student behavior, activities, lesson planning, supply management, procedures, routines, structures – all combined to create feelings of security and safety, which in turn engendered trust and fairness in the classroom. These essential elements of teaching were, according to the participants, necessary for learning to occur. They were also the sole the responsibility of the teacher. This rationale led the teachers to consider themselves the locus of learning.

Policy-driven curriculum as the locus of learning. Although the participants expressed a belief that the process of learning began with the teacher, they also recognized the strong influence from outside political forces on their teaching, most notably through standardized curriculum and content. This influence started at the "very

highest top government" according to Filip, before its filters "on down to the state government, down to the district level administration, down to the school level administration. Everybody's got to throw in their ideas and influence in." Phoebe agreed with Filip, noting the ubiquity of multi-layered education policy:

> Of course there's always state policy – what the state decides we have to teach. . . . At the district level there's the curriculum coordinators that decide how you're going to teach what you teach. And then the principal at our level [makes decisions that] . . . drive how it is we do what we do.

All of these influences worked together to create a set of state standards that were then packaged into a district curriculum and implemented by individual schools. Both the standards and the curriculum were intended to address the information tested annually through the state's standardized testing program. The district curriculum was designed to gather data on how the students and the school were progressing with regard to the state standards. Phoebe described how this system of district common assessments that were intended to gather data on the state standards influenced her teaching. "You have to give [the assessments], and the district takes the data," Phoebe explained. These data points then shaped her teaching, because "if you know that these are the things the district is looking for, then it has to shape the focus of what you're teaching."

This shaping of curricular focus created a tension within the locus of learning between district mandates and the teacher. This tension was most evident in David's response to content control. Earlier he mentioned the importance of the teacher being in control of the new information presented to the students. Yet, he also confessed that "teachers don't have too much control when you consider what we're being told we have

to teach, what's important in our subject." He referenced the teacher certification process, where each teacher candidate must pass a content exam in order to become certified. In his opinion, that made teachers "experts in our topic." However, these content experts were not allowed to make curricular decisions regarding student learning. "A lot of districts do that decision making. The state gives us our learning targets or whatever, our objectives. Whenever they decide something is not important or is important, it goes in or out of the curriculum." Phoebe agreed with David, succinctly stating that "[teachers] don't have any control over what the subject is you have to teach."

The rationale for district control over curriculum, according to Filip, was financial. Districts pay "tens of thousands for some training materials and trainers to come in" and present a method for teaching that is "the best way for learning." David echoed Filip's sentiment, adding that "it's like somebody, somewhere decides that certain people or certain products, or certain ideas are good." These products or ideas were then presented to the teachers, usually in some form of professional development seminar. The teachers were then expected to "implement it . . . and see if it makes a positive impact in the classroom."

For Phoebe, this financial investment added an extra level of priority and primacy to the district's decisions. These decisions "are dictated by . . . the people who have the most skin in the game, the people who have the most to profit or to lose." This observation politicized the argument for Phoebe: "That's part of the whole political situation going on around teaching right now, who decides what direction that kids are supposed to be going in." She determined that there were at least two groups trying to make decisions for students, those with a financial or political investment and teachers.

Ultimately, she conceded that teachers were on the losing end: "That's not something that teachers have – we can influence the direction, but really, that kind of larger momentum comes from outside of us."

Filip acknowledged a similar political atmosphere as did Phoebe, but his response to it was less cynical. In his opinion, those with the most to profit or lose seemed to want immediate returns on their investment. When a particular pre-packaged pedagogy or strategy failed to yield results, it was quickly discarded and replaced with something apparently newer and better, even though it was essentially the same material. He commented that "two years later [one idea] is out the door and we're doing the next thing. . . . So now the old is no longer – we're no longer pushing that, even though it's based probably on the same research." For Filip, what rarely change were the state standards, and that was what he was charged with teaching. "The [state standards] are the whole reason [I'm] here . . . because society put me here to teach their children these knowledges and skills." The way he was expected to deliver the standards was inconsequential, even though it effected his pedagogy: "You still want to tell the kids what they are going to learn that day. It's just pushed in a different way, whatever the new principal or the new district guy or the new rules [determines]."

Teachers' response to tension within the locus of learning. The tension created between the two identified loci of learning was based on control, specifically over curriculum and content. The participants felt that it was their responsibility to manage student learning, including control over content. Whether they viewed themselves as certified experts in their content field, or perpetual learners keeping up with new information through formal learning opportunities, the participants considered the content

matter to be under their purview. However, state standards and district curriculum

suggested otherwise. The importance of the standardized test placed a significant

emphasis on teaching the state standards. Districts incorporated outside pedagogical

strategies designed to help students succeed on the standardized test into their mandated

curriculum, which the teachers were expected to teach. A tug-of-war ensued over who is

in control of the content in the classroom, the expert teacher or the standards and

mandated curriculum.

The participants responded to this tension in several ways. Filip downplayed the

tension by mentioning it was always possible to tweak the standards. He did not see the

district and state curriculum as an intrusion on his teaching "because you can put your

own spin on every single [standard]. You can do it several different ways." David

maintained his subtle defiance toward the standards. If the standard he was required to

teach was lacking in or missing important information, he considered it his responsibility

to supplement the curriculum. He commented that "I'm the area expert, technically, and

I feel like, without this [missing] information, this stuff is really difficult to understand or

do well." In other words, he would go along with the mandated curriculum until he felt it

was lacking, at which point he would take over. Phoebe approached the tension

holistically, reminding herself "that teachers are really part of a larger system." The

issues of politics and finances were part of education, but only a part, the same as

teachers. These pieces might impact the process of teaching, but no more than the other

factors. "All the hard work you put in behind the scenes, to make [the lesson] come off

smooth," she added, were as equally important as the content itself. These elements of

hard work and lesson planning were what Phoebe could control, and they fit together

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with the curriculum to form the learning opportunity. "You have to realize," she commented, "that there's all these pieces that you have to get together to make this impact on the student."

Regardless of their attitude toward the content, all three participants shared one specific response to the tension within the locus of learning, an attempt to change the focus of control from the curricular content to the learning environment. The content may be what the state and district determined to be of utmost importance, but it was useless without establishing an environment conducive to learning. The participants agreed that the teacher was responsible for instilling within the classroom elements of a successful learning environment. Thus, the locus of control shifted from what the teacher could not control to what he or she could control. The participants accomplished this transition of control by focusing on the pedagogical relationship. Filip explained ths shift by proclaiming that "you teach kids; you don't teach science." Phoebe stated emphatically: "whatever it is that you're trying to present, that has to start with the teacher-student relationship. It has to begin there. It has to."

In other words, the content was not the purpose of teaching and learning. Rather, the student was the objective. In this sense, did not matter who was in control of the content, because the focus of learning was on the student. For Filip, the goal of teaching was "for the kid to learn," and learning happened within the teacher-student relationship. "It's the teacher's job to set that relationship up," he explained, "So, no matter the situation I'm in, it's my job to set that relationship up for success and to keep it going." According to his perspective, the teachers were in control of the learning process. If learning hinged on the presence of a healthy pedagogical relationship, and if the teacher

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was the one responsible for establishing the relationship, then the teacher was in control of learning. By placing the locus of learning within the pedagogical relationship, the teacher could remove it from the content, thereby stripping the curriculum and standards of control.

This subtle shift was rooted in the teacher as the locus of learning, specifically the elements each teacher described as essential to providing classroom management and structure. These elements were responsible for creating an environment of fairness and trust, which were crucial for learning. The role of the teacher-student relationship to learning took center stage when the participants described how they encouraged fairness and trust in their pedagogy. Phoebe labeled the pedagogical relationship as "essential," David considered it to be "crucial," and Filip insisted that it was "foundational."

For Phoebe, the relationship was "essential to the students' success" both socially and academically. The teacher functioned as a role model for students, which placed considerable importance on the success of the relationship:

> If you have an interaction with [students] that is positive, you are going to see, hopefully, positive results. If you have a negative interaction, then you are definitely going to end up with negative results from that. [If students] view teachers negatively, they might view science negatively, they might view adults negatively. Either way, how you interact with a student has far-reaching effects.

David expanded on his description of relationship as crucial in much the same was as Phoebe. For him, teachers had an "influence" on students that impacted "how [teachers] interact with [students], how we are perceived by them." Filip understood that the relationship laid the groundwork for learning. Teachers had to build a "foundation where

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[students] can learn. . . . They have to trust you, they have to look up to you, they have to want to do something for you." Without that relationship in place, it was difficult to provide a stable set of structures for successful learning to occur.

The work teachers put in to developing pedagogical relationships helped establish the feelings of fairness and trust mentioned by the participants as being essential to learning. "At some level," David explained, "the student has to put some level of trust in the teacher. . . . If you don't trust a teacher, you're not going to want to do their work." In order for students to be successful, they had to feel a modicum of trust between themselves and the teacher. David placed this duty squarely on the teacher by stating that "my job is to convince them that I'm trustworthy. . . . The students' role is to follow the lead of someone they trust, and they have to make a decision whether they trust [me] or not." For David, the relationship was crucial to establishing trust within the learning environment, and introducing trust into the classroom was solely the teacher's responsibility.

In this regard, the teachers provided another possible answer to this study's main research question. Pedagogical tension took shape in the form of redirection or reassignment. Rather than acknowledge the tension between the two loci of learning, the participants focused on reassigning control over learning. When faced with political mandates that wrest curricular decisions away from teachers, the participants responded by repurposing the true nature of learning. Relationships that encouraged and nurtured trust and fairness became what ultimately determined the success of learning.

Gnostic connections. The participants' response to pedagogical tension within the locus of learning was another example of the Gnostic struggle for control. Whereas

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the tension between the purposes of learning was eliminated by constructing dualisms, shifting the locus of learning revolved around the control of knowledge. Gnostic thought attempts to control knowledge by keeping it a closely guarded secret that can only be disseminated through select individuals (Tiessen, 2007). Controlling the purity of knowledge was also paramount, because it contained the key to salvation (Edgoose, 2006; Morris, 2008).

The participants acknowledged that the content they taught was not their own. The state standards determined what was taught in the classroom, as evidenced by Phoebe's comment: "I think that what you're going to teach is what you have to teach. You don't have any control over what the subject is you have to teach." What the teachers did have control over was the learning environment. Thus, the key to successful learning became, not the content, but the maintenance of the purity of knowledge in the form of the teachers' efforts to construct a productive learning environment. David expressed in terms of teaching students "how to learn" as opposed to "what to learn." The standards were responsible for the "what." But only teachers control the real key to learning, the "how" as expressed through the learning environment. This was, in some sense, an example of controlling the purity of knowledge that was under the sole purview of the teachers.

Assumptions of the Other

The teachers' desire to control the locus of learning by placing it within the teacher-student relationship introduced an element of egocentricity into the pedagogical process. By deciding that learning was a result of the pedagogical relationship, which they controlled, the participants assumed responsibility for determining the actions of

both the teacher and the student in the relationship. In other words, they made

assumptions for how the students would (or should) act in the relationship and

determined a proper course of action based on these assumptions. Filip explained this

process by saying "I do what I feel is best for the kids." What was deemed "best for the

kids" was often based on teachers' personal reflection and experience rather than on the

relationship or the student. This attitude allowed teachers to make assumptions about

their students under the guise of the pedagogical relationship.

Egocentric foundations of assumptions. Making assumptions for the student

began with what the teachers expressed as the purpose for the pedagogical relationship.

The participants expressed this relational purpose to center on getting the students to

learn the content. Phoebe commented that it was essential to "build that relationship with

. . . students. And the more you have a relationship with them, the more likely they are to

be able to concentrate on the stuff that you're trying to teach." Filip expressed this

purpose in a similar manner: "They have to understand that there is a reason we have a

relationship at all, and that reason is for them . . . to learn and grow as a person." He then

placed this purpose under the sole responsibility of the teacher, saying "I get paid for

being here, but I'm paid to help them. As long as they understand that whatever our

interaction is, it needs to be pushing them forward." The purpose for the relationship,

according to Filip, consisted primarily of the tasks with which he was charged. He was

paid to accomplish certain things. No matter what else occurred between the teacher and

the student, "whatever our interaction is," the teachers' purpose for the relationship took

precedence.

The elements of fairness and trust that the teachers identified as necessary for the

success of the relationship were also couched in egocentric terms. David understood the element of trust to serve his purpose of getting the students to obey. "My job is to convince them that I'm trustworthy," he began. "Hopefully their role is-- once they have decided - because I can't really force that - then to go ahead and do what [I] say. [Students] have to obey and trust that where the teacher is leading [them]." The function of trust in the relationship in this sense was student compliance. In order for the relationship to be successful, students had to comply with teacher directives, and they were less likely to obey if there was no trust. Filip commented in a similar way, noting that, in order for students to learn, "they have to trust you, they have to look up to you, they have to want to do something for you." Trust functioned as a precursor to getting the students to do what you want them to do.

Additionally, the teachers' egocentric purpose influenced the methods they used to establish teacher-student relationships. For example, Phoebe felt that the teacher's job was to establish a level of respect in the relationship. She spoke of the need for students to respect the teacher so that they can succeed. She remarked "if [students] respect you, they want to do well in the topic, and the only way they are going to respect you is if you really earn that respect in some way." The way a teacher earned the respect of her students was to set boundaries, provide support structures and establish rules. "The way you [establish a relationship] is by setting that expectation, providing those avenues, supporting them as they go." These expectations and avenues that provided support came from setting rules and boundaries. Phoebe explained that "rules" and "structure" were "really important to [relational] success" because they are the "things that help shape the experience of the kids while they're here. . . . I just think having standards and rules, and

not compromising that standard is important." These rules helped establish boundaries for students, as long as the teacher worked to make them "applicable enough."

David reiterated the need to set rules and expectations so that students knew where the boundaries were. Like Phoebe, David considered these things to be essential for establishing the necessary level of respect. He explained his rationale for communicating his rules and expectations by stating that:

> If you pick and choose a few . . . things that you do in class a certain way, and say this is why we do this . . . even if it . . . doesn't make sense to them yet, it's like, 'well, I still trust the person. We'll just go ahead and obey for now; maybe it'll become clearer later.'

Without these things in place, it was easier for students to disrespect their teachers. "When there's a teacher [students] don't respect," David warned, "they're just going to try to push every boundary, not listen, disobey, and then when [the teacher] tries to reason with them, they are going to question." A successful relationship, according to David and Phoebe, was predicated on respect. It was up to the teacher to earn the respect of his students by setting rules and boundaries that were communicated through expectations given to students.

Pedagogical assumptions in practice. The motives and methods teachers use to set up and develop pedagogical relationships were, ultimately, based on assumptions they made about the way their students learn and behave. Filip described a direct connection between a student's behavior and their ability to learn. Students "who don't have the behavior foundation where they can learn" required more resources than presumably students who already have that foundation. For Filip, appropriate behavior was necessary

to learning. Based on this assertion, he assumed that students who did not behave appropriately could not learn.

Phoebe's assumptions of student learning and behavior were connected to the teacher's ability to set rules. Teachers who were unable to establish their relational parameters effectively were perceived as "messy" by students. In her mind, students "perceive you as a person that, if you can't set rules for [them], then you certainly are not disciplined in what you do. They don't say that, but that's essentially what their thought process is." Phoebe assumed that a classroom without rules was perceived by the students to be disorderly and undisciplined. Rules and structures were an important part of the pedagogical relationship for Phoebe, so they must be important for the students.

Assumptions of student thinking were evident in David's construction of the teacher-student relationship. The way he understood how students perceived the learning environment impacted how he taught. His description of student perceptions were based on two assumptions, the first being past learning experience. Students often carried academic baggage with them into his science classroom. "Their past experience could determine what they perceive of me, as far as their past experience [with] a teacher," he began, "or a past experience in a science class specifically." These past experiences affected the way students related to him or to the subject:

> Maybe they never associated good things with science class specifically because they always felt like they were behind or they didn't get it. . . . So then, they walk in here, and they go, 'Here we go again, this is the subject I really struggle with,' or anything. It could really be anything.

If students struggled with science in the past, David assumed they would enter his class

carrying those past struggles with them. David did not communicate any evidence of

students' past experiences shaping their feelings. He merely assumed that students who

struggled with science in the past would develop an anxiety over current and future

science classes.

The second assumption David made with regard to students was based on their

perception of reality. This perception was based in large part on students' ability or

desire to respect and trust teachers. He commented that if students "don't trust [teachers]

that they know their content well . . . many kids lose respect." As a result, "students start

misbehaving in teachers' classrooms when they don't respect their content knowledge,

their expertise, or even their classroom management skills." Whether or not these

teachers were deficient in their content knowledge or classroom management was

irrelevant, according to David. "It's [the students'] perception; it doesn't even have to be

reality." David's assumptions about what students thought dictated how he went about

establishing trust and respect.

David gave three examples of student perceptions he considered important to the

construction of an effective learning environment. The first was a culture of perfection in

which the students lived. According to David, students "are afraid to fail." He viewed

them as "perfectionists" who "don't want to even try unless they know they're going to

succeed." This fear of failure impacted student learning, according to David, because

"they're less willing to take risks, so they won't try things unless they already know the

answer, which means they're not really learning." This paralysis existed because

"students are they're own worst critics, and I don't think they even realize it. They don't

even give themselves a chance." David constructed a perception that students were afraid

to fail because they do not realize that they were harder on themselves than were others. As a result, they exerted less effort in class in order to be perceived as unintelligent.

Second, David described how students were a part of a culture that believed practice was not important. "[Students] show up to practice because they're told to, not because they understand that it's going to make them better," he insisted. Students wanted to succeed in sports or on the test, but they seldom wanted to put in the work to make that success possible. In turn, they would often get frustrated and "they don't understand why if they get nervous or if they mess up. They don't connect the fact that it was the lack of preparation that had a big deal to do with it." For David, this lack of preparation compounded the perfectionist culture, creating an even bigger obstacle to teaching and learning.

Third, David perceived his students suffered from shorter attention spans. This dilemma was brought on by a culture of immediacy and convenience. Texts and tweets impacted students' ability to write out their thoughts in complete sentences. These abbreviations in information and communication developed into "certain kinds of personality quirks and habits." David used an example of the ubiquity of video streaming to emphasize the effect of shortened attention spans on the classroom environment:

> If you can't focus enough for an actual YouTube clip, so you go down to a seven-second Vine clip, and that's all you can handle. Well then, you're less likely to be focused for more than a certain amount of time in class or think it's so boring, then you'll just go looking for a distraction or [try to] get out of the classroom.

For David, a culture of convenience made it more difficult for him to establish a successful learning environment. Students lacked the attention span to focus for what he

considered to be an appropriate amount of time. As a result, learning was affected.

These assumptions were seminal David's construction of the pedagogical relationship. Because of his assumptions, he made the conscious effort to focus on effort over intelligence. He mentioned that "the one thing I like to stress in my classroom is . . . the effort. . . . I go out of my way to make sure I'm trying to emphasize effort over intelligence." His rationale for doing so was, in part, because he felt that most people emphasized intelligence. This overemphasis caused students to label themselves and each other as either intelligent or not. The problem with this line of thinking, according to David, was when students "start putting themselves into one of these labels and categories, their effort gets tied to which category they tie themselves with. What ends up happening is they paralyze themselves." David reasoned that some students' lack of effort was due to the fact that they had convinced themselves that they were not intelligent. The students who already decided "for themselves that they're not intelligent enough, they will not try because they know they're going to fail anyway." For those that had been labelled smart, they were afraid to mess up. David perceived their thought to be "since everyone thinks I'm smart, I better not mess up."

David chose to focus on effort over intelligence as a way to combat these labels of "smart" or "not smart" that hindered learning in the classroom. If he praised students for their effort, he could make the point that everyone could try a little harder, everyone "could be a little smarter." Regardless of where a student believed himself or herself to be, every person could always improve. In order to do that, a person must be willing to work at it, to combat the cultural perception of the lack of preparation. Students also needed to recognize that intelligence did not come from perfection. Intelligence was

more likely to increase when students took risks. "The kids who risk it," David asserted, "as far as answering questions in front of other kids, they're more likely to learn quicker, in a sense, because they're thinking and they're throwing themselves out there." David also reiterated that this risk-taking to increase intelligence was a gradual process, rather than a quick fix. It took time, and it was important for students to understand this aspect. He emphasized that learning was about taking "baby steps" and building confidence," reminding students that the main goal was to "get better today than you were . . . yesterday."

Gnostic connection. Although David's use of assumptions about students was more systematic than were Phoebe's and Filip's, all three participants shared an egocentric understanding of the teacher-student relationship. This distinction is important to make because it is the one quality of their pedagogy that directly relates to Gnosticism. The ways in which the teachers described their experiences, the thoughts about the teacher-student relationship, or the teaching practices described as emanating from their reflections are not what can be defined as Gnostic. Rather, it was the decision to locate the pedagogical relationship within the self that is Gnostic. By situating the relationship within the self, the participants based their practices off of assumptions of the other, rather than the relationship. These assumptions then allowed them to make decisions for the other (the student) and decide upon an acceptable course of action. Students were left out of the decision-making process, which means they were also excluded from the relationship.

Vagle (2014) mentions that consciousness exists between humans and the world, between the self and the other. Similarly Bakhtin (1984) describes a person's

consciousness as inextricably connected to another's consciousness. A person cannot

think of or about the other independently. Conscious thought requires the participant of

the self and the other. Ellsworth (2005) places these ideas into the context of learning by

describing pedagogy as "embodied experiences . . . of being radically in relation to one's

self, to others, and to the world" (p. 2). In this respect, any attempt at pedagogy cannot

include assumptions of the other. Assumptions arise from egocentric attempts to decide

for the other, which is akin to a Gnostic desire for control. The construction of binaries

allows one element to make decisions about the other for the purposes of control (King,

2003; Williams, 1996). Arendt's (1961a) description of the crisis in education is one

example of this desire for control. Adults construct the world as they would like to see it,

and then decide for students how they will enter into it.

The same idea was behind the egocentricity of the participants' assumptions of

their students. They constructed the learning environment based on the teacher-student

relationship as they would like it to be. They decided how each student would operate

within this environment based on assumptions made about him or her. In this respect,

they aimed to control the teacher-student relationship. Within the framework of this

study's research question, pedagogical tension took shape in participatory contexts

through assumptions made about the other that led to egocentric relationships.

Recognition of the Other

Assumptions based on egocentric relationships were not the only responses to

pedagogical tension described by the participants. Alongside the descriptions detailing

the struggle for control were reflections on a pedagogy framed by recognition of rather

than assumptions about the other. Recognition of the other, according to the participants,

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hinged on the realization that each student was an individual. Although the requirements

and expectations of education were standardized, the students did not enter into the

learning environment standardized. This recognition did not come naturally for Filip. He

confessed that "it took me a while to figure out . . . that every class and every kid is

different." He recounted his experience as a beginning teacher where he thought

pedagogy was like a computer program; it was standardized and repeatable. "You can't

be a computer and teach them," he explained. "I always thought you could, and it

freaked me out when I started teaching. I was like 'where's the manual that tells me what

to say, and why, and how?'"

Phoebe agreed with Filip, noting that "kids are not blank slates. Kids come with

all different experiences." They were not receptacles in which teachers mechanically

deposited information. Rather, they came with their own personalities and experiences

that help shape the learning environment. Phoebe commented that it was imperative for

teachers to view students as on a "journey" rather than "as compartment in chairs that

have to have their brains open and stuff poured in."

The recognition that students have their own personalities and experiences

required that teachers treat them "like people, like humans," according to Filip. It

depended upon the realization that "[teachers] are working with their little heads. You're

not trying to figure out how [they work]. Each kid's head is different." Recognition of

the other, treating students like people, also meant that teachers could not base

pedagogical decisions off of assumptions. Phoebe communicated that "not assuming . . .

goes into respecting [students] as people." Rather than making egocentric assumptions,

teachers must give students the opportunity to be respected as individuals. For Phoebe,

this meant "giving them a chance to either tell their side of the story, or provide you with information that you weren't aware of."

Recognizing that students may actually bring different perspectives or knowledge that might improve the teacher-student interaction required teachers to participate in relationships that were free of assumptions. David summarized the impact assumptions can have on pedagogical relationships by stating that assumptions put up "barriers or . . . keep people at arms' length instead of reaching out to them" Not only did David consider assumptions to be relational barriers, he also saw them as potentially replacing the relationship altogether. "The more you assume, the less you feel like you need to connect [to students]," he reasoned, "because you already feel connected, but those are not like real connections." Egocentric assumptions created the illusion of a pedagogical relationship. But, like David said, they were not genuine because they were egocentric representations of the teacher's understanding rather than a relational recognition of the students as individuals.

Allowing assumptions to replace relationships impacted the way teachers teach. For Filip, assumptions led to expectations that got in the way of teaching. David echoed Filip's notion of expectations as hinderances, adding that these expectations also influenced the way students perceive teachers. Phoebe commented on how these assumptions and expectations ultimately led to the limitation of academic possibility. Phoebe considered it impossible to "assume the motivation for any kind of behavior or academic performance" of students. There were simply too many variables to consider in order to determine a student's exact motive. But once teachers begin to make assumptions about students' motives, they immediately limit possibility. The end result

is a loss of connection for the teacher, both with the student and with the success of the curriculum.

Relinquishing control. Constructing pedagogical relationships around the recognition of students as individuals, free of egocentric assumptions, involved recognizing that certain elements of pedagogy and learning were outside teachers' control. Establishing a purpose for learning centered on the teacher was an exercise in control. Similarly, the effort to situate the locus of learning within the teachers' responsibilities was a desire for control. Both of these practices attempt to remove the tension from pedagogy. However, by recognizing that certain essential learning elements were out of their control, the participants began to envision a classroom environment that worked within and through pedagogical tension. Rather than working to eliminate the tension, the teachers described a way to work with it.

Working within pedagogical tension first required that the teachers' recognize elements of "the other" that were beyond their control. Phoebe mentioned students' home life, specifically their relationships with parents and families. "How much respect the family has for education . . ., their income, [and] how enriching their activities outside of school have been" were all attributes of students' home life that were beyond the teacher's control. David echoed the importance of the extracurricular activities and the impact they had on students, specifically "the hours spent doing them instead of homework." He also included other familial factors, such as the presence of siblings or whether or not they came from a single-parent home, as being out of teachers' control.

Additionally, the teachers discussed the unique nature of adolescence as being out of their control. David recognized that "these kids are going through different things, and

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they feel different every day, or maybe even different parts of the day." Many of these feelings were out of the students' control, much less the teachers' control. Phoebe expanded David's recognition of adolescent thoughts and behavior to the broader social setting. There's an element of "realizing that your class is not the most important thing that they do during the day . . . we're a very small part [of students'] lives." Other things were happening in students' lives while teachers were trying to help them learn. Struggles with parents, friends, and other factors that influence them impacted their ability to learn from day to day. Phoebe explained that she learned early in her career:

> You can't take a kid at face value all the time. You can't assume that the behavior that they are exhibiting means: number one, that they understand what you are doing. Number two, that their brain is here even if they are looking at you. And number three, that the reason that they're not with you, is not because they are just actively choosing not be part of your classroom. Of course that happens, but you can't assume that that's what's happening.

There were simply too many factors that contributed to a student's perception and behavior for the teacher to control. As a result, making assumptions in order to control them, was counterproductive to teaching. "Sometimes you have to let them have their moods," she confessed. Pedagogical tension took shape, not through assumptions of the other, but rather through recognition of the other. The process of recognition began with admitting things that were beyond the teacher's control.

Re-establishing the relational dichotomy. Admitting a lack of control opened up the possibility to consider the pedagogical space as a dichotomy. Whereas the effort to control pedagogy led to the construction of dualisms and hierarchies, recognizing the

other by ceding power and control allowed for the re-establishment of a relational

dichotomy between self and other. This dichotomy allowed pedagogical tension to take

shape in what Voegelin (1990) describes as metaxy along with Ellsworth's (2005) notion

of transitional space. Considering the relationality of pedagogy allowed for the learning

environment to operate in the in-between-ness of the self and the other. It was neither the

cause nor the result of one specific element over another. Rather, the learning

environment existed as in combination with, as an interaction between the self and the

other.

   Flexibility and control. The teachers recognized three examples of the relational

dichotomy in pedagogy, beginning with flexibility and control. All three of the

participants named flexibility as an essential quality of good teaching. Flexibility was

necessary because teachers often did not know what would transpire from day to day.

The elements of pedagogy the teachers described as being their responsibility (i.e., lesson

planning, material resources, and classroom/behavior management) were only

controllable insofar as student learning was controllable. For example, the participants

made sure they were in control of their lesson planning, while also understanding that

student responses to these plans were not controllable. Phoebe confessed that: "You

never know from day to day exactly what you think they got today, and then you take an

assessment and they don't know it. So tomorrow [has] to be a different lesson."

   The recognition of the other, of something that existed outside the realm of their

control, created a transitional space where teachers could acknowledge and respond to

their students through the reflective practice of flexibility. Filip described this practice of

flexibility by relating a particular experience. He explained how a lesson he had planned

that involved working with a computer simulation changed in response to student interaction. "Earlier in the day I started out with some notes instead of jumping right into the computer thing," Filip began, "You could smell the boredom in the air." It became apparent to Filip that his students were not engaged in his lesson, so he changed his plans in response to their feedback. He spoke of how one specific student, whom he initially thought was being disruptive, found a more productive way to use the simulation. Instead of disciplining the student for what he perceived to be misbehavior, Filip invited the rest of class to try and use the simulation the new way. This example was an attempt to "play off what's interesting to [students] so you engage them in the lesson. What she was doing was interesting, so if everybody tries it, it's even more interesting to everybody. What's interesting to kids is engaging to kids." Filip's attempts to engage his classes in his lesson plan were examples of flexibility in the midst of control, efforts at recognizing pedagogy as the space between self and other.

Choice and standardization. The second example of the relational dichotomy in pedagogy, as expressed by the participants, was the recognition of choice and standardization. There were elements of the education process that were beyond the teachers' control, most tangibly the state curriculum and standardized tests. All three participants understood their responsibility to teach what was expected of them. Filip went so far as to label it a social expectation: "society put me here to teach their children these skills and knowledge." David communicated that the curriculum and content of his class was largely out of his control. Even though the teachers' disapproved of their lack of control over the content, they understood that it would be a "disservice" to their students if they ignored the standardized elements of education. The prescribed tests and

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curricula were a necessary part of teaching and learning.

Phoebe discussed the implications of recognizing the other in the midst of standardized curricula and tests. She described standardization efforts as involving a "system that has the direction set in place for the students." This direction was set by "somebody in a tower somewhere who is deciding [what] social values we should impart through our education." The bottom line for Phoebe was that "the people that make policies are looking for this mainstream, one-size-fits-all type of thing." The logic she conveyed regarding the construction of standardized learning echoed an egocentric, self-focused motive. There existed a goal for education, the imparting of certain values. This goal was accomplished by a mainstream, one-size-fits-all pedagogy. Phoebe resisted this logic, stating that it was not "necessarily the teacher's responsibility to force the students to go a certain direction." This assertion was based on her recognition of the other in the form of student individuality and choice which pushed against standardization.

The recognition of the other through individuality and choice was just as much a part of the teacher's responsibility as was teaching for the test. "I think it's my responsibility to prepare the kids to be able to deal with the world," Phoebe commented. Preparation for dealing with the world was her way of acknowledging what "societal" and "systemic forces" expected of education, namely a college degree. But Phoebe stated adamantly that "it's not [teachers'] responsibility to force kids into this." She continued by saying:

> Yes. I think it's my responsibility to prepare the kids to be able to deal with the world. If they are going to go on to higher education, then I absolutely have a responsibility to help them prepare for that. That's my job. But also recognizing

that that's not the only direction that a kid should go. So, making sure they have

the tools to be successful in that setting that's expected, but still supporting the

fact that, "You may not choose to go this mainstream direction. So, I'm going to

teach you everything you need to be, everything you need to do to go on to do

that," but I'm also going to be supportive and encouraging of all those different

pathways that somebody might choose.

Phoebe recognized that the one mainstream option expressed through standardization was

not necessarily the best one for each individual. It was her job, literally, to make sure she

did everything she could do to help each student be successful in that required endeavor.

But she also considered it her responsibility to encourage and prepare her students to

pursue other, more individual interests. She expressed this sentiment using the following

example:

I'm not going to tell my musician that your music is not important, because it's not

a [standardized] test. That's not fair, and it denies that kid the recognition of the

importance of who they are. That's not right. It's not the right thing to do. So, yes,

I'm going to teach them all they need to know in terms of my subject, but I'm

going to validate all of those different ways that kids can develop as a person.

This last statement succinctly described the pedagogical tension that existed for Phoebe

between choice and standardization. Standardization was a part of the educational

process, and she was responsible for her role in that process. But it was not the only

process involved in teaching. The other process involved the development of students

and persons, or individuals. For Phoebe, this involved recognizing the inherent

"otherness" of students, and then structuring her pedagogy around validating this

otherness in the midst of standardization. It was not her responsibility to make a choice

for the student. Rather, she validated the presence of choice and supported her students

in their process of deciding.

Empathy and assumption. The third example of relational dichotomies

expressed by the participants involved the recognition of empathy in the midst of

assumptions. Although the participants frequently discussed their perceptions of teaching

and learning based off of assumptions made about students, they also recognized the need

for empathy. Filip defined empathy simply as "put[ting] yourself in the place of the kid,

putting yourself in their point-of-view so you can see what they're struggling with."

David and Phoebe provided examples of this empathetic understanding when discussing

the elements of pedagogy that were beyond teachers' control, specifically how a student's

home life might affect their learning. Phoebe described how knowing what her students

had available outside of school impacted her teaching: "Accessibility to community

offerings . . . and parent involvement both influence my practice." Community offerings

included the availability of libraries and computer and internet access, while parental

involvement played a role in determining tutorials or homework assignments. Phoebe

empathetically considered her students' personal situations when constructing her

lessons.

David described how empathy toward students impacted his understanding of

student learning, describing how his empathetic recognition of the other influenced the

assumptions he made about students. In other words, David's assumptions about his

students were not merely an effort to control the locus of learning nor the environment.

They were also an attempt to increase his recognition of the other in empathetic ways.

To be empathetic was to "know yourself, know your content and know your kids."

Teaching, for David, happened somewhere in the intersection of these three things. Empathy required considering students' emotions, particularly fears, when teaching in an effort to establish feelings of safety and comfort. His desire was to make his classroom "a safe place, not only physically, but emotionally and mentally as well." Emotional safety was established through the course of teacher-student dialogue. It was important to David for students to get past the fear of "looking goofy" if they answered a question wrong. It was his responsibility to work toward "getting students to feel okay to try something, say something wrong in front of people and still possibly be wrong and be okay with it." He engendered a level of comfort with his students by "brushing off" or downplaying "ridiculous" answers. "I don't care how ridiculous [the] answer was," David remarked, "because I'm going to brush it off." He reflected on how his former students often conveyed to him how important this was to them by saying: "No matter how dumb the answer was, you never laughed at them."

Responding to students' participation in class was an example of how David used empathy to help establish a safe learning environment. It was based in part on reflections from conversations with past students. Yet, it was also based on assumptions made about his current students. He recognized how uncomfortable adolescence can be, and this recognition led him to assume it added to students' level of discomfort to be wrong in class. David stood in the in-between space of empathy and assumption. Rather than allow his pedagogy to be driven solely by assumptions, he treated his students (and the assumptions made about them) with empathy.

Teaching within pedagogical tension. The re-establishment of the relational

dichotomy, inviting metaxy and tension to exist within pedagogy, hinged on the presence

of compassion and humility. These were the two qualities of teaching identified by the

participants that encouraged them to recognize students' individuality instead of making

assumptions about them. In short, the participants described teaching with compassion

and humility as a means for pedagogical tension to take shape in the classroom.

Compassion. Phoebe defined compassion as taking into account "all the variables

and acting upon that, as opposed to rigidly holding [all students] to the same. . . . [This]

means avoiding absolutes. We have the rules we have to follow, but there are always

extenuating circumstances." These variables that must be taken into account were what

defined students as individuals. According to the participants, these variables included

such factors as familial relationships, socioeconomic status, resource availability and peer

relationships. They influenced the teachers' approach to learning from student to student

as well as from day to day. Phoebe shared two stories that related to each of these

contexts. In the first story, she described a student who was absent for a three week span

during the school year due to a family situation. Phoebe could have placed the

expectation on the student to complete all of the assignments each one of her other

students had to complete. "If I were to follow the letter of the law," she remarked, "[the

student] would have to do every assignment." Teaching with compassion allowed

Phoebe to modify, change or omit assignments so that the student could focus primarily

on learning the required information rather than turning in work. "In using my discretion

and picking out the things that [were] most important," she was able to set up an

opportunity where the student could "still pass and get the information."

The second story conveyed by Phoebe focused on the daily roller coaster that can be adolescence. She commented on a situation where a popular music group that many of the students listened to broke up, devastating some of the girls in her class. She remembered the girls "sobbing in my class." As far as Phoebe was concerned, this was hardly cause for alarm: "In my mind, this is totally ridiculous. . . . But for [these] girls, they were truly disturbed." Her students' reaction to this seemingly insignificant event caused Phoebe to modify her teaching for the day to allow for some of her students to regain their composure long enough to participate in learning. Even though it appeared trivial, this event was no less an example of compassion. For Phoebe, compassion in teaching is not determined by what she considered to be important or trivial, but rather by how her students responded to their surroundings.

David and Filip both echoed Phoebe's sentiment regarding compassion. David understood that compassion involved recognizing the students' perspective. "It's not our perspective that really matters," he stated, "it's what they think of the situation." As for the situation with the hysterical girls, he recognized that, according to their perspective, it was very important. He continued by saying "you've got to deal with it as if it's important, because it was for them. It's a reality for them." So, too, Filip described compassion as being able to see things from the students' perspective. In his mind, empathy and compassion were the same: "You have to be able to put yourself in their place."

The ability of teachers to put themselves in their students' place was only part of compassion within pedagogical tension. This type of compassion must also take into account the expectations of the systems and standards of education. Filip recognized that

the expectation for student learning was mastery; he expected every student to master the content. Although the goal may be the same for all students, how each one accomplishes this goal may be different. Phoebe explained the tension in compassion the following way:

> Our goal is mastery. Well, kids reach mastery in all different ways, and they all start from different points, and they all end up at different points. You have to be compassionate and insightful enough to be able to guide a student toward that mastery, and it's not going to look the same for everybody. It just isn't.

Compassion does not mean that teachers alter the content mastery goals for students. These goals are determine by the state standards and tests. What compassion allows teachers to do is work within the tension that exists between these mastery goals and the individual ways students work toward accomplishing them.

Humility. In addition to utilizing compassion in pedagogy, the participants also recognized the importance of treating students with humility. Whereas compassion allowed the participants to recognize the individuality in others, humility allowed them to recognize the humanity in others. Compassion served as an attempt to engage "the other" that lives within the tension between process and product. Humility served as an effort to recognize "the other" in a way that placed the locus of learning within the pedagogical relationship itself. Learning does not emanate from the teacher toward the student. It exists in the metaxic space between teacher and student. Teachers engage with students in this space by practicing humility.

The primary practice of humility identified by the participants was learning from students. Filip insisted that teaching was "not just a one way flow of information from

teacher to student, but you also get information from student to teacher." It was imperative that teachers allow for a relationship to exist, one where the roles could be flipped at any time. David agreed and added that it was crucial to "understand that [students] have something that's important [to share] that they contribute as students, and we have to be willing to listen and value that." Phoebe summed up David's thought by expressing the need to "validate a way of thinking" for students. The participants practiced humility by allowing students to share in the process of communicating knowledge and information in a way that validates students' thinking.

Even more necessary to the practice of humility was the recognition that teachers are learners just like their students. Phoebe expressed the notion that, as a teacher, it was imperative to recognize that "you're always a learner." Learning from students was no exception. This notion of learning from students was expressed in three ways, most simply as feedback. The participants related the importance of letting students respond to lessons and activities in an effort to improve their teaching. David recognized that allowing students to critique lessons "takes a lot of humility." This example of humility gave students an opportunity to participate in the learning process in a way that encouraged a two way relationality described by Filip, while also serving as a larger social example. David commented on how asking students for feedback shows them that teachers are willing to admit mistakes and recognize an opportunity to change things. Taking advantage of these moments gave teachers the opportunity to "develop [students'] social skills" in a way that was "a great example of humility from a teacher."

The second expression of humility was a recognition that teachers do not have all of the answers. Filip described the motive for his dialogic teaching style by simply

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stating "I think I honestly do not know all the answers." The importance of this statement cannot be lost in its simplicity. By recognizing that he may not have all of the answers, Filip opened his classroom up to a relational pedagogy. If he did not have all of the answers, then there existed the possibility that he may learn from his students. If his students did not have all the answers, then there existed the possibility that they may learn from him. This recognition of the unknown creates the possibility for learning for both the teacher and the student, a possibility that could only exist through the teacher's practice of humility.

Filip's seemingly inane comment was expanded to include the realm of science in general. Phoebe and David both agreed that it was impossible to know everything from a scientific standpoint. David considered science to be a "habit of mind" or a "habit of thinking." In other words, the practice of science was a process that was more about viewing the world a certain way rather than retaining bits of knowledge. One of the reasons David gave for this scientific perspective was the notion that scientific knowledge was, in a sense, "limitless." He expressed this notion by stating:

> I think we have to understand first of all, it's our content. Science is all about learning and telling each other some perspective and adjusting what we know and saying, "You know, there's something to that." Maybe we can agree on some fundamental truths here, but then there's the idea of thinking that [knowledge] is limitless.

Filip's comment of not knowing all the answers applies to the field of science. There existed the possibility that science knowledge was limitless, that acquiring all of the possible science knowledge could never be accomplished. In this regard, science

teachers must consider themselves learners because every person is and will always be a learner. Practicing humility by naming teachers as learners created an opportunity for pedagogical tension to exist through the recognition of the other.

Conclusion

This analysis suggests that the teacher participants were aware of pedagogical tensions in theoretical, practical and participatory contexts. They discussed two contrasting perceptions of this tension, one based on the Gnostics philosophies of competition and control that undergird standardization efforts, and the other based on a more metaxic understanding of pedagogy. Although these responses are different from one another, they both represent teacher perceptions of pedagogy opposed to current efforts to standardize education.

The first response, while opposing standardization, actually served to reaffirm the Gnostic philosophies within standards-based reform efforts. The participants described a purpose of learning that was grounded in a radical dualism that, similar to this study's Gnostic argument, engendered a competition between process and product. The participants viewed the purpose of learning from a developmental process-oriented approach. Their responsibility was to initiate and guide students through their development, as Phoebe noted: "the teacher's job in the end is to help guide the journey of [a] student from where you get them to where they're going to be going."

This view of learning as a process was held in opposition to a more product-oriented perception, exemplified most notably by standardized curricula and tests. The participants determined that, though both perspectives of learning were present, they could not co-exist. In short, they viewed these two purposes of learning in dualistic terms

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in order to construct a hierarchical relationship between them. Unlike standardization hierarchies based on the same dualism, the participants elevated the process over the product. Helping students experience the joy of learning, teaching for students' future, and helping students grow were all expressions the participants used to describe their purpose for learning. Focusing on the product of learning undercut this process-oriented approach. As a result, the teachers felt obligated to choose one over the other, as indicated most concisely by David: "I'm not going to sacrifice [students'] future for the sake of the test . . . if I had to choose between the two."

This dualistic understanding of the purpose of learning carried over to their descriptions of the source, or locus of learning. The participants viewed the responsibility for learning in the process-oriented approach as belonging to the teacher. Conversely, they defined a product-oriented approach to learning that emanated from the standardized curricula and tests. With the teacher as its focus, learning was defined as "being able to take . . . new information and access it, and then [use] it to inform future behavior or future thoughts." The goal for learning was still developmental, always focused on the future. Three teacher requirements were considered essential to this understanding of learning – content knowledge, reflective practices, and classroom structure and management. Each of these requirements was determined to be the teacher's responsibility.

Standardized curricula and tests originated outside the teacher, primarily within government and district administrative policy. These policies decided the curriculum for teachers, which ultimately affected what and how they taught. The motive for this locus of learning was measurable data, which was collected on students and schools. These

data were then used to determine student achievement and teacher effectiveness. The result was a politically situated approach to teaching that decided "what direction that kids are supposed to be going in." Teachers were perceived as being on the losing end of this political effort to direct student learning. "We can influence direction," Phoebe lamented, "but really, that kind of larger momentum comes from outside us."

The participants responded to this momentum by reassigning, or redirecting, the locus of learning away from curriculum toward the learning environment. In order for curriculum to be effective, the environment must be conducive to learning. This slight shift placed control over learning back to the teachers, most noticeably in the teacher-student relationship. The participants suggested that their focus on teaching was the student rather than the content; "you teach kids," Filip stated, "you don't teach science." As a result, how teachers interacted with students became the determining factor for whether or not learning took place. It was not up to the state or district policy. Instead, it was up to the teacher to create an appropriate learning environment.

Placing the locus of learning in the teacher-student relationship culminated in an egocentric view of students. Deciding for themselves that learning was a result of the pedagogical relationship allowed teachers to make assumptions about their students. Filip explained how he did "what I feel is best for the kids." Because the participants constructed a system to wrestle away control over learning from standardization efforts, they could not seem to include students in their decisions. What was "best for the kids" rarely involved considering students' perspectives. Instead, the participants described elements of fairness and trust, cornerstones of effective teacher-student relationships, in solipsistic terms. According to David, it was his job "to convince [my students] that I'm

trustworthy." Phoebe explained that respect had to be earned by the teacher in the classroom. Filip stated that students have to "trust you [as the teacher], they have to look up to you." It was clear that students needed to respect and trust teachers. But these comments were often devoid of teachers returning to the students this trust.

This explanation of trust and fairness allowed teachers to make assumptions about their students under the guise of developing relationships. For example, David assumed that students brought certain behaviors into class that hindered learning. They seldom applied themselves in class because they were afraid to fail. They labeled themselves and each other as either "smart" or "not smart," which influenced their level of commitment to the class. Students' attention spans had grown shorter, in part because of the social influences of YouTube and Twitter. All of these hindrances to learning were egocentric in nature; David decided they existed based on his own observations. As a result, his interactions with students were not based on a dialogic relationship, but rather on his egocentric assumptions.

Despite this carefully constructed attempt to control learning, the participants admitted that it was ultimately uncontrollable. The reason for this admission was based on the simple fact that learners are not standardized. Filip confessed that "every class and every kid is different." Phoebe expressed that "kids are not blank slates. Kids come with all different experiences." In other words, a standardized learning environment could not produce learning no matter what its purpose was, where it was located, or how teachers attempted to control it. Learning happened when teachers recognized the individuality and humanity of students.

Along with their efforts to counter standardization in the classroom, the

participants spoke about learning in truly relational and dialogic terms. Learning was a result of the interaction between flexibility and control, between choice and standardization, and between empathy and assumption. They identified compassion and humility as elements of teaching that could promote both learning and pedagogical tension. Compassion involved recognizing the individuality of students. The fact that each student was unique should be reflected in the way they are taught. According to Phoebe, the goal of education dis not alter the presence of compassion and individuality. Though education may be focused on mastery, compassion recognized that "kids reach mastery in all different ways. . . . You have to be compassionate . . . enough to guide a student toward that mastery, and it's not going to look the same for everybody."

Humility reiterated the humanity of individual students by inviting them to participate in the pedagogical relationship. It required teachers to recognize that they may not know everything, and they may not have all of the answers. Humility allowed participants to form authentic pedagogical relationships by placing both the teacher and the student at the level of learner. In short, in order for learning to occur, both participants must be willing to learn. Practicing humility provided teachers the opportunity to learn from their students.

V – FLATTENING THE HIERARCHIES

The data analysis suggests that teaching is more than an egocentric exercise. To be sure, much of the practice of pedagogy begins with and is often initiated by the teacher. But to assume that it remains completely within the control of the teacher and therefore an entirely egocentric enterprise denies the inherent dialogic and relational nature of pedagogy. Learning is a dialogic activity (Lyle, 2008; Matusov, 2009; Watkins, 2005) and is therefore relational (Giles, et al., 2012; Margonis, 2011; Saevi, 2011). The study's participants themselves recognized this fact, using dialogic partnerships such as flexibility *and* control, choice *and* standardization, empathy *and* assumption to describe pedagogy.

This relationality, the *and* of pedagogy, further denies the egocentricity of pedagogy by suggesting that it actually occurs in between the participants rather than within one or the other. Voegelin's (1990) concept of metaxy defines this understanding of reality as dependant upon the existence of two consciousnesses, the noetic and the pneumatic. The noetic consciousness describes rational thought and scientific reasoning, whereas the pneumatic consciousness reflects on knowledge of a more spiritual and transcendent nature. Both consciousnesses are necessary, because reality exists in the space between, created through a "mutual partnership" of the "human and divine" (Voegelin, 1990, p. 187). Reality is not just some material thing that we become aware of. It occupies an actual space, having physical presence of in-between-ness (Hughes, 2004; Mitchell, 2002).

This study argues that the same notion is true of pedagogy, that it occupies a physical space, an in-between-ness in the learning environment. This understanding of

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pedagogy guided the study's research question: how might pedagogical tension take shape in theoretical, practical and participatory contexts? The question acknowledges that pedagogy exists in a state of tension, the result of its in-between-ness or metaxy. Pedagogical metaxy actually takes a shape, or is embodied within these contexts of learning. The research question examines the construction of these contexts through interactions between teachers and students, between monologic and dialogic theories, and between technical and relational practices.

Pedagogical Metaxy

Pedagogical metaxy takes Voegelin's necessary and participatory existence of reality as a state of in-between-ness and places it within the context of education and learning. It emphasizes the uncertain yet necessary human element of education, the realization that the participants involved in learning are actively engaged in creating meaning (Biesta, 2004). This meaning creation, or learning, hinges on three metaxic conditions: transitional space, embodied moments, and participation. These three conditions reflect the tension inherent within pedagogy, which is problematic for standardization efforts influenced by Gnosticism.

Transitional space. Learning exists in the space between participants rather than with the participants themselves. Ellsworth (2005) describes this participatory space of pedagogy using Winnicott's (1989) construct of transitional space. This space involves the recognition of realities that exist outside a participant's understanding of his or her own existence. Not only do these realities exist outside a person's understanding, they also interact with him or her. These interactions are "transitional because encounters with the 'not me' that one finds there and the actions that we take in response to such

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encounters change both the inside of the self and the outside of the social environment" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 60). These actions, responses, and changes that occur as a result of interactions with the outside create tension because, according to Ellsworth, they are unknowable and spontaneous. "When we are in transitional space" she writes, "we are neither ourselves as we have come to know them nor are we our others. We are in transition" (Ellsworth, 2005, pp. 60-61). As participants and individuals navigate these spontaneous and unknowable transitory spaces, they begin to reconfigure both themselves and their understanding of their surroundings. It is this process of reconfiguration, brought on by the unavoidable encounter with the "not me," that Ellsworth describes as learning. This process can only happen in a space that is filled with tension and the unknowable.

Filip embodied this unavoidable encounter with the "not me" and the unknowable by stating that he did not know all of the answers. Similarly, Phoebe expressed the importance of teachers to always be learners. These two statements suggest that the participants recognized the impossibility for teachers to escape the unknowable and the spontaneous. These elements of pedagogy occurred through interactions with students, according to David and Filip. Filip described teaching as a two-way flow of information between teachers and students, while David understood his responsibility to value what students contributed to the relationship. The presence of the "not me" in the form of the student precipitated information that could not be known ahead of time. As a result, the teacher's response was to become a learner in this unavoidable encounter.

Embodied moments. Metaxy is also a tangible and real element of pedagogy and learning. Merleau-Ponty's (2002) notion of embodiment puts flesh on Ellsworth's

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description of transitional space. "The body is the vehicle of being in the world,"

Merleau-Ponty states, "and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a

definite environment" (2002, p. 94). The process of a body intervolving with its definite

environment is what Ellsworth refers to as transitional space. For her, transitional space

happens in both time and space and can take material form. She refers to this

embodiment or materialization as transitional objects, which are used to "put our selves

in a transformative relation with the outside" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 60).

    Van Manen (2015) describes transitional objects in learning as pedagogical

moments. These moments arise "in the exact instant of a pedagogical situation or

relation when a pedagogical action is required" (van Manen, 2015, p. 35). Absent from

this definition is the reliance on a participant or individual for the creation of the moment.

Pedagogical moments arise from specific situations or relations. Although individuals

may participate in the development of situations and/or relations, the pedagogical

moments that arise from them are not dependent on individuals for their creation or

existence. These moments "cannot be predicted or wished into existence by artists,

architects or teachers" (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 60). Rather, they serve to highlight the

"uniqueness of each situation, and the uniqueness of each individual life" (van Manen,

2015, p. 35).

    Furthermore, van Manen's (2015) concept of pedagogical moments bolster

Ellsworth's (2005) notion of transitional spaces by forcing the pedagogical actor outside

himself or herself. Van Manen (2015) states that the "pedagogical moment is embedded

in a situation in which something pedagogical is expected of us and we subsequently are

oriented to that which is in the best interest or 'good' of this child" (p. 38). Our

awareness of the pedagogical moment forces us to interact with the outside. We did not

create this moment but, by participating in it, we must respond to and interact with

something outside ourselves. Ellsworth (2005) describes this moment as the "space of

difference between," full of "movements and changes that reconfigure as it happens" (p.

60).

Phoebe communicated a willingness to work within this space of difference that

moves and changes through her understanding of compassion. For her, compassion

involved taking into consideration all of the variables that present themselves in a

teaching moment, and responding to them appropriately rather than holding each student

to the same expectations. Although the goal of teaching and learning may be the same

for each student, the ways in which pedagogy accomplished this depended on the "space

of difference between" each student (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 60). The goal may be the same,

but the ways in which students achieved it were each different. "You have to be

compassionate and insightful enough to be able to guide a student" toward the goal,

Phoebe explained, while recognizing that "it's not going to look the same for everybody.

It just isn't."

Participation. Finally, pedagogical metaxy is a recognition of the dialogic and

participatory nature of learning. Voegelin (1990) understands this dialogic necessity in

terms of multiple consciousnesses. Ellsworth (2005) discusses the interactions of the

inside with the outside in transitional spaces. Van Manen (2015) defines the pedagogical

moment as an action that occurs within a situation between an actor and a child. There is

no metaxy, no transitional space, no pedagogical moment, without a dialogic or relational

interaction. Ellsworth (2005) suggests that pedagogy can only occur when the inside is

put into relation with the outside and expresses pedagogy "as an economy of moving forms and selves that operates through a logic of open-mined relationality" (p. 57). There is no expression of or intent behind pedagogy other than the relational existence between participants. "Pedagogy has no external goal outside of itself," van Manen (2015) writes; rather "the goal of pedagogical action is not a predetermined outcome but the caring action itself" (p. 43). Pedagogy is an end in and of itself, the result of a relational moment between two participants. It is necessarily dialogic and struggles to survive in a monologic or egocentric environment.

The data supported the presence of a dialogic and participatory pedagogy within the learning environment. All three participants spoke of the importance of the "*and*" of pedagogy in restoring the relational focus to pedagogy. For example, Phoebe spoke of the relationship between flexibility and control with respect to lesson planning. There was a certain amount of control that teachers necessarily exercised over their lesson plans. This level of control and preparation was part of being a responsible and effective teacher. The other side of this responsibility was recognizing that pedagogy, specifically the implementation of the lesson plan, was a participatory exercise. In Phoebe's mind, it was imperative that the teacher recognize that the student responses to these lesson plans were uncontrollable. There was a need for participatory flexibility because, as Phoebe noted, "You never know from day to day exactly what you think [students] got today, and then you take an assessment and they don't know it. So tomorrow [has] to be a different lesson." As the teacher interacted with the students during the lesson, the participatory and dialogic nature of pedagogy created a flexible space where students and teachers worked together to impact the future lessons.

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Standardization and Pedagogical Metaxy

These three metaxic conditions are responsible for the presence of tension in pedagogy. Voegelin (1990) describes this tension as the one "constant in the history of humankind" (p. 119). Human experience, including pedagogy, at once and always has the characteristics of a tension which can never be resolved, only realized (Hughes, 2004). It is the uncertain yet necessary human element of education (Biesta, 2004), and the result of one's participation with others(Mitchell, 2002; Webb, 2005).

The tension that results from a participatory and metaxic understanding of pedagogy is viewed as problematic and an obstacle for education, as is often expressed through efforts to control the educative process through accountability practices which favor standardization (Douglass, et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2002; Taubman, 2009). Earlier chapters of this study detail the various tools and rationales often utilized by education reforms in an effort to standardize and control learning. They include: creating standards for efficiency and transferability (Dunn, 2005; Kliebard, 2004; Knoll, 2009; Liss, 2013; Polikoff, 2012; Rothman, 2011), identifying and measuring teacher capacity (Grant, 2008; McDiarmid & Clevenger-Bright, 2008; Zhang & Stevens, 2013), mandating instructional alignment (Early et al., 2014; Polikoff, 2012; Polikoff & Porter, 2014) which results in curriculum narrowing (Au, 2011; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011), quantifying the impact of pedagogical relationships on measurable student achievement (e.g., Birch & Ladd 2007; Crosnoe, et al., 2004; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Hughes et al., 2008; Klem & Connell, 2004; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Roorda et al., 2011), and identifying and measuring teacher dispositions (Alawiye & Williams, 2010; Harrison et al., 2006; Newberry, 2010; Rike & Sharp, 2008; Ripski, et

al., 2011; Yucel, et al., 2010).

The goal of each of these standardization attempts is to replace the tension inherent within pedagogical metaxy with a measure of certainty. It is as if education reforms attempt to answer the question: what is pedagogy and how can it best be implemented? In order to define what it is, labels must be constructed so that one can determine if something is or is not pedagogy based on its descriptors. Measures of effectiveness must also be established so that educators can decide whether or not current strategies are being implemented successfully. The result is a standardized education that focuses exclusively on pedagogies and learning outcomes that can be measured (Taubman, 2009).

The participants discussed the focus on measurable learning outcomes and their impact on teaching. All three teachers recognized that the current purpose of education revolved around standardized test scores. Phoebe commented that students seemed to be singularly focused on the grades that came from the tests, while Filip noted that teachers' evaluations were tied to their students' test scores. "It's all about the test scores," he lamented. David explained that this evaluative purpose of the standardized test influenced both his pedagogy and curriculum. He described a learning environment that told him what topics he needed to teach, because "they will be tested later." Despite his judgement that the test should not be the focus of teaching and learning, he reluctantly admitted that "our hands are tied as far as what we can teach." The participants expressed that the focus on the measurable outcomes dictated what and how they taught.

This shift in defining pedagogy, away from something that is metaxic and uncertain toward something that can be defined and measured, reconfigures the

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materiality of pedagogy. Instead of functioning as the space and time between dialogic participants (Ellsworth, 2005), pedagogy is repurposed in the form of standards, instructional alignment, tests and student achievement. Pedagogy is measured according to its alignment with predetermined standards (Au, 2007) designed to elicit specific answers on standardized tests (Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011; Taubman, 2009). The result is focused on certainty, intent on "providing the same curriculum and expecting the same outcomes for all students" (Kim, 2010, p. 10). By standardizing the learning experience, educators attempt to reduce the amount of the uncertainty and the unknown in pedagogy.

Additionally, the trend toward standardization has impacted the participatory and relational nature of pedagogy. Whereas Ellsworth (2005) and van Manen (2015) stress the necessity of relationality in pedagogy, standardization efforts describe its effectiveness in terms of individual achievement. In other words, pedagogy no longer is understood in relational terms. Rather, it is judged on how effective it is in producing individual student results, namely test scores. Van Manen (2015) illustrates this shift in the following way:

> The difference between pedagogy and "instruction" or "curriculum" is that pedagogy has no external goal outside of itself which would serve certain societal interests . . . . In a sense, the goal of pedagogical action is not a predetermined outcome but the caring action itself . . . . Pedagogical action that is motivated by the external setting of learning outcomes and achievement goals inevitably turns into instrumental action – action in the service of calculated ends. (p. 43)

When pedagogy serves as a means to an end, it ceases to be pedagogy. When it no longer exists in the situated context of dialogic participants, but rather serves to accomplish an

externally motivated goal, it becomes something other than pedagogy, or what van Manen refers to as instrumental action. By structuring and standardizing the learning environment around the acquisition of test scores, educators redefine teaching as instrumental action rather than pedagogy. This shift in action and purpose can be detrimental to the pedagogical relationship (Au, 2007; Ellsworth, 2005; Kim, 2010; Lovat et al., 2011; Milligan, 2005; Rubin & Kazanjian, 2011; Taubman, 2009). Additionally, this limitation can impede or negatively affect student achievement due to the fact that strong relationships have been shown to be pivotal to learning in the classroom (e.g., Davis, 2006; Fan, 2012; Huan, et al., 2012).

This study's data suggests that an environment centered around accountability practices and standardized test scores negatively effects the pedagogical relationship through teacher assumptions. The participants discussed their struggles with engaging in relational pedagogical practices in the midst of standardized expectations. The tensions between assumptions made about students and the recognition of students as individuals served as a concrete example of this struggle. On the one hand, the teachers talked about the necessity of relationships in pedagogy, and the importance of recognizing the individuality of each student.

On the other hand, the pressures of standardization and accountability expectations engendered a pedagogy based on dualisms and control. The teachers resisted the mandates of standardized practices by attempting to take back control for themselves. This tug-of-war over control of learning led to assumptions about students. The teachers recognized that making assumptions limited their relational interactions with students. Allowing assumptions to replace relationships impacted the way teachers

teach. For Filip, assumptions led to expectations that got in the way of teaching. David remarked that "the more you assume, the less you feel you need to connect." Phoebe commented on how these assumptions and expectations ultimately led to the limitation of academic possibility. Yet, despite these realizations, the teachers continued to express a commitment to their dualistic thinking that led to assumptions and control

This study criticized efforts to control the educative process through standardization as being Gnostic. Gnostic philosophies are built largely on the belief in and need for a radical dualism. Though the Gnostic argument in religion describes the physical and complete separation of the material world from the transcendental world (Brakke, 2011; Johnson, 2004; Morris, 2008), the notion of radical dualisms has come to represent any system that revolves around a central binary pairing (Martin, 2007). Dualisms are constructed by taking elements of dichotomous relationships and repurposing them into hierarchies (Plumwood, 2002). These hierarchies are based on the assumption that the tension within dichotomies can be replaced with certainty (Bleazby, 2013). They rely on competition and domination in order to assert this certainty over the apparent subjectivity and doubt of dichotomies (Macfarlane, 2015). By repurposing dichotomies into dualisms, systems can be constructed over relationships that allow for certainty and control.

In addition to establishing hierarchical relationships in order to control pedagogy, standardization efforts attempt to determine what counts as knowledge through the development and dissemination of standards (Apple, 2005; Buras & Apple, 2008; Clarke, 2015). These attempts at controlling knowledge are also Gnostic. Gnostic philosophies espouse a similar desire to control knowledge by elevating a specific set of knowledges to

the status of "secret" (Edgoose, 2006; Morris, 2008). This secret knowledge, closely guarded in order to maintain its purity (Morris, 2008; Tiessen, 2007), was thought to have salvific and protective qualities (Raeder, 2007). Standards have been granted a similar salvific status, being portrayed as the protectors against what is perceived as an erosion of Western thought and ideals (Apple, 2006, 2005; Buras & Apple, 2008). Establishing a sense of order and control through educational standards is viewed as the solution to this problem (Hill, 2013).

Compassion and Humility in Metaxic Spaces

The inherent tension within teaching and learning, the relationality of pedagogy, is threatened by the dualisms and hierarchies of standardization. The search to answer the question "what is pedagogy and how can it best be implemented" has engendered educational practices that disregard the relational components necessary to pedagogy. Whereas standardization efforts consider pedagogy as a thing to be identified, manipulated and harnessed, metaxy understands it as a space in which to be. Pedagogical metaxy, transitional spaces, and pedagogical moments all reflect the notion that pedagogy exists in the space between the teacher and the student, the technical and the relational practices, and the monologic and the dialogic theories. Rather than ask questions in order to identify pedagogy, metaxic inquiries seek to address its location. In other words, what might educators be able to accomplish if they ask the question – where is pedagogy and how might we participate in it? This study suggests that teachers participate in the where of pedagogy, the transitional spaces, by practicing compassion and humility.

Compassion. Phoebe concisely expressed a definition of compassion that was shared by all the study participants: "Compassion is taking all the variables and acting

upon that, as opposed to rigidly holding [all students] to the same. This means avoiding absolutes." Compassion involves recognizing students as individuals, that there are always "extenuating circumstances" that should prevent teachers from making generalizations and assumptions about students. Filip extended the teacher's role in compassion by suggesting the need to empathize with students. It is not enough to recognize individuality. As a teacher, you must also "put yourself in the place of the kid, putting yourself in their point-of-view so you can see what they're struggling with." Practicing compassion meant recognizing student individuality so that the teacher could share with students in their struggles.

This pedagogy of compassion draws in part on Nussbaum's (1996) call for education (specifically Western schools) to be grounded in the study of narratives of suffering: "Public education at every level should cultivate the ability to imagine the experiences of others and to participate in their sufferings" (p. 50). This notion of compassion involves the recognition of others, the identification of the "many concrete situations" that act as "obstacles to [their] flourishing", and the creative process of "being drawn into [their] lives through the imagination, becoming a participant in [their] struggles" (Nussbaum, 1996, p. 51). The purpose for developing compassion is to recognize that, in addition to alternative perspectives that exist outside the individual, there are also "discourses that often obscure inequality and injustice" (Zembylas, 2013, p. 506). It is not enough to recognize a difference. Individuals must also recognize that these differences are not equal, and this inequality is unacceptable.

Nussbaum's call suggests that compassion is not a natural phenomenon within communities or societies, but must be taught. Educators construct concepts such as an

ethic of care (Noddings, 2012), perspectival empathy (Yacek, 2014) and critical pedagogies of compassion (Zembylas, 2013) to articulate how compassion might be incorporated into teaching. Compassion in education often addresses issues of equity and marginalization (Blinne, 2014; Hao, 2011), inclusion (Veck, 2014) and social justice (Zembylas, 2013).

Education expresses the aim of compassion as providing "a space for students to begin understanding the unique perspectives of others, and for others to respond" (Yacek, 2014, p. 100). These spaces are most frequently sought through dialogue (Blinne, 2014; Yacek, 2014), and are the result of a recognition of inequity or imbalance between the self and the other. Nussbaum (1996) describes inequity as a "struggle for flourishing," indicating that some students or people flourish while others do not (p. 51). This struggle occurs due to obstacles that prevent a person from flourishing. The purpose of compassion, according to Nussbaum, is to encourage those who do flourish to imagine what might keep others from doing so and, in turn, participate in their struggles.

Analysis of the study's data echoed this understanding of compassion. The participants recognized that, as compassionate teachers, they were responsible for including the students' perspectives. This responsibility was described as putting one's self in the students' place. Phoebe shared an example that helped concretize Nussbaum's (1996) notions of compassion as recognizing obstacles to flourishing. In her example, a student's home life precluded the individual from completing all of the required assignments, which presented an obstacle to flourishing. In turn, Phoebe recognized this obstacle and modified her requirements to remove the obstacle.

Responding to obstacles to flourishing, in some respects, is an oversimplification

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of the concept of compassion. For example, Zembylas (2013) criticizes Nussbaum's

categorization of compassion for being too imaginative, describing it as a feeling of pity.

He defines pity as the recognition or feeling of empathetic identification, whereas

compassion "refers to the feeling accompanied by action" (p. 507). Pity alone is not

sufficient. It must be accompanied by the recognition of a common vulnerability. Pity

constructs a hierarchy between the one pitying and the one being pitied. The one pitying

has identified a vulnerability within the one being pitied. This vulnerability places the

person in a state of victimhood, which allows for an unequal relationship between the two

individuals. Instead of this disparity, teachers should work to engender the idea of a

common vulnerability within students in an effort "to explore how we might move

beyond dichotomies that single out the self or the other as victims" (Zembylas, 2013, p.

512). Common vulnerability allows for the notion that all participants are vulnerable

rather than the other/victim.

      Additional criticisms of pedagogies of compassion, though, would argue that this

notion of common vulnerability only serves to exacerbate the egocentricity of

compassion. This egocentricity results in the perpetuation of unbalanced systems and

relationships in the classroom, despite compassionate attempts to eradicate them.

Ellsworth (1989) argues that, rather than removing inequity and favoritism in the

classroom, this particular understanding of compassion actually serves to reify such

practices.

      Dialogue is often recognized as the foundational element of compassion in

education (Blinne, 2014; Hao, 2011; Yacek, 2014; Zembylas, 2013). The belief is that

"through dialogue, a classroom can be made into a public sphere" (Ellsworth, 1989,

p.314). This understanding is based on the assumption that all participants have an equal

opportunity to speak. Ellsworth suggests that this is simply not the case. The right to

speak is often controlled by the position of difference and privilege, which creates

classroom relationships that are often asymmetrical The end result is an asymmetrical

relationship that recognizes its asymmetry, and attempts to solve this problem by using

tools that helped create it in the first place. Rather than creating more equitable spaces,

the dialogue serves to perpetuate and expand the asymmetrical relationship.

   This criticism accuses dialogue of being based on the assumption that individuals

(in this case the teacher and the student) are "capable of agreeing on universalizable

'fundamental moral principles' . . . that become self-evident" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 316).

Compassion, in order to effectively engage the other, must rely on both individuals

agreeing to principles that reveal themselves to be self-evident. In the case of

vulnerability, common or otherwise (Zembylas, 2013), that which is considered to be the

cause of vulnerability must become self-evident to both parties.

   This process is impossible to accomplish for two reasons. One, the agreed upon

vulnerability (or obstacle to flourishing) is real for one while imagined by the other.

Nussbaum (1996) relies on the capacity of those who are not suffering to imagine

suffering in order to participate in compassion. Similarly, Zembylas (2103) insists that

compassion rests on the recognition of one's own vulnerability in order to develop

"solidarity" with the other's vulnerability (p. 512). Though this solidarity is meant to

engender a perspective that all participants are vulnerable and not just the one who needs

compassion, it requires that some imagine their vulnerability. In a situation requiring

compassion, one participant will be experiencing real vulnerability, while the other will

be imagining it in order to feel empathy. The presence of two vulnerabilities creates an asymmetrical relationship between the participants.

Two, this asymmetry comes from a place of power and privilege. Ellsworth (1989) understands this power and privilege emanating from a place of social injustice. There are "power relations between raced, classed, and gendered students and teachers" creating injustices in the classroom that cannot be overcome through common compassionate means such as dialogue (p. 316). She continues by acknowledging that knowledge, power, and desire are woven together within the classroom in such a way that they contribute "in each other's formations and deployments" (p. 316). In other words, there are social forces preventing symmetrical dialogue from occurring in the classroom, which limits compassionate action based on common vulnerabilities.

These social forces determine which participants are in the position of power and have the luxury of imagining vulnerabilities rather than experience them for real. Additionally, these social forces decide what constitutes a vulnerability and what does not. Ellsworth (1989) suggests that the universalizable fundamental moral principles (or common vulnerabilities) are actually established by the participants. Because of the asymmetry of the relationship, participants do not share equally in the construction of these principles. The end result is a collection of principles or vulnerabilities that always emanate from the dominant participant or group of participants who have the luxury of imagined vulnerability. They are the ones responsible for acting with compassion, because the suffering and obstacles to flourishing are never real for them. In this respect, compassion in the classroom, no matter how well-intentioned, remains an egocentric exercise.

This egocentricity distorts compassionate action. What initially begins as an effort to recognize the "other" in the pedagogical relationship is co-opted as a form of "consumptive objectification" (Boler, 1997, p. 258). Empathy requires identification, the claim that I know your experience through my own experience. Empathy also demands difference, or the notion that you and I are different because I am not the one suffering at this particular moment. Thus, empathetic notions are a projection of one's self onto the other who is in need of compassion. This projection "centrally posits the 'other' as the secondary object of concern, known only because of [one's] fears about her own vulnerabilities" (Boler, 1997, p. 257). The identity of the other is reabsorbed into the self and ends up becoming an egocentric expression (Veck, 2014), whereby the "other's difference" is consumed as "sameness" (Boler, 1997, p. 258).

Phoebe communicated an understanding of this danger to consume the other as sameness in compassion. She spoke about how teachers do a "disservice" to their students when they design teaching and learning around assumptions, even ones based on compassionate intentions. There is information pivotal to the pedagogical relationship that a teacher cannot know or plan for until the student communicates it. In this situation, no amount of compassion can rightly imagine what this student-generated information is without consuming the difference as sameness. For Phoebe, compassion allowed her to recognize that each student had unknowable information to bring to the relationship. In turn, she committed to providing the space for students to present this information. Any additional acts, even ones professed to be compassionate, served to generate assumptions about the information. These assumptions were the beginning of reducing other's difference to sameness.

Humility. The egocentric assumptions behind compassion require something else to work with it in order to restore the metaxic and relational nature of pedagogy. Metaxy, transitional spaces and pedagogical moments all require the presence of the other for relationality, akin to the Bakhtinian recognition that one's consciousness "awakens wrapped in another's consciousness" (1984, p. 138). Absent from this insistence is the notion of egocentricity, because Bakhtin does not recognize that one consciousness exists prior to the other. Rather, the two awaken simultaneously, together at the same time. There is no consumption of sameness, no pretense of control. The absence of control is what allows for both consciousnesses to exist, which would suggest that control over the process lies somewhere outside either consciousness, in the space between. In order for compassion in pedagogy to be free of its egocentricity, it must exist in a relationship that cedes control to the space between. The concept of humility works alongside compassion to create opportunities for the recognition of the other within this transitional space.

Definition. Humility in pedagogy is the acceptance of the unknowable. Far from being a surrender or reluctant acceptance, it is an active recognition, a "willingness to live with and learn from the unpredictable" (Seitz, 2004, p. xi), marked "at once by an active pursuit of . . . agency in the unpredictable and unknown" (Vagle, 2011, p. 363). The "active pursuit" of humility in pedagogy suggests that it is something to be sought after, implying that humility extends beyond the egocentricities of compassion. It is not a quality or characteristic of pedagogy that originates from a person. It already exists outside the person and requires agency or participation from the individual. In other words, people to not attain humility; they participate in it.

Humility demands that the teacher reconsider her or his role in the learning

environment. The teacher's role from the perspective of humility is "to respect the ideological limitations [he or she] bring[s] to the pedagogical experience," recognizing that he or she "can never lay claim to the fullest experience of the [student]" (White, 2014, p. 910). Rather than attempting to control the situation or lay claim to the full experience, the teacher humbly engages in the relationality of learning as another learner. Humility recognizes that the teacher has "minimal control over what happens and that the students' goals will likely differ from [the teacher's goals]" (Seitz, 2004, p. xi). No matter the plan or the action taken by the teacher, there exists a certain amount of unknown that cannot be predetermined. Rather than focus on controlling elements of the environment, humility in pedagogy asks the teacher to "engage in the search and struggle" for learning (Miola, 2008, p.2). Identifying the teacher as learner challenges the efforts of egocentric compassion to disregard the other as difference, reducing it to an expression of sameness.

The study's participants all recognized the need for teachers to consider themselves as learners. Phoebe's comment that teachers are always learners was followed by David's statement that this admission "takes a lot of humility." Filip provided a reason for teachers as perpetual learners, stating that he simply did not have all the answers. Similar to Miola's (2008) call to participate in the struggle of learning, Filip recognized that the first step in this process was to confess a level of ignorance. It was not just the student who required knowledge, but the teacher as well. In this sense, both participants could be viewed as learners rather than one a teacher and the other a student.

***Contingent and recursive humility*.** This shift in the purpose and role of the

teacher to learner is informed by the recursive and contingent nature of humility in

pedagogy (Lesko, 2012; Vagle, 2010a, 2011). Contingency refers to the contextual and

dependent nature of pedagogy (Vagle, 2010a). Opportunities for learning occur within a

particular situation and are dependent on the relational interaction between the

pedagogical elements. They arise from these interactions and present themselves as

moments (van Manen, 2015). As such, they cannot be created, forced or controlled by

one person or element, including the teacher. The contingent nature of pedagogy requires

teachers to practice humility rather than assume control. Humility in pedagogy is

accomplished through a recognition that "students' learning, particularly the learning that

[the teacher] can learn the most from, often happens beyond the domains of [the

teacher's] control" (Seitz, 2004, p. xi).

Recursiveness understands that these contingent moments happen over and over,

are repeatable but not necessarily replicable (Lesko, 2012; Vagle, 2010a). Efforts at

standardization aim to replicate pedagogical moments by controlling the elements of the

learning environment. The recursive nature of pedagogy suggests that replicability is

impossible because the elements are not controllable. Replicability assumes that learning

and pedagogy are linear processes, that they occur in a step-by-step fashion (Lesko,

2012). Recursiveness insists that learning is not necessarily cumulative, but is bound

instead within specific contexts. Although these contexts may or may not occur in a

linear fashion, they are not governed by this principle. More often than not, linear

explanations of learning are superimposed on top of the already existing context of

learning. The recursive nature of pedagogy resists efforts to impose a linear

understanding on learning, focusing instead on the reality that pedagogical moments occur over and over again over time (Lesko, 2012; Vagle, 2010a, 2011).

The participants expressed a contingent and recursive understanding of humility in their recognition of the direction of the flow of information in pedagogy. Filip commented that teaching was "not just a one way flow of information from teacher to student, but you also get information from teacher to student." This sharing of information, for Phoebe, served to validate a way of thinking, both for the teacher and the student. What Filip and Phoebe hinted at was the idea that the process of information sharing and thinking was the focus of pedagogy. Since it was not limited by a specific content or method that dictated what and how information was to be taught, pedagogy could be both contingent and recursive.

The recursive and contingent nature of pedagogy challenges the notion that specific pedagogical elements can be completely known. The attempt to ascertain step-be-step procedures from pedagogical moments that can then be transferred to other moments is an attempt to completely know the other. A pedagogy based on a set of procedures is an effort to completely know the other, which ultimately reduces the other to the same (Veck, 2014). Ellsworth (1989) suggests that it is impossible to define or determine the "other" in a pedagogical moment. She describes pedagogy instead as a "strategy that affirms 'you know me/I know you' while pointing insistently to the interested partialness of those knowings; and constantly reminding us that 'you can't know me/I can't know you' while unsettling every definition of knowing arrived at" (pp. 321-322). The "interested partialness" of Ellsworth's strategy addresses a "pedagogy of the unknowable" that is both recursive and contingent (p. 318). A pedagogical moment

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may be known in full, although usually only in the past. The knowledge that is gained from this moment cannot be transferred to another because it is bound to the particularities of its context. It may be useful as partial knowledge, but it can never function as full knowledge in the next pedagogical moment. Because of pedagogy's recursive nature, a new pedagogical moment will certainly arise. But what is known from the previous moment will be of little or no use in the new context. New definitions of the knower and the known will have to be constructed in each given situation, which is why the process of pedagogy constantly unsettles "every definition of knowing" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 322).

In this sense, because pedagogy and learning are recursive and contingent, it is impossible for the teacher to always be the knower. It is impossible for him or her to always define and determine the other, simply because pedagogy is never settled or determined. When teachers attempt to control pedagogy by placing themselves in a constant state of knowing, they ignore the very elements and qualities of pedagogy that make it possible. Pedagogy exists in a constant state of metaxy and tension. It desires a physical and transitional space that appears in pedagogical moments that can be anticipated but never fully planned for. It is contextually bound and recursive and thus uncontrollable. The proper response to such a pedagogy is compassion and humility.

A Carnevalesque Flattening of Hierarchies through Compassion and Humility

Responses to these moments with compassion and humility allow for teachers to participate in moments that actively work to disrupt the dualistic presentations of pedagogy in the classroom. In other words, when teachers recognize pedagogical moments and engage with them by practicing compassion and humility, they work

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towards "flattening hierarchies" within educational spaces (Fecho & Botzakis, 2007, p.

553). The practice of flattening hierarchies draws on Bakhtin's (1968) notion of

Carnival, where, for brief instances, there is a rejection of the status quo (Tam, 2010).

For Bakhtin, Carnival is a "temporary liberation . . . from the established order" through a

"suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (p. 10). The

distinctions created and enforced by society are blurred long enough to allow for a "feast

of becoming, change, and renewal" (p. 10).

These moments of change create opportunities for expressions of relationship

other than hierarchies, for "other conceptions of the present to emerge and be heard"

(Fecho & Botzakis, 2007, p. 554). Although these moments of Carnival may be brief, the

opportunities for change leave a lasting imprint on the returning hierarchies (Sidorkin,

2005). The order and structure may return, but it is never the same as it was before

Carnival. Each instance provides a glimpse of a more dichotomous and relational present

moment. In time, these glimpses can serve to flatten hierarchies.

This study's data analysis suggests that teachers can play a role in flattening

hierarchies by participating in pedagogical metaxy and transitional spaces with

compassion and humility. The participants communicated an understanding that the

willingness to engage in the metaxic and carnivalesque moments of pedagogy began with

relinquishing control. Giving up control did not necessarily mean that no thing or no one

was in control of pedagogy. It simply meant that the teacher did not have complete or

total control over pedagogy. Filip's story of the student who helped him restructure his

lesson plan served as a good example of how the carnivalesque appears in pedagogical

moments. Although he had planned a lesson using a computer simulation to teach the

students a particular concept, he quickly realized that the students were not engaged. Filip stated that "you could smell the boredom in the air." To complicate the matter, he noticed a particular student who was being disruptive as she worked on her computer. Rather than punish her for what he perceived to be misbehavior, Filip noticed that she had actually found a better way to use the computer simulation.

This realization was Filip's invitation to participate in Carnival. It was not a pedagogical moment created by him. Rather, it was presented to him. He described how he used the student's new way of interacting with the simulation to encourage the class to further engage in the activity. He described the moment in this way: "What she was doing was interesting, so if everybody tries it, it's even more interesting to everybody." Filip responded to the moment with compassion and humility. Initially, he assumed that the student was misbehaving. Yet, he allowed for the moment to present him with new information that he then used to create a better learning experience for his class. His compassionate and humble response to this new information allowed him to participate in the pedagogical moment that presented itself to him.

Although these practices echoed Bakhtin's (1968) recognition of the brevity of Carnival, their presence in the midst of an otherwise dualistic and competitive education system hinted at the possibility for more dichotomous and relational opportunities. The participants largely regarded their teaching to be based on a dualistic interpretation of the purpose of learning (between process and product), which often established a competitive relationship between the teacher and the curriculum, resulting in teaching practices primarily based on assumptions about the students. This perception of teaching and learning was egocentric and served to bolster the desires for control undergirding the

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standardized hierarchies of pedagogy. Yet, despite their complicity in the reification of pedagogical hierarchies, the participants continued to return to the notions of compassion and humility as a potential source of pedagogical Carnival. Working together, these two teaching practices can serve to flatten hierarchies and return pedagogy to its inherent metaxic condition, if only for a brief moment.

This brief suspension of hierarchies allows for new meanings to emerge (Sidorkin, 2005; Tam, 2010). In much the same way as Arendt's (1961a) notion of natality provides the possibility for newness through a second birth, Carnival recognizes its spaces of equality as spaces where "something new can be born" (Gold, Anderson, Clarke, & Thorpe, 2009, p. 127). Bakhtin (1968) suggests that this newness is embodied in "a special type of communication impossible in everyday life" (p. 10). When people are freed from their social constraints, a new "marketplace speech" emerges, "frank and free, permitting no distance between those who [come] in contact with each other" (p. 10).

This speech, which Bakhtin describes as laughter, is an expression of communication that was unique to Carnival (White, 2014). In Carnival's laughter, there is "a profound and collective engagement with alternative 'truths' to the officious, the convention, and the tradition" (Sullivan, Smith, & Matusov, 2009, p. 329). The experience and presence of laughter, which is only made possible through the flattening of hierarchies, gives "birth to freedom and a renewal of meaning" (Tam, 2010, p.177). Laughter, a common form of communication, is the mechanism that brings about the birth of new meanings. Without the temporary suspension of hierarchies, this common language cannot exist, thereby suppressing the possibilities for new meanings.

Carnival is often described in terms of resistance in educational research (Gold, et al., 2009; Tam, 2010; White, 2014). These descriptions center on the presence and position of authority in the classroom. There exists a tension in the classroom between the two forms of authority, between the teacher and the students as a group. The group is described as a mob, suggesting that, if they were to band together in solidarity, chaos or disorder would be the result. Through the removal of vertical interpretations of authority (i.e., classroom hierarchies), the possibility of horizontal authority, or mob rule, is created (Sullivan, et al., 2009; White, 2014). This potential disarray is often what prevents teachers from encouraging Carnival in the classroom (Tam, 2010).

In this interpretation, Carnival can be achieved and disaster averted if the teacher is prepared to engage students in both the horizontal and vertical forms of authority (Sullivan, et al., 2009; White, 2014). The teacher is responsible for creating an environment where the carnivalesque is both "encouraged and engaged by the teacher, who simultaneously fulfills a democratic role to ensure that this atmosphere is available to everyone" (White, 2014, p. 903). In other words, it is the teacher's responsibility to recognize the opportunity for Carnival by creating and facilitating the environment in such a way as to allow for the flattening of hierarchies. Additionally, the teacher is then responsible for moving back and forth between the vertical and horizontal authorities in order to ensure that "carnivalesque is legitimately enabled for *all* students" (White, 2014, p. 903, italics in original).

This particular understanding of Carnival is an inadequate depiction of Bakhtin's (1968) notion of the carnivalesque for two reasons. One, Bakhtin describes the purpose of Carnival within the broader context of feasts, which are "an important primary form of

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human culture" (p. 8). Feasts are human responses to their environment rather than human creations. They do not arise out of a community's efforts or as a response to "the physiological demand for periodic rest" (p. 8). They are not constructed by human desires, but rather by natural cycles. In other words, feasts are "always essentially related to time" (p. 9). They are connected to the "recurrence of an event in the natural (cosmic) cycle, or to biological or historical timeliness" (p. 9). Additionally, they are linked to "moments of crisis, of breaking points in the cycle of nature" such as death or revival (p. 9).

Two, the relation of feasts to time and natural cycles suggests that they are moments rather than objects. The moments of crisis or cyclical occurrence determine the time for the feast. In turn, humans respond by organizing a feast, allowing them to celebrate and participate in these moments. The "peculiar character of the feasts" where expressions, or responses "in concrete form," to the moments (p. 9). The significance of the feast was essentially a participation in the moment rather than the specific mode or human design of the celebration.

Considering Carnival as an expression of pedagogical metaxy holds true to Bakhtin's notions of moments and response. Metaxy is not an object constructed by humans, but instead exists in the in-between spaces of pedagogical interaction (Voegelin, 1990). It operates within the transitional space between the self and the other (Ellsworth, 2005), and expresses itself in moments of pedagogy (van Manen, 2015). As such, Carnival can neither be created nor controlled by teachers. Their task is to prepare for carnivalesque moments to appear in the classroom where they may participate in learning with students. The responsibility of the teacher does not lie in creating or controlling

moments of Carnival or metaxy. Instead, her responsibility is to prepare for her participation in response to the moment when it is presented. The teacher prepares for this response, and in turn encourages learning, by practicing compassion and humility in her teaching.

Implications for Future Research

The data collection, analysis, findings, and discussion of this study present several opportunities for continued empirical research around the notions of pedagogy, specifically the practices of compassion and humility, along with the presence of metaxy and the carnivalesque. For example, teachers' experiences of and reflections on tension and metaxy in the learning environment need to be explored further. Although certain commonalities were noticed among the three participants' perceptions of pedagogical tension, their individual experiences were by no means similar. Furthermore, the richest data were found in the stories they shared about specific interactions with students rather than in descriptive attempts to name and identify tension. In other words, teachers' reflections on specific pedagogical moments are vital to gaining insight into the presence of metaxy in the classroom. Interview protocols designed to elicit these stories may yield a broader and more varied understanding of where tension exists in pedagogy.

Two, further investigation of teachers' perceptions and practices of compassion and humility is needed. Questions of how teachers define these terms and how they practice them in participatory ways within transitional learning spaces remain. What other ways, descriptions, or stories do teachers use to understand compassion and humility? How do these practices help them continue to engage in tension and metaxy? How do their compassion and humility in pedagogy engender the same in their students?

Additionally, how might these pedagogical practices be viewed as dispositions? Compassion and humility as dispositions was not explicitly discussed in the interview protocol. How might teachers better understand compassion and humility if they were described as dispositions? How might teachers understand dispositions as representations of learning, specifically through the practices of compassion and humility?

Three, the inclusion of additional metaxic elements of pedagogy beyond the teacher-student dynamic need to be examined. The human participants are not the only relational parts to pedagogy. Curriculum, instructional strategies, administrative relationships, physical classroom space and available technology are but a few necessary elements of pedagogy that are present in the metaxic space. This study's focus on the teacher-student aspect of pedagogy does not suggest that these elements are not important. Further research can explore teachers' perceptions of how these pedagogical participants share in the tension and moments of pedagogy.

Four, this study brought forth the metaphor of Carnival to express the brief appearance of pedagogical moments in the classroom. However, the suggestion of the carnivalesque was not explicitly discussed in the data collection. Additional interviews and study can examine teachers' perceptions of and experiences with Carnival in the classroom. How do they perceive and respond to moments where hierarchies are flattened? What do these moments look like and how do both teachers and students respond to them? What transpires as a result of them? Discussion on these questions could help further concretize the experiences of Carnival in the classroom for teachers.

Implications for Practice

Given the empirical evidence of provided in the study, if compassion and humility

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can be understood as necessary responses to metaxic and carnivalesque moments that appear in the classroom, the task for education becomes how best to prepare teachers to recognize these moments and respond accordingly. In other words, how do we motivate, encourage, and train teachers to acknowledge pedagogical moments? How can we prepare them to respond and participate in the carnivalesque with compassion and humility? One possible suggestion is to reconsider the notions of teacher dispositions, what they are, how they impact pedagogy, and how teacher education might repurpose their efforts in identifying and assessing them.

The rationale for selecting teacher dispositions as the focal point for compassion and humility draws on the increased focus on dispositional assessment with regard to teacher education. Changes in external accreditation requirements have led to teacher education programs assuming responsibility for assessing more than their candidates' knowledge of content and pedagogy. These changes have come, in part, because of research which suggests that a strong correlation exists between teachers' dispositions and the quality of student learning (Notar, Riley, & Taylor, 2009). Certain effective teachers are described as having characteristics that may not be measured as or described by pedagogical knowledge and skills. These characteristics are often labeled as teacher dispositions. Consequently, many educational leaders believe that "teacher dispositions are as important as pedagogical skills and content knowledge in helping students learn" (Conderman & Walker, 2015, p. 215). Although disposition assessment has been around for over 20 years (Brewer, et al., 2011), the involvement of national accreditation boards in this process a recent intervention. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (formerly the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) now

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requires that teacher education programs develop "appropriate assessment devices to measure and document candidate dispositions" (Johnston, et al., 2011, p. 391). As a result, teacher education institutions are employing more exhaustive disposition assessment measures to meet accreditation requirements (Conderman & Walker, 2015).

Traditional descriptions of teacher dispositions. The discussion on teacher dispositions from chapter two of this study were discussed in conjunction with a teacher-centric approach to the teacher-student relationship, specifically as they related to student achievement. Research on teacher dispositions suggests that they have an influence on school effectiveness and achievement (Alawiye & Williams, 2010; Taylor & Wasicsko, 2000). Social support in the classroom positively affect student achievement (Chong, et al., 2010) and student engagement in learning (Corso, et al., 2013). These social supports have been attributed, in part, to teachers' personal characteristics as they relate to the teacher-student relationship (Newberry, 2010; Reeve, 2006; Schussler, et al., 2008b; Serdyukov & Ferguson, 2011).

Although education research supports the notion that teacher characteristics and dispositions positively impact student achievement, there is considerable disagreement as to how best to define or categorize them. One disagreement centers on whether or not dispositions are descriptions of personality traits or observable actions and behaviors. Those who describe dispositions as "behaviors and attitudes held by teachers" (Shoffner, et al., 2014, p. 175) also suggest that they develop predictive patterns of action over time (Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2007). This research attempts to directly link teacher dispositions directly to observable behaviors and actions in the classroom (e.g., Brewer, et al., 2011; Conderman & Walker, 2015; Johnston, Almerico, Henriott, & Shapiro, 2011;

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Miller & Maninger, 2012; Ruitenberg, 2011; Thornton, 2006).

Research that supports the description of dispositions as internal personality characteristics view them as internal filters through which teachers reflect on their pedagogical experiences. Dispositions are personal inclinations toward behavior rather than the behavior itself (Stooksberry, 2009). Although the external context and desired outcomes are part of the definition, the focus is on a person's inclinations and awareness as the genesis of dispositions. Schussler (2006) elaborates by describing this internalization as "the point of origin from which a teacher's knowledge and behaviors emanate . . . a guiding source for a teacher's ability to process knowledge and act in particular ways" (p. 259).

In addition to the discussion over behaviors versus personal traits, researchers disagree as to the ontological nature of dispositions. Are the inherent or can they be acquired over time? Although much of the research conducted on dispositions supports the notion that they are teachable (e.g., Cummins & Asempapa, 2013; Ruitenberg, 2011; Shoffner, et al., 2014), there are some who suggest that they are not. Some argue that dispositions rely on "a trait or characteristic that is embedded in temperament and disposes a person toward certain choices and experiences" (Borko, et al., 2007, p. 362). This description seems to argue that people are pre-disposed toward actions. Thus the traits used to define and describe dispositions (e.g., caring, respect, fairness, empathy) are part of a person's temperament and personality and exist prior to action.

One issue with the current disposition research centers on its entrenchment in the same egocentric and dualistic thinking of standardization and assumptions of the other. The descriptor "habits of mind," for example, has increased in recent research, possibly

as a means to consolidate the teachable/acquirable quality of dispositions with its observable activity. Habits of mind refer to a "goal-oriented, decision-making or problem solving process" that utilize characteristics that motivate a person "toward good and productive professional conduct" which are "recognized in the patterns of . . . frequently exhibited, voluntary behaviors" (Dottin, 2009, p. 85). Dispositions are ways of responding to situations by behaving and acting in ways that are professionally appropriate. Over time, these appropriate behaviors become predictable habits (Borko, et al., 2007). This idea is based largely on Dewey's (1922) notion of habits as "active dispositions" (p. 44). People acquire habits of learning by developing dispositions, which modify actions based on previous experience (Dottin, 2010).

The key to the development of these habits is the "cognitive appraisal of situations" in which "dispositions are embedded" (Dottin, 2009, p. 85). The habitual development of dispositions is contingent on one's ability to assess situations cognitively. This assertion suggests that dispositions are egocentric in nature. Although there may be a necessary environmental stimulus that initially engages the mindful habit, the development of dispositions is a cognitive exercise, which relegates them to the realm of the ego. They are things to be acquired through repetition and exercise, becoming pedagogical "objects of intentions" (Dottin, 2009, p. 85).

Along with the egocentric description of dispositions as habits of mind, the disagreements over their location and perception are based on either/or binaries. By forcing dispositions into specific and opposing categories, competition emerges in an effort to qualify one interpretation as better, or more correct than the other. Dispositions are either inherent or learned, they are either "caught" or "taught" (Cummins &

Asempapa, 2013, p. 100). They are either manifestations of personalities or they are actions based on behaviors. Because the literature has established a binary, dispositions must be one or the other. They cannot be both.

A metaxic understanding of teacher dispositions. These notions of egocentricity and binaries arise from the fact that the research is largely based on the belief that dispositions are things to be acquired (e.g., Brewer, et al., 2011; Conderman & Walker, 2015; Cummins & Asempapa, 2013; Johnston, et al., 2011; Miller & Maninger, 2012; Ruitenberg, 2011; Thornton, 2006). Teachers and teacher educators assume that learning can be improved by recognizing the qualities of good teaching that can be isolated, named, acquired and improved. The more of these dispositions the teacher has, the better the learning environment will be for the student. This process of acquisition runs counter to the relationality of pedagogy expressed through metaxy and Carnival. A system of teacher development based on an egocentric understanding of dispositions as material things to be attained and controlled cannot focus on spaces in-between where hierarchies can be temporarily suspended.

A metaxic understanding of dispositions disregards egocentricity and acquisition in favor of plurality and participation. This shift is based on a description of disposition that lies "not in the development of lists of desirable patterns of behavior or lists of attitudes and beliefs, but in the fullness of the irregularity and unpredictability that occurs in the normal course of teaching" (Freeman, 2007, p. 121). This relocation of away from acquired things toward the fullness of irregularity and unpredictability describes dispositions as ways of relating to the outside world. Dispositions become less about naming desirable qualities of teaching and more about describing "general postures

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toward the self and the other" (Freeman, 2007, p. 121). They become descriptors of a way of relating with and to one's surroundings. Rather than functioning as a cognitive exercise to assess a situation, dispositions become responses in participation with one's surroundings. In short, a person requires skills in order to perform the task of teaching. These skills do not occur "as representations in the mind, but as dispositions to respond to the solicitations of situations in the world" (Dreyfus, 2002, p. 367).

Reconsidering dispositions as a way of relating to self and other relies on Merleau-Ponty's (2002) phenomenological understanding of embodiment. Merleau-Ponty's notion of embodiment describes how bodies serve as our access point the world, to others, and our experiences with both entities (Vagle, 2014). Through embodied existence, professional knowledge is understood as embodied knowledge. In other words, knowledge is understood through interactions with the world; there is no knowledge that exists outside of interactions. Merleau-Ponty (2002) describes this embodied knowledge by stating that "our body is not an object for an 'I think,' it is a grouping of lived-through meanings" (p. 177). There is no separation of the action of knowing and the construction of knowledge in the mind. Both occur through interactions of bodies with the world. In pedagogical and dispositional terms, teachers make sense of their teaching through their inter-actions with their environment (Riveros, 2012). These inter-actions consist of groupings of lived-through meanings, encounters with one's surroundings that alter both the teacher and the environment. What eventually is described as knowledge or disposition is the recognition that a change has occurred in both the person and her world.

It is only through interacting with the world that dispositions come into existence

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and are made known to the inter-actors. For Merleau-Ponty, the process of knowing

implies an active engagement with the world. There can be no knowledge outside this

engagement. It is the recognition of dependency, that knowledge is *made known to* the

person while simultaneously *being made by* the person (Reynolds, 2004). Knowledge is

not confined within the actor, existing solely as a thought or cognition, as habits of mind

would suggest. Rather, it is "to be intervolved in a definite environment" (Merleau-

Ponty, 2002, p. 94). To acquire this knowledge, to learn, depends on one's interaction

with the environment so that "lived experiences constitute concrete episodes of personal

transformation" (Riveros, 2012, p. 607).

Dispositions are constructed within this process of interaction and transformation.

They are descriptive representations of personal transformation as a result of inter-actions

with one's surroundings. The process of learning can also be understood similarly as an

instance of transformation as a result of interacting with the environment. In this way,

dispositions are a description, or representation, of teacher learning. In other words, they

are not things that teachers bring to the learning environment. Rather, they are moments

of transformation that occur for teachers within the tension and action of pedagogy.

If dispositions are best understood as representations of learning in moments of

pedagogy, determining what representations are most vital to learning becomes of

primary importance. This study suggests that compassion and humility are two such

dispositions. Given that pedagogy happens in metaxic and transitional spaces, brought on

by moments of Carnival, then the ability to recognize the other and to accept the

unknowable are necessary to the survival of pedagogy. A teacher who is capable of

recognizing the dialogic and participatory nature of pedagogy, the Bakhtinian insistence

that the self and the other are inextricably interwoven, is best situated to engage in pedagogical moments. Similarly, the teacher who understands that, because of the necessary presence of the other, there are elements and experiences of pedagogy which are uncontrollable is more likely to encourage learning. It is important to remember that this learning can only happen if all participants engage in the pedagogical moment as learners. In order for the student to accept her role as a learner, the teacher must become a learner as well. The ability of the teacher to become a learner depends primarily upon his or her compassionate and humble responses to pedagogical moments.

Traditional assessment of dispositions as behaviors. Reconsidering dispositions as representations of personal transformation as teachers participate in pedagogical metaxy directly affects the way teacher educator programs approach teacher dispositions, most notably in the way they are assessed. Currently, teacher educators assess dispositions based on observable behaviors (Brewer, et al., 2011; Conderman & Walker, 2015; Edgington & Cox, 2015; Johnston, et al., 2011; Miller & Maninger, 2012). Although the rationale for assessing observable behaviors is based partly on the definition of dispositions as behaviors or actions (Shoffner, et al., 2014), its primary motivation comes from the national accreditation requirements. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation expresses in its standards that teacher educator institutions must "establish and monitor attributes and dispositions" by defining "measues used and evidence of the reliability and validity of those measures" for the purposes of reporting "data that show how the academic and non-academic factors predict candidate performance in the program and effective teaching" (CAEP, 2015, Standard 3.3).   These measures and data are required to be collected "through structured and validated

observation instruments and/or student surveys" (CAEP, 2015, Standard 4.2). As a result of this requirement, teacher educator programs define dispositions as concretely and observable as they can in order to provide evidence of valid assessment (Rike & Sharp, 2008).

The need to develop reliable observation instruments to maintain accreditation creates two issues with teacher educator assessment. One, behaviors that are easily quantifiable end up being assessed more frequently (Conderman & Walker, 2015). For example, teacher educators discuss with one another in order to reach a consensus on the descriptions of dispositions so that there programs can have clear definitions of what they are (Shively & Misco, 2011). These definitions tend to be labeled with generic categorical descriptors such as caring, collaboration, professionalism, or creative thinking. Observable behaviors are then assigned to each descriptor so that each disposition may be assessed by teacher educators.

In one study, Conderman and Walker (2015) suggest how this procedure for naming and assessing dispositions can lead to disproportionate representations in teacher candidates. In their study, faculty members issued more frequent assessments on dispositions that were easy to observe and measure. For example, the disposition labeled "caring" was assessed much more often (and negatively), perhaps because the behaviors associated with caring (e.g., tardiness, turning in work late) were readily quantifiable. Other dispositions that were not noted as frequently may have required "more subjective judgement and may be less observable or more difficult to operationalize" (p. 226). In other words, dispositions that are easy to observe and measure are assessed more frequently than those that are not. Because of the accreditation pressures facing

institutions, the push is to associate dispositions with measurable behaviors as much as possible (Brewer, et al., 2011). Ironically, in a study of 234 teacher educator institutions, Ellis, Lee, and Wiley (2009) report that the majority of institutions code their identifiable dispositions as characteristics, followed by perceptions. Dispositions identified as behaviors, by the reporting institutions rank third, yet they are the most frequently assessed.

Two, the requirements for accreditation impact the methods and rationales used to construct assessment tools. The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation allows for the use of multiple measures to construct disposition assessments, including student surveys. Yet, the majority of teacher education institutions rely solely on faculty surveys to select and define dispositions (Ellis, Lee, & Wiley, 2009). Modified Adelphi techniques are often used to rank these definitions by importance. These rankings are then used to generate rubrics in order to measure competency (Miller & Maninger, 2012; Rike & Sharp, 2008). The reason most assessment tools are constructed in this manner is to provide the institution with a research-based document with which it can measure dispositions to ensure consistency and to limit subjectivity (Rike & Sharp, 2008).

The pressure to provide valid instruments with which to assess dispositions results in institutions creating systems in order to pass subjective descriptions off as objective measures. Adelphi techniques based on Likert surveys purportedly assign "objective" numerical value to subjective judgements. These newly constructed "objective" measures are then administered by multiple faculty members, all under the guise of consistency and limited subjectivity. This entire process is approved as a valid instrument despite the recognition that – 1) some dispositions are still assessed more

frequently than others due to their being more easily quantifiable (Conderman & Walker, 2015), and 2) as much as possible dispositions should be associated with measurable behaviors (Brewer, et al., 2011). These two acknowledgements suggest that disposition assessment is neither consistent nor limited in its subjectivity. Yet, teacher educator institutions continue to assess their candidates by them due in large part to the pressures of accreditation.

Additionally, many assessments are based on deficit thinking, designed to determine which candidates are lacking in dispositions and in need of remediation. Edgington and Cox (2015) outline an assessment system that determines which candidates lack proficiency in observable behaviors. This deficiency is then used as the basis for issuing referrals to candidates deemed to be not in keeping with the program's expectations. Conderman and Walker (2015) describe disposition assessments in a similar manner, using them to generate the need for student development and intervention. Harrison et al., (2006) employ disposition assessments in the admission process in an effort to deny potential candidates from entering the program. The notion behind this deficit model is that candidates either possesses the behavior, or they do not (Conderman & Walker, 2015). This understanding of deficit thinking seems to run counter to the belief that dispositions are teachable behaviors rather than inherent traits.

Assessing dispositions as representations of learning. Understanding pedagogy in terms of metaxy, that teaching and learning occur in the in-between spaces teacher and student, provides the opportunity to rethink the meaning and function of disposition assessment in teacher education. The elements of pedagogy, both teaching and learning, exist in a tension that resists being reduced to quantifiable measures of behavior. This

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tension recognizes that "the essential feature of teaching is uncertainty and unpredictability" (Shulman, 2004, p. 464). It is this nature of uncertainty that serves as the basis for understanding dispositions as representations of teacher learning. Dispositions cannot be quantified because they are not behaviors. Instead, they are manifestations of how teachers learn while participating in pedagogy. Compassion and humility are the terms that describe these manifestations. The goal, then, for teacher education is to determine how best to recognize, develop, and assess their candidates' abilities to participate in pedagogy with both compassion and humility.

The suggestions in this section are not intended to engage the discussion on bridging the gap with regard to theory and practice. Although there is a considerable amount of literature dedicated to this worthwhile effort (e.g., Allen, 2009; Allen & Peach, 2007; Allsopp, DeMarie, Alvarez-McHatton, & Doone, 2006; Cheng, Cheng, & Tang, 2010; Cross & Bayazit, 2014; Hart & Passmore, 2010), these suggestions aim to provide opportunities to engage in dispositions as representations of learning in teacher education. The goal is to describe ways dispositions may be presented, discussed and assessed within the educational institution's program. The distinction between theory and practice involves a discussion that exceeds the scope of this study.

Dialogic framework. Assessments of dispositions as representations of learning are inherently and necessarily dialogic. In other words, they are responses to intentionally dialogic pedagogy embedded within aspects of teacher education. Dialogic pedagogy purposefully stresses the role of language and participation in the learning environment (Bignell, 2011; Cuenca, 2011; McAuley, 2013). The focus on language stems from the recognition that the meanings of words are not neutral (Fecho & Botzakis,

2007). Their meanings are representations of tensions between "the atmosphere of the already spoken" and "that which has not yet been said" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 280). Words have historical meaning, cultivated from the atmosphere of the already spoken. They also have a future meaning, which is carried in the anticipation of dialogue. In short, the meanings of words are context-dependent. Their prior existence is consumed by the context of the dialogue. As such, words and their meanings are not neutral components of dialogue. The language of dialogic pedagogy is not neutral, but rather exists in tension between what has been said and what will be said.

This tension within language provides the necessity for participation in dialogic pedagogy. In order for language to take on meaning, there must be participants engaged in dialogue, or multiple voices engaged in meaning making collaboratively (Lyle, 2008). The words of one voice create the context of history for another's future utterance. Bakhtin (1981) describes the future utterance as the answering word. It relieves the tension within the dialogue while simultaneously inviting new tensions. What once was the future-anticipated word immediately becomes history, as the dialogue shifts once again to the next participant.

This simultaneous call and response is what makes dialogic pedagogy and its participants unfinalizable. A person may enter in to dialogue with something to give, but this giving does not contain the totality of the event or meaning because it has not and cannot account for the not-yet-achieved. Bakhtin describes the history and future of dialogue as "inseparable," and a "once-occurrent whole – an event" (1993, p. 32). This both-and nature of dialogic interaction means that there can be no final word spoken because something yet-to-be-achieved is always possible, because the nature of each

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participant is always unfinalized (Karimova & Shirkhanbeik, 2012).

     Dialogic representations of assessment. Given the dialogic nature of dispositions as representations of learning, the goal for teacher educators is to find ways to assess candidates' learning in dialogic situations. One way to accomplish this task is through the implementation of case methods. Cases are recognized in educational literature as "communal, collaborative, dialogic" experiences (Trier, 2010, p. 49) that can provide learners with an "opportunity to solve a problem by what they know" (Dottin, Johnson, & Weiner, 2013, p. 4). Research on case methods point to the effectiveness of the method in helping improve reasoning skills of candidates, which may assist them in identifying issues in order to analyze problems more effectively (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Pitton, 2010). They promote a "critically reflective stance" which requires "active engagement or consciousness in the experience" (Gartland & Field, 2009, p. 31). In short, cases serve as examples of dialogic pedagogy by creating opportunities for candidates to engage with colleagues in an effort to solve a problem. Through this process, they interact with other candidates while also reflecting on their own previous learning.

     The result of case-based analyses and discussion "can reveal the thinking of preservice teachers, giving teacher educators a better window into how their students think" (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p. 18). This window into thinking can serve as an opportunity to assess students' thought processes as well as decisions. Candidates' perceptions of compassion and humility may be evident as they wrestle with the particulars of a case. Over time, participation in multiple cases may provide teacher educators with opportunities to notice trends toward or away from compassion and

humility. As candidates progress through a course or program, their dialogic encounters with cases may yield insights into their representations of compassion and humility. Educators can then make programmatic decisions (remediation or advancement) based on candidates' participation in cases.

Cases provide opportunities to assess candidates' dispositions in collaborative settings. They typically focus on groups and peer-to-peer interaction along with engagement with the issue being discussed. Groups, however, are not the only way to encourage dialogic pedagogy. Individual opportunities to assess candidate dispositions dialogically are also possible by finding ways for candidates to engage with the world around them. One example is through empirical research. Park and Amenvuvor (2015) discuss the effectiveness of empirically-based social justice research in undergraduate teacher education programs in a way that yields insight into teacher dispositions. By focusing on social justice issues, candidates are required to interact with the world around them in ways intended to raise consciousness about the self in relation to the world. Ellsworth's (2005) understanding of pedagogy as being in relation with self, other and the world echo the very same dialogic notions. As students research a particular issue, they begin to apply what they are learning in the classroom to the outside world (Park & Amenvuvor, 2015). The result of this interaction between self and the world provides an opportunity for educators to assess candidates' responses of compassion and humility. It provides an additional window into candidates' thought processes and allows educators to determine the level of compassion and humility present in student research.

Additionally, the notions of compassion and humility may be explicitly designed into the curriculum of a course. Villegas (2007) describes a process for intentionally

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building dispositions into course objectives. Discussions, readings and opportunities can be structured with the explicit intent to cultivate dispositions. These dispositions can then be assessed through class assignments. The assignments can be collaborative or individual, depending on the structure of the course. The goal is to provide an explicit approach to disposition cultivation to counter the somewhat nebulous and implicit ways they are often taught in teacher educator programs. If the goal is to accurately assess the cultivation of dispositions, then an explicit course designed around them may provide educators this opportunity.

Conclusion

Reframing teacher dispositions as representations of learning affects more than educator preparation programs. The practice of dispositions, notably compassion and humility, ultimately come to fruition in both the classroom and the teacher-student relationship. Teachers, understanding and utilization of dispositions, in many ways, are most critical in the secondary classroom, in relationship with adolescent students.

Compassion and humility in the secondary classroom. Lesko (2001) describes how the idea of adolescence is a social construction. As such, there are specific limits and labels that are placed on these students which affect how adults (teachers and educators) perceive both the student and the educational process. Students are often described as lacking, often in maturity and critical thinking abilities, and are regarded in terms of development (Finders, 1998). Adolescents, in this sense, are adults in development. This perception has been created by a linear perception of maturity, that children become adults by following a series of steps that have been vetted by society (Lesko, 2001; Finders, 1998). The goal of adolescence is to strive for "higher

achievements in cognitive, emotional and psychological understandings" (Lesko, 2001, p.191). Those who accomplish these goals are rewarded, while those who struggle are often labeled with pejorative terms (Finders, 1998). In short, the ways in which adolescence is defined as a developmental stage in life restricts the practice of dichotomous relationships between teachers and secondary students. Adult teachers are regarded as fully developed adults, while their students are thought of as in need of development. The fact that one relational participant is fully formed while the other is lacking indicates the presence of a hierarchy.

Additionally, educators often describe the purpose of secondary schooling in developmental terms. Teachers often perceive middle school as a time for preparation for high school (Conklin, 2010). In this view, there is no present tense of middle school education. Its sole purpose is to prepare for the future; it exists to facilitate a transition. This perception is largely driven by hierarchical understandings of middle school students as developmental. They are not ready for high school but they have progressed past elementary education. They exist as not quite present, future expectations along the linear timeline. They are in a constant state of liminality (Conklin, 2010; Lesko, 2001).

Utilizing compassionate and humble dispositions in the classroom is one way to begin re-establishing relationality in the place of educational hierarchies, helping teachers to take advantage of carnivalesque moments of pedagogy, tension and learning. For Lesko (2001), adolescents be included as "*active participants* (not tokens) in education" by allowing for "concrete practices in which youth demand adult-like responsibilities" (p. 199, italics in original). In other words, adolescent students must be regarded as having equal capabilities. To accomplish this leveling, students can be given the responsibility

of teachers, or teachers can be regarded as learners. The practice of compassionate

dispositions afford teachers the opportunity to become learners. By recognizing the

presence of another person willing to engage in learning, they are invited to participate as

a learner. In order to regard themselves as learners, teachers must put aside their

egocentricities and recognize that learning occurs within a relationship of learners.

Lesko (2001) also encourages the presence of humble dispositions in the

secondary classroom. By acknowledging that "growth and change are highly contingent .

. . [and] recursive," she dispels the notion that adolescent development is a fixed, linear

process (p. 195). The contingent and recursive nature of change allows for educators to

let go of control with regard to teaching and learning. Structures and standards may be

put in place to encourage learning, but standardization and control only serve to limit it.

If learning invites growth and change, teachers must be willing to accept that learning is

contingent and recursive. Humble dispositions allow teachers to engage in the

recursiveness of learning through the recognition that it is ultimately beyond their

control.

Compassion in Gnosticism and standardization. The presence and practice of

pedagogy in the classroom is relational. This relationality has been described in this

study as metaxic (Voegelin, 1990), a transitional space (Ellsworth, 2005), and a moment

(van Manen, 2015). A metaxic pedagogy recognizes that teaching and learning live in

the tension that exists between its participants. This understanding considers the in-

between space as more important than the participants themselves. For pedagogy to

survive, no one person can be elevated above another.

The notions of transitional space (Ellsworth, 2005) and pedagogical moments

(van Manen, 2015) further the conversation of pedagogy as an actual thing that is created within the classroom rather than brought in by the teacher. Transitional space recognizes that pedagogy happens within the recognition of the self, others and the world. This recognition creates a space that is full of "movements and changes" as it responds to pedagogical actions (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 60). Similarly, van Manen's (2015) pedagogical moment understands pedagogy as "embedded" within a situation or context "in which something pedagogical is expected" (p. 38). In other words, pedagogy is not brought into the classroom. Instead, it presents itself through interactions that demand pedagogical responses from its participants.

These descriptions of pedagogy function as both product and process. In order for the product (the transitional space or pedagogical moment) to be present, those responsible for pedagogy must engage in the relational process. Pedagogical moments cannot occur where there is no relationship present. The relational process cannot commence without the compassionate recognition of self and the other. Both the self and the other must be equally present in order for the pedagogical moment to occur.

This reliance of the product on the process and vice versa stands in opposition to the claims of Gnosticism in educational standardization. This study's presentation of Gnosticism describes the effort to elevate the product over the process. Although Gnosticism largely refers to a heresiological debate within Christian theology (Desjardins, 2005; King, 2003; Pagels, 2003; Pricopi, 2013; Tiessen, 2007; Williams, 1996), three of its tenets are immediately recognizable in efforts to standardize education. One, a dissatisfaction with the present encourages a negative view of the present reality, and that the world is in a constant state of decline (Edgoose, 2006). Standardization

efforts are predicated on a "fundamental disappointment with public education and a pervasive belief that schools [were] not doing what they should to educate the population of the future" (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008, p. 158). The present state of education is broken and needs to be fixed so that the future is not ruined.

Two, a radical dualism exists between good and bad, spiritual and physical, transcendence and materiality (Johnson, 2004). This belief lends credence to the efforts to dismantle dichotomous relationships and reconfigure them into hierarchies. In education, these dualities exist within the either/or (Science versus the Arts) debates over curriculum (Teese & Polesel, 2003), as well as the competitive discourse between teacher-centered or student-centered learning (Chung & Walsh, 2000; Macfarlane, 2015; Neumann, 2013). It also serves to separate the teacher from the student by using a developmental binary (Conklin, 2010; Lesko, 2001; Finders, 1998). Students are viewed as deficient and in need of development, which can only be provided by the adult educators.

Third, a gnostic, secret knowledge is the only thing that can save the present from itself (Brakke, 2011; Morris, 2008). This secret knowledge must be closely guarded and controlled (Tiessen, 2007). Standardization seeks to control what counts as knowledge by controlling curriculum in the classroom (Buras & Apple, 2008; Clarke, 2013). The impetus for control of knowledge, a decline in Western morals and values, brings the gnostic connection full circle. Standardization reforms seek to control what counts as knowledge in an effort to protect and save what is perceived as an erosion of Western thought and ideals, not just in education, but in our society as well (Apple, 2006, 2005; Buras & Apple, 2008).

A compassionate disposition counters these gnostic tendencies of standardization by resisting their efforts to control pedagogy. Compassion, first and foremost, is concerned with providing a space for participants to begin to understand the perspectives of others (Yacek, 2014). It is not concerned with authority or control, but rather strives for the representation of multiple voices. These voices are represented by focusing on responses, or what Bakhtin (1981) refers to as the answering word. This word represents the anticipated future utterance of the other participant. Where standardization focuses the efforts of pedagogy on control, compassion revolves around the constant recognition of what the other may bring to pedagogy. Although these future utterances may be anticipated and even expected, they cannot be controlled. A pedagogy based on compassion recognizes that, although the other is essential to pedagogy, he or she may only be invited to respond and not controlled.

Humility and the carnivalesque. Understanding humility as the acceptance of the unknowable and unpredictable (Seitz, 2004; Vagle, 2011) provides opportunities to participate in the carnivalesque. Bakhtin's (1968) insistence on Carnival as the temporary suspension of hierarchies creates a space in the classroom where "something new can be born" (Gold, et al., 2009, p. 127). These moments of temporary suspension are what define and shape Ellsworth's (2005) description of pedagogy as transitional space. Although this space involves human interactions between the self, others and the world, it is an interaction based on response rather than creation. In other words, we are not responsible for designing or instigating pedagogical moments. They appear within the natural cycle of learning and invite us to participate in them (Bakhtin, 1968).

Teachers can only accept this invitation by practicing humility in their

relationships with students. Humility is the admission that specific moments of pedagogy can neither be created nor controlled by teachers. Pedagogy is uncontrollable because students bring the unknowable and unpredictable with them into the learning relationship (White, 2014). No matter the plan or the action taken by the teacher, there exists a certain amount of unknown that cannot be predetermined. Rather than focus on controlling elements of the environment, teachers humbly prepare for carnivalesque moments to appear in the classroom where they may "engage in the search and struggle" for learning (Miola, 2008, p.2).

      Compassion and humility as dispositions. Finally, the elements of compassion and humility serve to provide an alternative description of and use for dispositions in teaching. Teachers as compassionate and humble learners understand dispositions as ways of relating to the outside world (Riveros, 2012). Since the outside world can never fully be known, teachers must consider themselves as learners along with their students. This consideration redefines dispositions as representations of learning, descriptions of teachers' "general postures toward the self and the other" (Freeman, 2007, p. 121).

      Understanding dispositions in this manner encourages teacher educators to rethink how their programs assess candidates. Currently, teacher education programs assess dispositions behaviorally (Brewer, et al., 2011; Johnston, et al., 2011; Miller & Maninger, 2012). These behaviors function as gatekeepers, identifying which candidates possess qualities ideal for teaching, and intervening with those that do not (Conderman & Walker, 2015; Edgington & Cox, 2015). This developmental perception of dispositions considers them as characteristics to be acquired and improved on.

      A relational understanding of pedagogy insists that teaching and learning are not

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objects to be attained or mastered. They are instead responses to carnivalesque moments that appear in transitional spaces. Teachers and students are invited to respond to these moments with compassion and humility, so that they may both approach the moment as equals, as learners. In much the same way as Bakhtin (1984) imagines the awakening of one consciousness wrapped in another, these two pedagogical participants are relationally bound to one another. It is in this recognition of dependent existence where pedagogy becomes the unending process of creation and re-creation for both the student and the teacher.

APPENDIX

Participant Journal Prompts

Journal One: Collaborative Interview

Take a few minutes to reflect on the following prompts. Your answers will guide the conversation during our first collaborative interview.

1. Why did you decide to become a teacher? Why do you still teach?

2. What elements do you consider necessary to be a good (or effective) teacher? How do you use these elements in your daily experience as a teacher?

3. Reflect on the last few years of your teaching experience. How has your teaching and pedagogy changed? What are some of the major contributors to these changes?

Journal Two: Technical/Relational (Intrapersonal) Pedagogy

Take a few minutes to reflect on your personal beliefs, desires, understandings and practices of teaching. Journal about the following prompts as they relate to your personal understanding and practice of teaching.

1. This study explores the relationship between technical and relational pedagogy. How do you define technical pedagogy? How do you define relational pedagogy?

2. What technical skills do you feel are necessary to effective/successful teaching? How do you acquire these skills?

3. What relational skills do you think are necessary to effective/successful teaching? How do you acquire these skills?

4. How do you find a balance between the technical and relational components of teaching?

Journal Three: Teacher-Student Interactions (Interpersonal Pedagogy)

Take a few minutes to reflect of your interactions with students in the classroom. Reflect in your journal on the following prompts.

1. What word (or phrase) would you use to characterize the interaction between teachers and students?

2. What is the teacher's role in this interaction? What is the student's role in this interaction?

3. What events or experiences strengthen this interaction? What events or experiences challenge this interaction?

Journal Four: Monologic/Dialogic (Extra-Personal) Pedagogy

Take a few minutes to reflect on your experience regarding outside influences on your teaching. Reflect in your journal on the following prompts.

1. How do you define learning? How did you come to this understanding? Who or what are the main components in your understanding of learning?

2. What do you feel are some external pressures that impact your teaching? How do they specifically impact your teaching?

3. How do you respond to these pressures? What are some ways you resist or encourage these pressures?

Journal Five: Collaborative – Recognition of the other

1. How do you define pedagogical tension?

2. How do you encourage this tension in your classroom? What are some of the important elements of teaching and learning that promote this tension?

3. In what ways do you work to recognize student individuality in your classroom?

Journal Six: Collaborative – Compassion and Humility

1. How do you define compassion? How does this definition influence your

    understanding of pedagogy?

2. What are some ways you practice compassion in your classroom?

3. How do you define humility? How does this definition influence your

    understanding of pedagogy?

4. What are some ways you practice humility in your teaching?

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