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Dan O. Lovitt

Teacher Identity and Small School Reform

Dan O. Lovitt

**A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2007

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

College of Education

UMI Number: 3293493

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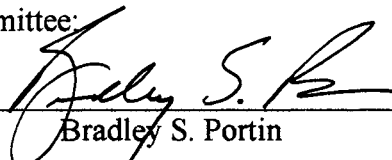
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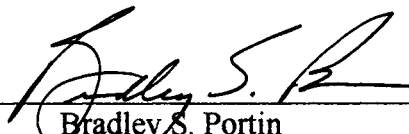
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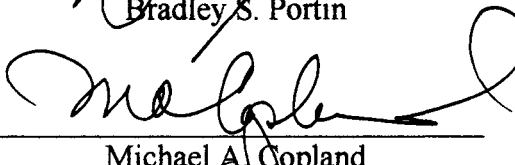


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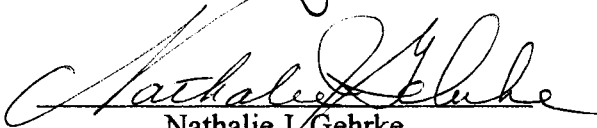
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Abstract

Teacher Identity and Small School Reform

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In order to gain some of the benefits of smaller, more personalized schools, many public high schools across the country have been reorganized, divided into several subunits, academies, or small schools. Recent studies examining these schools have shown some positive, some mixed results. This study combines theories of small school reform and professional identity to frame an examination of teachers' reflections on their experience working in such schools. Sixteen teachers at two schools in the Pacific Northwest were observed and interviewed. The transcripts of these interviews were analyzed individually and collectively. Common themes related to the theoretical framework as well as those that emerged from the interviews are explored and discussed through the lens of theories of professional identity.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wants to express sincere appreciation to all of the little people who made this possible. Without the presence and cooperation of teachers, students, and schools, I would have looked quite foolish talking to myself. Also, this dissertation would never have been completed without the help, support, and patience of my wife, family, and friends. My cat, too, has always been there for me.

DEDICATION

To my wife, the finest teacher I have ever known.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

School reform occurs frequently in ways large and small. Policy makers and pundits, parents and teachers all have ideas of what needs fixing and how things need to be fixed. Some policies call for little more than new course curricula or teaching strategies. Others call for broad changes in how schools and classrooms are structured. Many of these proposed changes affect how staff and students interact with one another. When such major restructuring occurs, teachers must adjust to new ways of going about their work. Reform policies that call for new relationships among staff and between teachers and students confront teachers with changes that may challenge how they have heretofore viewed their roles as teachers.

Some teachers may view these reforms as merely affecting the daily practice of teaching, new tasks to be added to the list. Such requests come and go; it's all part of the job. Their fundamental role as a teacher is not seen as changing. Other teachers, however, may view these reforms as asking them to take on new and different roles, perhaps to give up old ones. Working in a restructured school may mean, to them, becoming a new kind of teacher. This is a much deeper kind of change. Performing new, or additional tasks is one thing; becoming a new kind of teacher is much more personal. In this study I examine the goals and methods of small school restructuring through the lenses provided by theories related to teacher identity. This study, therefore, is informed by two sets of literature, that pertaining to small school reform and that associated with personal and professional identity.

Parallel Case Studies

Statement of the Problem

The recent Small School reform movement has been based, in part, on the premise that teacher-student relationships are an important consideration in school design. Smaller school structures are presumably more personable and students therein feel cared about and known. These close relationships then lead to greater student engagement, which then is associated with improved student outcomes such as attendance and graduation rates and test scores.

With these goals in mind, Small School reform policies call upon schools to become more personalized. To accomplish this, these schools often incorporate several common policies. One is to limit the number of students. With a relatively small number of students and teachers at these schools there is good opportunity for all to get to know one another. Another part of the design of many of these schools is time set aside for students to be a part of an advisory group during which students can develop close relationships with a staff member who will get to know them over several years. It is also part of the mission of these schools for teachers to create flexible curricula centered on the needs of the particular students of the school.

These kinds of school structures call upon teachers to develop closer relationships with their students than in other, more traditional schools. However, simply making a school smaller than it was before may not necessarily lead to personalization and student engagement. Further, knowing students well does not necessarily lead to improved instruction. An organizational change may set the stage for

change in practice, but like other reforms, it does not guarantee that teachers will actually alter their classroom behaviors.

Purpose of the Study

Much of the previous research on small schools looked at stand-alone schools that were small either because of the population that they serve or by design. The practice of dividing large high schools into subunits is a relatively new one. As more of these designs have been put into practice and outcomes are being assessed, more can be said about how these particular kinds of schools are working out.

Recent reports evaluating the progress of schools within schools have shown some consistent findings. Teachers and students report that small schools are fostering more personal and supportive environments. Perhaps related to this are reports of lower dropout rates and higher attendance rates at these schools compared to similar populations in other public high schools. Impacts on achievement have been mixed. One set of studies showed higher performance in English and lower in math. Other studies showed no difference in state test scores. These reports also found that instruction in these small schools was not significantly different from that at traditionally structured schools (Kahne, Sporte, De la Torre, and Easton, 2006; Mitchell, et al., 2005).

Given the relative autonomy of teachers in their classrooms not much may change if teachers see their roles as unchanged. In this study, I explore how these teachers perceive the restructuring going on at their schools and how it has affected their professional identity. Theories of personal and professional identity may help to describe and explain what these teachers are experiencing. As these schools restructure

their organizations it is important to see if the teachers' definitions of themselves and their work also change.

A reform that calls for a change in how teachers perform their work, how they interact with students and with one another, must take into account how teachers value such interactions. This study provides a closer understanding of how or why these reforms may or may not be succeeding. How teachers view their professional roles is an important part of this question. For instance, if teachers don't view their roles as changing, classroom practice is not likely to substantially change.

Theories of professional identity can help us understand teacher motivation and commitment to school reforms. Teachers' sense of their roles as teachers helps to explain the values and relative priorities they place on their work. These theories also help us to understand the social and interactional components of identity formation and maintenance. "Identities and the acts attributed to them are always forming and re-forming in relation to historically specific contexts" (Holland, Lachicotee, & Cain, p. 284). The historical context for these teachers is one of change brought about by school restructuring. Theories of identity describe identity forming within social experience. This study aims to describe teachers' perceptions in the midst of the changing social experience of school reform.

By observing and listening to teachers who are working among the new organizations created within these high schools, I hope to provide an insightful description of what their experiences have been, what meaning they see in these events, and how they view their roles as teachers. Without an understanding of small school reform through the eyes of those who are charged with relating to students and

providing them with rigorous and relevant instruction, reform advocates and critics as well as school leaders may never know how policies are enacted or why they have been or have not been successful. It is my intention to help fill this gap in the research.

Terminology

The term, small school reform, is used to describe a number of different school designs that organize schools into smaller groupings than are common in comprehensive public high schools. A “small” high school generally has from 300-600 students. A common manner in which these schools are formed is to take an existing school of 1,500 or more and break it up into several small subunits. The research literature often refers to these as schools-within-schools, academies, or small schools. For this study, I have observed and interviewed a total of sixteen teachers from two public high schools in the Pacific Northwest. These two schools were divided into four and five subunits at the time of the research. One high school had been restructured in this way and the second was a start-up, a high school that had opened with several subunits already in place. Throughout this paper I will use the terms, academy and subunit interchangeably to refer to the schools within these two schools.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

This study examines teachers' perspectives on their roles as they work in schools affected by Small School reform. The design of this study has therefore been influenced by two sets of literature. Research dealing with the theories, goals, methods, and results of Small School reform and schools-within-schools has helped me to construct a framework guiding expectations of the schools' structures and rationale. In order to frame an analysis of teachers' sense of their roles, I have also drawn on literature dealing with personal and professional identity.

Small School Reform

For a number of years the idea that schools have gotten too large has been growing. In comparison to smaller secondary schools, large comprehensive high schools are associated with higher dropout rates (Lindsay, 1983), lower rates of student participation (Schoggen & Schoggen, 1988), and lower achievement (Walberg & Walberg, 1994). There is concern that many students at large urban and suburban schools are falling through the cracks. With student populations at these schools numbering in the thousands, it is easy for individual students to go unnoticed and not receive the attention they may need to navigate the academic and social challenges they face.

Reform Goals

In response to these concerns one of the recent reform movements has been to design smaller schools. Some districts have gone so far as to slice up existing large schools into several subunits.

The core premise of the small school strategy is that highly personalized and focused schools will serve all students better; that is, small schools will be better able to raise the overall level of student achievement as well as decrease or eliminate the achievement gap while increasing the cohort graduation rate. (Wallach & Lear, 2005, p. 17)

It is felt that a necessary condition for such improved student outcomes is the reduction of the school size. The belief is that this structural change will then provide a setting conducive to academic and social goals.

A number of reports and other publications have described the goals of small schools. In a report on the work of small school restructuring in Chicago, Wasley and her colleagues summarized the reasons for creating small schools. The purpose was to address four specific problems: to create small, intimate learning communities where students are well known and can be pushed and encouraged by adults who care for and about them; to reduce the isolation that too often seeds alienation and violence; to reduce the devastating discrepancies in the achievement gap that plague poorer children and, too often, children of color; and to encourage teachers to use their intelligence and their experience to help students succeed. (Wasley et al., 2000, p. 2)

In these smaller more intimate settings it is believed that teachers and students will be better able to focus on relationships and academics rather than behavior management and crowd control. Gallucci and her colleagues studied three urban schools that were undergoing restructuring into small schools of choice (2003). In this report the theoretical premises of the reform were defined.

1. Personalized relationship between teacher and learner. Central to this theory was the notion that students must be known and appreciated by adults, and this would only happen in settings that ensured extensive contact between learners and teachers, with whom the learners could form lasting relationships.
2. Teacher collaboration in, and ownership of, school design and curriculum. Teachers would engage learners more deeply, it was assumed, if they participated in creating the curriculum—and indeed, the design of the school as a whole. In this way, this approach to urban schooling sought to tap into teachers’ creative energies and their sense of ownership over the work of educating an often-challenging school clientele.
3. Distinctive school character and mission. By virtue of the teachers’ involvement creating the school curriculum and in order to attract students, the school would develop a distinctive character that reflected a clear and compelling mission.
4. Parental engagement and choice. At the same time the school would reach out to parents, who often feel alienated from city schools, and attempt to draw them into the school community in various ways. In addition, as alternatives to conventionally organized schools, the school would seek to attract a voluntary clientele, and would only be able to do so if the school offered what parents and students valued; conversely, if they failed to attract ‘customers,’ the school would be, appropriately, ‘out of business.’(Gallucci, Knapp, Markholt, & Ort, 2003, p. 5)

The premise seems to be that smaller environments are more conducive to creating communities where the relationships formed will support engagement and therefore improved academic and social learning.

Reform Methods

The defining method employed at these schools to achieve their goals has been to divide a large comprehensive high school into smaller units in order to achieve smallness and the benefits thereof. There is no single model of a schools-within-school structure. Some arrangements create one or more small schools that operate within a larger host school. These subunits are, in essence, alternatives to the “regular” school. The focus of these alternative programs may be to offer accelerated, remedial, or specialized curricula. Another arrangement divides the large school entirely into subunits. A number of labels are used to refer to these smaller units: academies, houses, small learning communities, small schools, subschools, or blocks (Lee & Ready, 2007). In this paper, I will generally use the terms, academy or subunit, when referring to these organizations.

According to the particular structural policies of the district or school, these subunits may have varying degrees of autonomy. Some may be fully independent schools residing in a common building site, with separate funding, staffing, and curricular authority. Others may have limited autonomy, sharing facilities, resources, and administrative staff. Some may be little more than administrative groupings providing counseling services to separate groups of students (Raywid, 1995).

These new units may have many structural goals in place:

Structural goals.

- The staffing matches the commitment to graduating all students college-ready.
- Academic goals at the school are standards-based.
- Structures are in place to support personalization, common planning time during the school day, and regular student-parent-teacher conferences.
- Each small school has substantial authority to make decisions and has a strong voice in determining its formal leaders, who teaches in the school, decides on curriculum, assessment, and teaching practices; determines schedule and calendar (within broad limits), has primary control of its budget, has contiguous physical space of its own.
- The students and staff spend most or all of the day in their Small School (90%+).
- Curriculum design leads to reduced student load for teachers through practices such as looping, multi-grade and multi-year courses, and curriculum integration.
- The range of curricular offerings and teacher specialization decreases over time.
- Remedial courses have been eliminated. (Wallach & Lear, 2005)

It is believed that implementing these changes in structure and practice will foster more personal and cohesive school cultures.

Limitations of Reform

While creating small schools may be a necessary condition to achieve the goals for personalization and collaboration, this reform, like others that have come before, must go beyond merely setting the stage for possible change. The actors immediately involved in these schools have the final choice to go along with the new directives or to

adopt a more resistant stance. “Smaller size establishes the groundwork for deeper school reforms by improving and streamlining the relationship between faculty and administrators but, in itself, does not trigger these types of reforms . . . Smallness alone cannot create satisfying relationships or academic focus” (Gladden, 1998, p.123). School-level changes may not necessarily impact the classrooms where teachers and students meet. “One can change curricula, standards, and a lot of other things by legislation or fiat, but if the regularities of the classroom remain unexamined and unchanged, the failure of the reforms is guaranteed” (Sarason, 1990, p. 88). Like other structural reforms, the small school movement will have limited impact if it is not able to go beyond superficial changes.

This describes some of the challenges that small schools face. Merely making a school smaller, breaking up a large comprehensive high school into several different “academies,” does not mean that what goes on in the classroom will change. These schools face a daunting task. In order to achieve lasting and substantial change, reform leaders must not only alter the way the schools are organized, they must also change the mindset of the teachers, often going against pre-service education, years of teaching experience, and the years teachers spent as students themselves (Lortie, 1975).

Teacher attitudes, their willingness and ability to change, present a potential barrier to possible reforms. At the same time, it may not be right to refer to teachers’ attitudes as a barrier. Teachers are an important part of any school action and their perceptions and attitudes are equally important considerations. These can be assets as well as detriments, just as other aspects of the educational enterprise can be.

Teachers' Response to Reform

The goals of the reform spell out potential areas of conflict. Each of these goals presents new ways in which teachers are asked to approach their work. Each of these goals presents a potential challenge to the ways teachers think of their role as teachers. While the goals at each school may be somewhat different, they often share the four described by Gallucci and her colleagues (2003): (1) Personalized relationship between teacher and learner, (2) Teacher collaboration in, and ownership of, school design and curriculum, (3) Distinctive school character and mission, and (4) Parental engagement and choice.

Personalization. Teachers may or may not hold an image of personalized relationships between themselves and their students. This may not necessarily fit with teachers' experience and expectation for their role in the classroom. High school teachers are most commonly subject area specialists responsible for teaching math, English, chemistry, and the like. Individual teachers may hold visions of themselves that focus primarily on the duties related to instructing course content. "I'm here to teach biology, not to be an adolescent counselor."

Personalization can be seen in conflict with other goals that are part of a teacher's professional self-image. If personalization means differentiated instruction, then conflicts may arise in regard to *fairness*. Personalization may seem like giving certain students special consideration. If some students are given different assignments, attention, or assessment measures, it may be seen as unfair. In this sense, many feel that all students should be treated exactly alike. A second goal that may seem to be compromised by personalization is that of *high standards*. Any difference between the

work of one student and another implies a different level of achievement. An assignment given to one student may seem to be more challenging than a different one given to another student. To personalize instruction in some manner may mean that some students are held to a lower standard than others. Another issue is *time*. If personalization is seen as just one more task to perform, then it competes with other classroom duties. Teachers feel pressures to do many things. Time constraints become a part of any decision to add, adapt, drop, or coordinate daily activities and methods.

Collaboration. Issues surrounding the idea of collaboration affect how teachers and building leaders share various responsibilities that previously have been reserved for individuals. Some policies call for teachers to take on some leadership duties, many call for teachers to work more closely with one another. One of the areas in which it may be quite difficult to affect change involves redefining administrator and teacher role relationships. Many of these reforms call for a blending of teacher-leader-administrator duties. Some experienced teachers may be designated as team leaders or mentors, responsible now for coordinating the work of other teachers as well as giving them feedback, guidance, and in some instances, evaluations. To the extent that these changes are tried they may push teachers and administrators to redefine what is appropriate for their respective roles. Part of this change calls upon principals to delegate or give up some of the power that they have traditionally held. "Several researchers have demonstrated that teachers' ability to function as leaders can be hampered by the principal's reluctance to share authority" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 14). Teachers, in turn, may be hesitant to take on new responsibilities. New authority and responsibilities may shake up existing relationships between building

administrators and teachers and among teachers. Teachers may not want to chance disturbing collegial relations with fellow teachers.

Taking on new roles is a difficult task. “Organizational change entails major risks for all participants” (Bryk & Schneider, 2002, p. 33). Change entails loss, anxiety, and struggle. Change entails altering role relationships. This can leave people feeling threatened and vulnerable. Change can also hold the implication that there was something wrong with what was before. If someone is directed to do something differently, this may be taken as a repudiation of past practice.

It also brings about an uncomfortable transition when new relationships may be uncertain, new positions unclear. Changing one relationship can also require changes in others as well (Fullan, 1991). As one actor is given more responsibility, another may have to allow for more flexibility. Individuals may have to communicate more directly with one another rather than relying on an established bureaucratic hierarchy to step in and make demands, punish, or reward.

A period of role transition holds many dangers. Collaboration calls upon those involved to share ideas and responsibilities. The more distributed leadership model will require greater levels of trust. “The transaction costs associated with decision making are reduced in environments where individuals are predisposed to trust one another” (Bryk & Schneider, p.33). Teachers will need to trust in the consistency of leadership, that there will not be favorites among the staff, the departments, or the new academies. Without this trust, teachers may look out for their own interest at the expense of others, minimizing responsibilities or hoarding resources. Possible splits can emerge along several lines: departmental, cultural, or generational. Teachers may be drawn toward or

away from their peers based on several identified affiliations. Members of one academy may be jealous of the resources available to those in another academy. Teachers in one department may be suspicious of the ambitions of teachers in another department. Younger teachers may feel they have little in common with the more senior faculty.

As teachers negotiate changing roles and responsibilities, schools may develop very different social and political atmospheres. Hargreaves (1994) describes different forms of school cultures: (1) Individualist. In this form, teachers go about their business independently with very little interaction with one another. They are responsible to themselves, the principal, and to their students. For the most part, teachers leave each other alone. (2) Balkanized. School communities sometimes breakdown into sub-groups. Subject area departments, groups of friends, generational or gender grouped small groups may band together and create their own ways of collaborating or otherwise supporting each other, sometimes in opposition to other groups. (3) Contrived collegiality. In this environment, teachers play lip service to the idea of collaboration. They may know the jargon that is used, but there is little impact on actual classroom practice. This sort of culture can develop when collaboration is compulsory and administratively regulated. (4) Collaborative. This sort of culture supports sharing among teachers. It is generally spontaneous and voluntary. The staff meets regularly and works together to plan and implement curriculum. Exchanges between teachers meaningfully challenge and support each other's work.

Intra-staff collaboration is a major component of small schools reform. It is hoped that smaller faculties will be better able to share ideas and responsibilities by

working closely together and that this will enhance student learning and staff development. This, in itself, can be a challenge. Meeting with other teachers, even those outside one's academic department in order to plan lessons and curricular goals draw teachers out of their classrooms. Inviting others into the classroom can be even more threatening, leaving a teacher to feel vulnerable to unfavorable comparison or criticism.

Beyond this, teachers will face the challenge to open up their classrooms so other teachers may observe them. They may give up some of their sense of isolated independence. Exhibitions of student work also bring into the open what has previously been kept within the classroom. Bringing transparency to the classroom is a necessary step toward creating a professional community of teachers. Such openness can leave a teacher feeling vulnerable and threatened. Support and trust are essential elements with this sort of organization in order to counter the tendency for individuals to close down (Little, 2003). Just how the teachers in such a school view themselves as teachers may help to explain their reactions to the reform's demands on them to change their practice.

The call to collaborate with other teachers can be for many a significant change in teaching practice. Hargreaves (1994) describes how the ideals of collaboration can be subverted in practice. He discusses how collaboration can be transformed into a kind that is comfortable and complacent, conformist, contrived, or co-optative. *Comfortable and complacent*. Teachers may work together in ways that support what they have done in the past. The collaboration can be confined to areas that are safe and non-controversial. *Conformist*. Collaboration can work to silence those who may not agree with the group or its leaders. In this way it can lead to groupthink that threatens to stifle creative and unfamiliar suggestions. *Contrived*. Teacher collaboration can be

“administratively captured, contained and controlled in ways that make it stilted, unproductive, and wasteful of teachers’ energies and efforts.” *Co-optative*.

Collaboration can be mandated and regulated by administrators and used as a way to make top-down policy implementation appear homegrown. It can be used as a means to secure teachers’ compliance. Like many policy ideas, collaboration is one that can be adopted and subverted in such a way that the original intent is sidetracked by passive or active opposition.

School mission. Having a common and clear sense of mission can help to build loyalty, commitment, and confidence among a school staff. The goals of the mission can help clarify and define what it is to succeed or fail to meet these goals. Banding together to meet these ends can help teachers to feel that they are not alone and so alleviate feelings of guilt and uncertainty. Come rain or shine, they are all in this together.

A school mission can also be a source of potential conflict. Whose mission is it? Who is involved in the mission planning process can make an important difference in how it is accepted and lived out in the school and classroom. A mission dictated by a district administrator or the building principal, is not the same as one composed by teachers, parents, students, and staff working together. “*Only changes emanating and sustained from within are likely to bring lasting improvement to our schools*” (Barth, 1990. p. xv). There are many who work within each school and it is no simple matter to reach a consensus.

A common mission also contains the potential for the problem of heresy (Hargreaves, 1994). If there is one set of goals for the whole school, those who disagree

now become outsiders who may be seen as a threat to the group's continuity. The mission statement can become something to rally behind or react against. Each teacher may find something within the group statement that challenges his/her professional and personal identity. Such a challenge may threaten a teacher's sense of security and affect his or her willingness to collaborate openly with colleagues.

At the other end of the spectrum, if a mission is stated in terms that offend no one and challenge no one, it may also be so bland or vague as to be meaningless. "We shall all strive to work hard and do a good job!" is a mission statement so general that it provides little clarity or focus.

Parental engagement. Parental engagement may take the form of increased parent voice. This can have both a positive and negative effects on teachers' work. Involved parents can support teachers' efforts to engage students. However, allowing for greater involvement of parents may encroach upon teachers' professional role vis a vis their students' education. This added dimension might further complicate teachers' sense of multiple loyalties. Each teacher's professional self-image can in part be illustrated by the relative position of these many loyalties: to the school organization, the subject matter, fellow teachers, the student, and now the parent.

At the secondary level, teachers are often responsible for well over one hundred students and the task of contacting parents can be quite demanding. Parents' work schedules often require teachers to make phone calls after they themselves return home from work. This places great demands of teachers' time. To meet the goal of greater parental engagement, teachers may have to expand their roles and duties to an extent that they do not feel able or comfortable.

As students reach high school age, parents, teachers, and the students themselves may feel that students should take on more responsibility for their actions and parents do not need to be as closely involved at their child's school as they might have been during the elementary years. By the time a child reaches high school, his/her parents may also feel that they are not as competent in their own mastery of the subject matter. The teacher seems to become a more distant figure. Teachers can also see their roles as somewhat removed from the parent.

Parent engagement may take the form of a voice regarding the school reform process. At the time a school or district is considering restructuring an existing school into academies or planning a new building that will house several such subunits, parents and other community members may be consulted, informed of the rationale, the options, and the process of the reform. They may at this time be given a chance to comment on and approve the project. This can be a tricky process given that parents may view such change with suspicion.

Sense-making

Reform policy directives, school organization plans, and ideas for classroom practice come to teachers in many forms of communication. Individually or collectively, they have to make sense of these messages and decide how to respond. According to institutional theory, messages are received and shaped through various means. Among these are regulative, normative, and cognitive messages. Regulative messages are such things as formal policy statements framed in specific language and artifacts. Normative messages occur when there is a felt pressure from various loci. Internal and external voices may convey "shoulds" related to daily practice. Cognitive

messages come in the form of beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions of best practice, the way things are (Scott, 1995).

The many messages that come in these forms can vary widely from person to person and from one setting to another. Regulative messages are generally straightforward and depend upon the specific language of the policies themselves. However, even the most thoughtfully worded policy statement may not be able to anticipate all possible contingencies and circumstances that arise in daily practice. Multiple goals may at times conflict and lead practitioners to make choices based on their own priorities or their perceptions of the policy's intent. For example, the goals of personalization and accountability may conflict. Since all students have to be prepared to take the same state examination, much of their instruction may need to be uniform and therefore less personalized.

Normative messages, by their nature, vary from one social context to another. These messages also tend to be informal and broad-based. Pressure can be felt from many sources simultaneously. From administrators, a teacher may feel that they should demand high standards of academic and social behavior. From students, teachers may feel that they should be caring and flexible. From fellow teachers may come a message of mutual support and conformity.

Cognitive messages inform individuals about reality, as they know it. Through years of experience in schools as a student and now as an instructor, teachers know that certain things work and others don't; they know what students are like and what they need. Some policy ideas may not be worth entertaining, because it is known that they will not work. Some of this knowledge may be based on published research or trial and

error in the field. However, beliefs may also be little more than rules of thumb and assumptions based on tradition.

One way that teachers make sense of new policies is to talk with other teachers. Processing all of this occurs within a social context. “Individuals make sense of policy messages in conversation with their colleagues and in ways that are deeply situated in broader social, professional, and organizational contexts” (Coburn, 2001, p. 145). During these conversations certain individuals may be seen as authorities. Particular teachers, leaders, or groups may have a strong influence on how others perceive policy language.

Messages in all their many forms are also filtered through social interactions and discourse. “Teachers, in conversations with their colleagues in formal and informal settings, co-constructed understandings of messages from the environment, made decisions about which messages to pursue in their classroom, and negotiated technical and practical details of implementation” (Coburn, 2001, p. 146). Teachers, individually and collectively make sense of policies in ways that may or may not challenge prior conceptions of daily practice.

It is often easier to make structural changes in an organization than it is to change the underlying culture that has existed for many years (Sarason, 1990). One of the reasons for this is that new policies or reforms have often been enacted without careful preparation of, or consultation with local personnel. In the case of school reforms, teachers have seldom been given much voice and have consequently resisted or watered-down the changes imposed upon them (Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Many of the new policies seem to only add more responsibilities without giving teachers sufficient

time or resources to accomplish the new tasks. Without adequate support, teachers may have no choice but to modify or ignore policy dictates. As “street-level bureaucrats” charged with performing various duties without much input on their part, teachers may also adapt procedures in such a way as to better fit with prior practice (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977).

Ginsberg and Berry (1989) discuss power and how subordinates as well as superiors in school organizations can use it. The autonomous nature of their work allows teachers and principals to influence their formal evaluations and therefore limit the ability of their superordinates to assess and influence performance. To the extent that organizational and personal goals contradict one another also allows the local actors to limit or distort implementation in ways that diminishes the power from the top to influence the activity at the bottom (Weatherley & Lipsky, 1977). The potential disconnect between upper-level policy and ground-level action has been explained in other theories as well. Sensemaking theory describes how “teachers notice new messages and construct understandings of them through the lens of their existing practices and worldviews” (Coburn, 2004, p. 214). Behind the closed door of the classroom, teachers may have some latitude in how they decide to interpret district guidelines, enforce school rules, and follow the practice of their fellow teachers. Coburn describes a variety of ways in which teachers may respond to policy changes: *Rejection*. If a teacher sees no reason to adopt a new practice, he/she may reject it outright. *Decoupling/symbolic response*. Teachers may outwardly appear to go along with a new practice, while not substantively changing their daily routine. *Parallel structures*. A teacher may adopt a new practice, but only in limited circumstances. Other former

practices will remain in place for other situations. *Assimilation*. The teacher may interpret and adapt a new practice in such a way that it fits with his/her prior understanding and experience without altering his/her mindset; and *Accommodation*. A teacher may indeed adopt a new practice and the new mindset that goes along with it.

Specific teacher responses may depend, in part, on how teachers are treated by those who are responsible for the implementation of the reform. If teachers feel that this reform is just one more that is being dictated to them by others, that they are being asked once more to change or add to their classroom practice, without being consulted, the reform may not take hold (Barth, 1990).

Teaching often lacks a sense of ownership, a sense among the teachers working together that the school is theirs, and that its future and their reputation are indistinguishable. Hired hands own nothing, are told what to do, and have little stake in their enterprises. Teachers are often treated like hired hands. Not surprisingly, they often act like hired hands. (Sizer, 1984, p. 184)

An additional question is, do they think of themselves as hired hands or professionals?

How teachers and others view themselves affects the relationships they form with one another. Schools

do not work well when people are connected to each other and when people are connected to their work for calculated reasons. Instead of treaties and contracts, schools need compacts and commitments. Instead of calculated connections schools need moral connections for things to work well. (Sergiovanni, 1996, p.

14)

Organizationally, this can get messy. When there are clear roles and responsibilities and a hierarchy that directs the action of each part of the whole, daily operations can be simplified and controlled. However, these reforms are aiming to go beyond simplified operations. Personalizing the instruction of hundreds of students who come from a wide variety of backgrounds with different skills and needs requires flexibility and the timely judgment of professionals. Collaboration among groups of teachers requires time for planning and evaluation, it requires trust, respect, and openness between individuals who are used to working solo. School missions call on teachers and other school staff to share a common vision and set of goals for themselves and for their students. Greater parent engagement and choice means creating a space for parent voices to be invited, welcomed, and heard in ways that may affect schools and their classrooms. These reform goals reach deep into the schools, the classrooms, and the practice of teaching. It is important to consider how teachers view their roles and responsibilities as they negotiate these various goals of Small School Reform.

Teacher Identity

As individual teachers face the challenges and changes of Small School reform they may be led to examine how they view themselves as teachers. Teachers come from many different backgrounds, and the very definition of “teacher” may vary from one teacher to the next. “Educational change is a process of coming to grips with the *multiple* realities of people, who are the main participants in implementing change” (Fullan, 1991, p. 95). Just what these identities are may give us important insights into the workings in the classrooms and at schools that are undergoing change.

Several theorists have helped to shape the ideas concerning identity presented here. First, the writings of Berger & Luckmann (1966) describe important ideas about the social construction of identity and forms of socialization. These ideas are useful for this study in a broad sense as they deal with identity on the level of society and culture. Second, the ideas of Holland et al. (1998) and Wenger (1998) have been useful as they explore identity within the context of group membership and practice. Third, Holstein & Gubrium (2000) discuss identity focusing more deeply at the level of the individual as they narrate their experiences and perceptions.

Identity is formed and maintained within a social framework. Each of us grows up, lives, works, and plays within many social groupings: families, schools, work environments, friendship circles, neighborhoods, religious and recreational groups. Each of these provides a social milieu in which we interact with others and which help to define who we are. Holland and her colleagues describe these arenas as “universes” or “worlds” of various kinds. In their discussions there are symbolic worlds, cultural worlds, figured worlds, and sub-universes. “Figured worlds provide the contexts of meaning and action in which social positions and social relationships are named and conducted” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 60).

These many worlds are places where we learn ways of labeling or categorizing others and ourselves. These vocabularies may be peculiar to each social setting. Terms used in one setting may have different meanings or no meaning at all in another. Within each world members engage in discourse using these vocabularies, or language games, that are specific to that time and place. For instance, teachers in the staffroom have

ways of speaking about students that is different from how they would talk to parents about their children.

Individuals within these worlds negotiate and navigate their own positions. They bring images of who they are into a variety of social situations. “Identity is a concept that figuratively combines the intimate or personal world with the collective space of cultural forms and social relations” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 5). The negotiation of identity is not static, but ongoing. At any given time, each member of a world may be limited in terms of the particular language game at play; the vocabulary available to them may be fixed. However, engaged in discourse with other members, the individual chooses categorical language confirming or countering their position within that group. For instance, a social studies teacher may also be a father, a volleyball player, a musician, and a Methodist. Ways of speaking about himself in these other frames of reference may have little or no meaning to his fellow teachers. This teacher’s position within the classroom or the staffroom must be negotiated in terms of the vocabulary used in those settings.

These settings, these worlds are not static. The individuals within the worlds and the worlds themselves are dynamic, changing over time. The turnover of staff at the school and new students in the classroom can change the interplay and vocabulary by adding new voices and perspectives. Changing policies and new discoveries and publications can also influence the language used to describe activities, goals, and selves. Each individual inhabiting these worlds may have something to say, but in order to articulate and communicate with others or even themselves, they must use the vocabulary that they have at hand.

Theories of Identity

The concept of *identity* refers to how we describe ourselves to others and to ourselves. It is a way of talking about who we are, how we came to be that way, and what we want to become. Most of us have many labels that we use: mother, bus driver, Italian, dog-lover, senior citizen, introvert, left-handed. Each of these terms refers to membership in a group of like kinds. Each category contains denotative and connotative meaning that adds to our understanding of others and of ourselves. Somehow, all of these myriad terms come together to describe who we are. In this section I will discuss how our understanding of identity occurs within a social context where we learn and share a particular vocabulary as we construct our identities.

The process of identity formation is dynamic and ongoing. “Identity is not something one has, but something that develops during one’s whole life” (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004, p. 107). As an individual encounters new situations, relationships, and challenges, new questions arise; new possibilities and categories are added to the vocabulary. Historical events create new challenges, questions, and circumstances. In response to an ever-changing environment, identity is itself dynamic.

Social Context. Individuals live and work among various groups of others. “Man is biologically predestined to construct and to inhabit a world with others. This world becomes for him the dominant and definitive reality” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 183). The process of identity generation and maintenance occurs within a social context as part of social practice (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Holland et al., 1998). The various social settings that make up an individual’s environment are the context in which

identity is created, sustained, or transformed. Those with whom we interact give us information that we use to shape our social selves. Identity formation is a

process . . . by which the individual judges himself in the light of what he perceives to be the way in which others judge him in comparison to themselves and to a typology significant to them; while he judges their way of judging him in the light of how he perceives himself in comparison to them and to types that have become relevant to him. (Erikson, 1968, pp. 22-23)

While Erikson's conception of personal identity differs fundamentally from the socially constructed identity envisioned by Berger and Luckmann and others, the above statement, nonetheless, describes how individual identity is linked to others, to belonging within a group. Indeed, the term, identity, refers to sameness, to characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group.

Group membership often entails position: roles and responsibilities in relation to others in the group.

Theories of *identity* are concerned with the social formation of the person, the cultural interpretation of the body, and the creation and use of markers of membership such as rites of passage and social categories. They address issues of gender, class, ethnicity, age, and other forms of categorization, association, and differentiation in an attempt to understand the person as formed through complex relations of mutual constitution between individuals and groups.

(Wenger, 1998, p. 13)

There are many ways that individuals describe themselves and others. These are used in dialogue and relation with others. "Our identity includes our ability and our inability to

shape the meanings that define our communities and our forms of belonging” (Wenger, p. 145). How we see ourselves and how others see us is a product of this process of interactions.

Categories. One’s social/historical setting provides a context as well as terminology with which to refer to oneself and others. The cultural setting provides typologies, categories, or labels that can then be used by the individual to describe him/herself and others. The individual may also hear these labels used by others to describe or place him/her. In this way our language and the language of others becomes the palette available with which we can color our identities and influence the identities of others. Each of the various groups to which we belong has its own set of terms that are used for self- and other-description. Societal structures provide a number of categories that are available. Racial and ethnic grouping; indeed, the very concepts of race and ethnicity, implies a set of questions and terms with which to answer them. Am I Welsh, Anglo-Saxon, Northern European, or just White? What, if anything, do these labels add to my, or anyone else’s, understanding of me? Gender, social-economic class, geographic, and vocational memberships also imply issues and vocabulary with which to define and describe our identities. “The identities that members use, apply, and produce in the course of constructing who they are, are not conjured out of thin air” (Holstein & Gubrium, p. 99). The terms used have a developing history of their own with layers of meaning and application. For instance, when describing ourselves as parents, teachers, Californians, Lutherans, middle class, what have you, we draw upon categories of description and stereotypes with which to articulate who we are. Such

stereotypes, categories, or labels help us to readily make sense of events and our environment.

Common vocabularies make it possible to communicate our ideas with others. Language plays an important role in what Berger and Luckmann refer to as typifactory schemes (1966). “Language provides the means for objectifying new experiences, allowing their incorporation into the already existing stock of knowledge” (Berger & Luckmann, p. 68). Labels allow us to make sense of others and of events; naming is also how we are able to communicate this knowledge to others. “Language forces experiences into rubrics” (Maslow, 1954/1970, p. 227). When experiences or feelings are put into words, they become named and fixed in terms that have meaning within a particular vocabulary.

There can be many such vocabularies. Language use differs from one social context to another. A word’s meaning depends on how it is actually used. Each social group may have its own vocabulary, different sets of categories and meanings. Individuals interact with one another in various social settings in which different vocabularies are in use. Holstein and Gubrium (2000) use a term, credited to Ludwig Wittgenstein, *language games*, to refer to these configurations of language use. Our experiences are embedded in a set of language games. These become points of communication in which we interact and exchange meanings with others in social groups.

Social contexts will, in part, determine what language an individual will use. A teacher may not use the same terms to describe a classroom activity when speaking to students, parents, or fellow teachers. This is due largely to the position of the individual

within the different groups. A teacher may feel superior to her students, subordinate to a building administrator, and equal to fellow teachers. Language can be used as a tool to position an individual within a particular social context. The use of “expert” “scientific” language, for instance, can be used to reinforce the power of the status quo and of existing control structures (Apple, 2004). Forms of address are another example of enforcing positional identities.

Identity can also be seen as it is acted out, apart from language. Identity-in-practice is different from that expressed in words, it involves action and is not limited by any particular vocabulary. “Identity in practice is defined socially not merely because it is reified in a social discourse of the self and of social categories, but also because it is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities” (Wenger, 1998, p. 151). It goes beyond the confines of language. However, as soon as this self is articulated, it becomes formed by language using the vocabulary bound to that understood by the community.

Professional Identity

The many dimensions of an individual can be seen in the variety of social settings inhabited by that person. There are ways of talking about and thinking of our selves in the past, the future, in the marketplace, at home, and at work. Each of these dimensions of our selves can be referred to in terms of a different identity: retrospective identity, who I have been; prospective identity, who I will be or want to become; instrumental identity, what I do and what I am good at; local identity, where I fit in; and professional identity, what I do for a living (Bernstein, 2000). In this study I am

interested in how teachers' professional identities interact with their personal identities in the midst of their school's organizational change.

Professional identity is defined as worker's "sense or perceptions of their roles or relevant features of their profession, or in terms of their perceptions of themselves as an occupational group" (Beijaard et al., 2004, p. 118). Gottfredson (2000) describes professional identity that includes a picture of one's professional goals, abilities, and interests. Beijaard et al. (2004) reviewed research on teachers' professional identity, analyzing 22 studies published between 1988-2000. Generally, these studies described professional identity as an ongoing process based on reflection, observation, and discourse, occurring within a social context. Professional identity also involves an integration and potential conflict between personal and professional images of the self. Listening to those who are working through this process can give us a sense of how teachers' identities are formed and sustained.

The picture that the individual teacher holds is derived from several sources. Professional identity is bound by "broadly accepted images in society about what a teacher should know and do, but also to what teachers find important in their professional work and lives based on both their experience in practice and their personal backgrounds" (Beijaard et al., p. 108). Various descriptors can be used to make sense of professional identity. *Representation*: professional identity is reflected in a teacher's daily deportment, posture, and positionality with students. *Preparation*: professional identity tied to induction process, training, teachers' knowledge base—content and methods. *Dedication*: commitment to the work, the organization, the profession. *Collaboration*: planning, teaching, training, and working with other teachers (Mitchell,

1997). These are all ways in which teachers may talk about and make sense of themselves and their work. The values that teachers hold as they describe themselves relative to others in the profession come out in these sorts of terms. Like other aspects of identity, the importance of these areas may also evolve over time. Professional identity can then develop as occupational circumstances, societal perceptions, and personal values change over the course of a career (Day, Elliot, & Kington, 2005).

Firestone (1996) examines teachers' professional identity in two domains: the cognitive and the organizational. Within the cognitive domain, teachers identify themselves in terms of being knowledgeable and reflective. At the high school level, in particular, this means being knowledgeable in one's subject area in addition to pedagogical practice. Reflection on one's practice also entails keeping up-to-date with subject matter and teaching methods. The organizational domain includes descriptions of a teachers' commitment to the group and its values. This includes a teacher's loyalty and attachment to his or her school, department area, or profession as a whole. To these two domains I would also add an emotional domain. Teachers' motivation and sense of satisfaction and vulnerability are best described as emotional components of their professional identity. The psychic rewards of feeling one is performing a valuable service to society reach teachers on an emotional level.

Cognitive Domain

Traditional/Historical teacher roles. The historical image of the teacher is closely tied to images of schooling and teaching. A good teacher is one who fulfills the role and achieves the goals of the traditional tasks. A good teacher, therefore, is someone who performs these tasks well, maintaining classroom order and morale while

eliciting competent student output. The various tasks involved in leading to such a classroom experience helps to define a teacher's identity. I am an engaging lecturer, I am a good classroom manager, I care about each of my students, and I am a fair grader. I have high standards. I know my subject matter. While these attributes are by no means mutually exclusive, the many ways that a teacher might describe him- or herself can sometimes conflict. The priority of one element of teaching may compromise goals of another. Altering the structure of the school and the classroom changes the tasks that define "school" and the criteria by which a teacher defines his/her performance and identity within the profession.

Media images. Teachers may collect images of what it means to be a teacher from many sources. For instance, almost everyone who has become a teacher has spent many years in the classroom as a student. Year after year growing up, the now former student has watched the teacher in front of the classroom acting out the role of teacher. Watching this act played out through the years of childhood often makes the job of teaching seem simple, anyone could do it.

The popular media also presents images of teachers in films, plays, and literature. The characters and plots of many of these media portray teachers in a variety of ways. Many focus on a "teacher-hero," an outsider who comes in and challenges a corrupt and incompetent system (Bulman, 2002). Others characterize teachers as bumbling or cruel.

Organizational Domain

Place in the organization. The social structure of the school provides many roles for individuals to act out. As in other organizations, there are leaders, followers,

dissenters, spectators, and other types, sometimes unique to the particular site.

Teacher identities are constructed and negotiated within the organizational context. The different structures within the school organization place varying demands upon teachers' time, energy, and attention. The degree to which individual teachers identify with one category or another helps to explain how they prioritize their actions and emotional commitments to teaching and to the school organization.

Within the school are various settings in which different role relations are played out (classroom, academic department, extra-curricular activity, the school-as-a-whole). A leader in one context may be a spectator or a dissenter in another. Each teacher has a place within the many intersecting school structures. The socially constructed identity is used to make sense of actions, abilities and responsibilities within the organization. How do teachers see themselves as part of this organization? Good team players? Outsiders? Critics? Within the structure, identities help teachers negotiate what they will be responsible for. Determining one's loyalty to the school, to one's department, and to one's students helps to define who the individual is and how he/she should go about the daily practice of the many tasks of teaching.

Departmental Organization and Affiliation. At many high schools that have undergone a restructuring into "academies" or "houses" a question arises concerning the role of subject area departments within the new organization. Typically in a comprehensive high school, academic departments form the organizational subunits, both in terms of resource allocation and teachers' professional identity. The introduction of academies creates a new or parallel structure of authority with the school (Little, 1995). This change in organization, whether the academy takes the place of the

department or is added on to it, creates a potential area of conflict as teachers adjust to new demands on their time and attention. The new academy structures compete for teachers' traditional affiliation to their subject and to their departmental colleagues.

“Despite deliberate and careful attempts to dismantle them, despite alternative structures to deal with size and space, the departmental divisions are reinforced by both external pressures and internal pulls” (Siskin, 1995, p. 40). District and state policies still divide courses and graduation requirements by academic discipline. Teachers are certified and hired based on subject expertise and training. Teachers also often identify themselves by subject and have strong relational ties to their subject area peers. A new organization that disperses teachers across the building or campus may not necessarily break these ties or the urge to gather with like-minded colleagues for personal and professional support. It has traditionally been in such social and professional groupings that teachers have made sense of their work and their positions within the school. Changes within these groupings may increase a teacher's workload and emotional stress, particularly when role requirements conflict.

Professional commitment. An important component of professional identity is that of commitment (Tyree, 1996; Day et al., 2005). This is defined as a high level of attachment to someone or something in a social endeavor (Tyree, 1996). Usually this has been used when describing teachers' commitment to the profession or to the school organization. Factors of commitment include: (1) a clear set of values, (2) a clear sense of standards, (3) a willingness to reflect, and (4) intellectual and emotional engagement (Day et al., 2005).

Each teacher's identity can have its focus on different elements of the profession. One can be committed to different things. Tyree (1996) makes the distinction between *teacher commitment* and *commitment to teaching*. Teacher commitment refers to one's loyalty to the school. Commitment to teaching, on the other hand, is described by one's commitment to students and subject matter. These various commitments can be more or less integrated.

Teachers' commitment may be experienced within the different domains and may be a source of conflict, internally as well as socially. What one is asked to do as a member of the school organization may be in conflict with what the teacher believes to be best practice. New curriculum designs might not fit with the way teachers may want to interact with students or fellow teachers. Commitment to teaching, then, can take on various forms. Tyree (1996) describes teachers expressing their loyalty to the subjects that they teach as well as to their students. In practice, however, Tyree found a disconnect between these two areas of commitment. "Teachers may strongly identify with both subjects and students, yet not demonstrate this in their actual involvements" (Tyree, p. 300). It is interesting that in his study he observed that there was a difference between what teachers expressed and what they actually demonstrated in the classroom. With many dimensions to focus on a different school culture may aim "to create contexts in which teachers can make connections between the priorities of the school and their individual personal, professional and collective identity and commitment" (Day et al., 2005, p. 575).

Emotional Domain

Emotion plays an important part in the formation and maintenance of personal as well as professional identity. The “constant construction, destruction, and repair of boundaries around the constitution of the self are fraught with emotion” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 107). As circumstances and relationships change over time, there is the uncertainty of new roles and responsibilities. The social position of one’s identity and interpersonal interactions can be the cause of feelings of security and belonging, or of vulnerability, anxiety, and guilt.

The nature of the teacher’s profession makes him/her particularly prone to emotional demands and challenges to identity. “Given that human interaction is so central to teachers’ practice, and that teachers often get deeply personally involved in their work, recent educational research affirms that emotions constitute an essential element of teachers’ work and identity” (van Veen, Slegers, & van de Ven, 2005, p. 918). Teachers have often committed much of their energies into the tasks of the profession. Guiding groups of youngsters, often having to push them where they do not want to go, is an emotionally stressful responsibility. “There is an unavoidable interrelationship between professional and personal, cognitive and emotional identities if only because the overwhelming evidence is that teaching demands significant personal investment of these” (Day, 2002, p. 684). The role of “teacher” often requires emotional as well as intellectual and organizational talents.

Emotion of social context. The social construction of identity involves emotional ties to others, relationships. The relationships themselves can be a direct source of emotional experience. Interpersonal exchanges can lead to feelings of happiness, love,

anxiety, etc. Emotions can also be shared with and influenced by those of others with whom one is in contact. Emotional contagion is the term for emotional states that seem to spread from one person to another or to a group. Emotional reciprocity is the experience of matching a person's emotional expression in a social setting. Coworkers sharing their feelings may often find themselves involved in such phenomena.

Social feedback. One's identity affects how one recognizes and names emotions. Particular emotions may be viewed as acceptable, even desirable while others are forbidden or arouse shame. Emotional significance is often defined culturally. The culture in which one lives also provides rules for emotional display and feelings (Parkinson, 1996). Some feelings such as anger or elation may hold such a place in the given culture that they are endowed with particular emphasis while others are barely recognized.

Emotional displays can also serve to enhance communication with others. "In getting emotional, people are conforming to a cultural script for making claims about their identity" (Parkinson, 1996, p. 675). Social and cultural contexts may dictate which emotions are displayed and in which circumstances. Coupling a message with a particular emotional tone or expression serves to underscore the message with emphasis or de-emphasis, thus adding nuances to the communication.

Teaching as an emotional practice. Charged with motivating a confined audience and creating a classroom atmosphere that fosters positive regard, curiosity, and commitment to learning, teachers must possess considerable emotional understanding. A teacher's job is not limited to performing tasks. Like supervisors, teachers must get others to do work and to get along with others as they do so. Teachers

must often control their emotional expressions while managing strong emotions in the classroom and helping guide the emotional development of students.

Teaching as a form of emotional labor. Hochschild (1983) studied the work of airline stewardess and collection agents. The workers she interviewed were not only trained how to deal with the emotions of the people that they encountered in their work, but also how to present their own emotions and how to manage strong feelings that might affect job performance and satisfaction. In order to present themselves as cheerful and patient, or tough and uncompromising, these workers described their experience as one of creating a “false” self to be used as a façade. In their work, teachers too may feel that they create a self that presents or performs certain emotions as they interact with students or colleagues in ways that they feel are professionally appropriate. For instance, while presenting information about or preparing students for a statewide assessment, a teacher may feel that he/she must appear enthusiastic in order to support student motivation for the project. Reforms that call for faculty collaboration may also encourage teachers to put on the mask of “friendly colleague” when he/she would much rather work alone. While some individual teachers may experience genuine feelings of enthusiasm and friendliness in these situations, others may not. Such circumstances may be the occasion for displays of a “false” self in conflict with a “true” self. Hochschild describes how these “selves” can be used to avoid emotional conflicts in the work setting where the worker is called upon to “feel” differently from how they may otherwise feel. Creating a “false” self, however, can be a source of internal conflict for the person, if not the worker. To be a successful worker, the individual may have to

become a kind of person at work that conflicts with the kind of person he/she would like to be.

Identity and Change

Times of change can be particularly trying. When the environment is relatively stable, one has time to adjust and try to find a way to fit in. When rules and guidelines are shifting, however, it can be very stressful attempting to navigate new boundaries and expectations. Such is the experience of teachers as they are faced with reform policies that call on them not only to adjust their practice but also to relate to one another in new ways as leadership duties are modified and departmental definitions are blurred.

Teacher identities, as well as the social and cultural context of the school, are important factors that affect how teachers respond to change (Lasky, 2005). A teacher's range of experience, his/her professional and personal identities provide a base from which he/she forms emotional and intellectual assessments. Age and career stage, for instance, may be an important factor that is associated with a teacher's reaction to change in general (Hargreaves, 1998). A new teacher may see a new policy as definitive and permanent; a seasoned veteran may feel that, "This too shall pass."

The culture of the school and the attitudes of a teacher's colleagues may also influence the response to change. Often these changes are experienced as increased roles and responsibilities. Teachers' roles often expand without casting away old ones; new roles are simply added on (Hargreaves, 1994). As teachers balance their plates, more and more is piled on top.

Emotional vulnerability. Some aspects of recent reforms call on teachers to interact more directly with their peers. “Reforms have changed what it means to be a teacher as the locus of control has shifted” (Day, 2002, p. 681). Small School reforms often ask teachers to team with others, to work closely with other teachers to plan, evaluate, and to instruct their classes. Collaborating in this way, teachers are exposed very directly to peer comparison and evaluation. It can be uncomfortable and even threatening to feel that one is being compared to others in a public manner. The experience of vulnerability in this setting is mediated by the social context in place. Some faculty groups may feel more supportive and less competitive than others. This vulnerability is also directly linked to teachers’ identity, feelings of job security, and satisfaction (Kelchtermans, 2005).

Change is wrought with emotion. For an experienced teacher to be asked to perform their job in a substantially different fashion potentially calls into question the job that they have been performing for the years leading up to this point. If this new way of teaching is no better than traditional ones, then why bother. This could be just one more occasion when some administrator or some government official has bought into a new program and now the teachers have to fill out more paperwork, use some new curriculum, or use some new vocabulary in order to please the higher-ups. This places more demands on teachers’ time, energy, and attention. If, on the other hand, this new way of teaching is better, then that holds the implication that former practice has been inferior. For this and other reasons, teachers may experience emotions of anxiety, frustration, and guilt (Day, 2002). Day discusses guilt in more detail. One type, *true guilt*, he describes as a consequence of failing to be oneself. Another type, *false guilt*, is

the failure to be what others expect. Teachers may certainly experience both types.

The kind of teacher one becomes after years of experience may differ from what one may have envisioned or hoped for. It may also differ from what others may expect.

“Teachers’ sense of professional, personal identity is a key variable in their motivation, job fulfillment, commitment and self-efficacy; and these will themselves be affected by the extent to which teachers’ own needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met” (Day, p. 683).

Reforms threaten professional identity. The emotions of teaching and teacher identity are closely linked. Teachers’ professional identity, for instance, is defined, in part, by the focus of their commitment. Whether a teacher is committed primarily to his/her students, subject matter, or position will determine to what extent he/she is affected by reform policies. “Educational change affected teachers’ emotional responses to the structures, practices, traditions and routines of their working lives by the way that the change was filtered through teachers’ feelings about their students” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 842). While I believe that teachers’ feelings about their students may be at the core of teacher identity, emotions toward other facets of the profession are also at play. It is a main purpose of this study to examine how individual teachers balance the emotional aspects of change and how this is reflected in their perceptions of professional identity.

The emotions experienced by teachers can be quite a mixed bag. The demands of teaching, in general, and the additional demands of dealing with change, in particular, vary from case to case. In a recent study, these emotional responses were grouped into several areas. Among these were happiness/enthusiasm, anxiety/anger, and

shame/guilt (van Veen et al., 2005). Identification with the new policies goals and practices may lead teachers to feel quite positive, happy and enthusiastic about the changes. Opposition to the policies may leave teachers feeling angry toward these demands or anxious about their possible effects. Doubt as to the policy's outcomes may lead teachers to feel shame or guilt if they go along with them. Teachers may also feel guilt or shame if they do not support these changes. Teachers may feel that they must choose between doing what they feel is best for their students, the subject matter, their colleagues, or the school administration. Individual teachers may or may not see these in conflict. To the extent that they do, this conflict can cause emotional stress, a strain that can lead to teacher burnout (van Veen et al., 2005).

Job satisfaction. The several foci of teaching may be more or less integrated. The needs, as perceived by the individual teacher, of students, subject matter, colleagues, and administrators, for instance, may be met in concert or they may be in conflict with one another. In this way, teacher identity is a lens through which teachers perceive these areas of possible stress and their job situation. In the course of their daily work, teachers may or may not be able to please everyone all of the time. They may or may not be able to feel competent or satisfied with all facets of their complex profession. How teachers view their roles and how they prioritize the many responsibilities in their work can affect their sense of efficacy, competence, and satisfaction in their work. Rewards are another important aspect of job satisfaction. The rewards of teaching may come from different sources: students, parents, or professional recognition.

Professional rewards. Tangible rewards such as pay raises, promotions, and public recognitions are possible reinforcements for teachers. In practice, these are infrequent and, in some cases, limited by contractual stipulations. Public school teachers are generally not eligible for merit pay bonuses or raises. Promotions, beyond status as team-leaders or department heads are also often limited. These sometimes provide financial stipends or release time. Occasionally there are recognitions and awards for teachers that publicly acknowledge performance in various settings. While there are some professional rewards for teachers, these are not what teachers themselves most often recall as the most meaningful benefits of the profession.

Psychic rewards. Students are the most frequent source of professional satisfaction and encouragement. In his sociological study of teaching, Lortie (1975) describes the intangible reinforcements that teachers most often mention as psychic rewards. These are the rewards of seeing students engage in class activities, show enthusiasm for learning, succeed in academic tasks, and show appreciation for the teacher's efforts. Because the results of teaching are often unclear, long-term, and delayed, a teacher may not know to what extent they have touched a particular student. "Teachers sometimes have a hard time proving their worth, even to themselves" (Jackson, 1986, p. 55). There is no visible, tangible product of their work. This situation can be the cause of some anxiety. "Endemic uncertainties complicate the teaching craft and hamper the earning of psychic rewards. Intangibility and complexity impose a toll; built-in difficulties include assessing performance, balancing demands and relationships, and managing the self under provocation" (Lortie, 1975, p. 159). Balancing priorities amidst changing school structures can further create uncertainties

for teachers facing demands on how they perceive their roles. Job satisfaction can be a matter of how well a teacher's professional identity is seen as important and how well it harmonizes with his/her other identities (Moore & Hofman, 1988).

Tensions between identities. Personal and professional identities coexist and influence one another; they may also, at times, be in conflict. "The professional self in teaching affects and is affected by personal history past and present as well as the political and social contexts of teaching" (Day & Leitch, 2001, p. 414). Individual experiences as well as the collective experience of the school or academic department come together to influence the professional identities of the school's teachers. Disharmony between these identities can be a source of emotional conflict within an individual teacher. The incongruity between personal and professional goals can also lead to conflicts among school staff.

Distinctive teacher identity, for instance, can also be a barrier to collaboration and organizational change (Mitchell, 1997). Teachers with different ideals concerning teaching practice and autonomy may not collaborate well with one another. Strong identities that hold conflicting values related to reform policies might very well be a barrier to changes in school structure and governance as well as classroom practice.

The many dimensions of teachers' identities, personal and professional, help to describe and explain the motivation and perceptions of teachers. Theories of professional identity help to frame discussions of who teachers are and how they understand the practice, ideals, and feelings related to their work.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This study aims to explore teachers' understanding of themselves and their work in the context of Small School reform. In order to delve into this question it is necessary to attempt to understand teachers' practice, ideas, and feelings within the school setting. "Interpretive, participant observational fieldwork research, in addition to a central concern with mind and with subjective meaning, is concerned with the relation between meaning-perspectives of actors and the ecological circumstances of action in which they find themselves" (Erickson, 1986, p. 127). The essence of a teacher's work occurs in the classroom among students. An inquiry of this kind must, therefore, be situated in this local context.

Qualitative methods are well suited for gaining insights into how individuals see and interpret attitudes and behavior (Good & Brophy, 1997). Using a variety of qualitative research strategies enabled the researcher to make inferences concerning these teachers' feelings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Observations, combined with narrative inquiry, will help provide rich data of teachers' perceptions in the context of daily practice. For instance, narrative inquiry allows for an approach that gives voice to those studied within the context of their lived stories and the social and professional setting (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). "By studying and interpreting self-narratives, the researcher can access not only the individual's identity and its system of meaning but also the teller's culture and social world" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mshiach, & Zilber, 1998, p. 9). The focus of this study on teacher identity fits closely with the narrative research

tradition. In various ways, many equate personal narratives with identity (Bruner, 1991, 1996; Gergen & Gergen, 1986; McAdams, 1993; and Polkinghorne, 1991).

A multiple case study design was planned to see a variety of teachers' experiences and perceptions in similar settings. Studying multiple cases increases generalizability, giving deeper comparative understanding and explanation (Erickson, 1986; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The cases being studied are the teachers. These cases were embedded within particular settings. Each of these teachers worked in a school that had recently been reorganized into subunits, such as academies. The school organization had changed and the teachers were being asked to take on new roles or modify old ones. This study examines how a number of teachers have experienced and made sense of this change. "Any change needs to take into account not only the knowledge, values, and background of the people involved, but also their hopes, intentions, and wishes for the future" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 167). A narrative approach is most helpful in achieving this level of understanding.

By listening to the voices of many teachers I hope to have gained a better understanding of the variety and interconnected nature of their experiences. Amidst these changing circumstances the teachers at these schools must come to grips with what kind of teacher they are to be. This process does not occur in complete isolation. Teachers make sense of their roles within a particular social context. The informing theory of this study suggests that identities are socially constructed and that environmental features influence the language used by group members to describe themselves and their activities. Studying several members within these groups enables me to speak to the range of their experience and issues raised.

The context of these teachers' experience was one of change. Changes in the mission and view of the role of the school influence the roles of those within the school. "In such a view, school reform becomes a question of the possibility of school participants reimagining their professional lives" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998, p. 162). This study aims to explore the range and possibilities of such reimagining.

Narrative Inquiry

The central question of this study concerns teachers' perceptions. Three common techniques that could be used to gather such data include surveys, diaries, and interviews. The first two have shortcomings that led me, instead, to prefer interviewing as the primary method for data collection. Surveys cannot provide for the variety of responses that teachers may have to general questions. They also do not allow for unanticipated areas of inquiry. Diaries, on the other hand, can be quite open-ended. However, without direct questioning by the researcher, teachers are not likely to reflect on phenomenon, events, or behavior, about which they are not consciously aware.

This kind of research is based on the idea that the teacher "mediates ideas, and constructs meaning and knowledge and acts upon them" (Richardson, 1994, p. 6). It is critical, therefore, to acknowledge the teacher's role in making sense of reform policies and the classroom practices that they advocate (Coburn, 2001). Teachers' voices will describe this sense making and reflection. "By listening to participant stories of their experience of teaching and learning, we hope to write narratives of what it means to educate and be educated" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 12). Narratives provide the substance as well as the method of this inquiry.

Positioning myself as an observer, it was important for me to establish rapport with the teachers and, to some extent, the students in the classrooms. In order for my presence to be minimally disruptive, I tried to be seen as a non-threatening, understanding observer. Spending some time with the teachers, chatting informally, letting them know something of my background as a teacher and now as a graduate student, allowed the teachers to feel more comfortable with my presence.

The quality of the interview depended upon the relationship between the researcher and the narrator (Grobela, 2004). The teachers were not only telling their stories, they were telling their stories to me. The teachers' narratives came about in conversation with me and in response to particular queries and probes. In a sense, these can be seen as *collaborative stories*, created out of the lives of both researcher and participant. The researcher's experiences and perceptions are reflected in the questions; those of the participant influence the responses. The views and experiences of both are fused into one narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990).

For my part, I must acknowledge that I draw upon my experience as a classroom teacher. I taught for over fifteen years at both public and private high schools. I am naturally sympathetic toward teachers and see their perspective as critical for understanding schools. I have worked as a teacher in traditional as well as alternative schools. This has affected my perspective on the range of possibilities for school organization and teacher roles. For instance, I have seen schooling work with and without traditional groupings of students and daily bell schedules. I have experienced how school structures and routines can foster or inhibit positive relationships between

teachers and students. This range of experience allowed me to sympathize with these teachers and appreciate their circumstances.

In this form of study the relationship between the narrator and the interviewer as well as the narrative situation are important aspects of the storytelling. Teachers' reflections do not occur independent of the circumstance in which they are generated and shared. The storytelling takes place in a particular context. "Narrative analysis requires an in-depth engagement with and understanding of the participant's experience" (Riley & Hawe, p. 234).

The narrative accounts created by the teacher interviews were used as the primary data source for this study. It is within these interviews that the teachers let be known their perceptions and offer meaning to their actions and feelings. The teacher narratives were analyzed on two dimensions: content and form (Lieblich et al., 1998), what is said and how it is said. In this way, I hoped to capture several levels of meaning that may be contained within the narratives created during the interviews with the teachers of this study. Transcripts were examined for the details within as well as more holistically.

I felt that it was important to analyze these data on two levels in order to better explore the complexity therein. These teachers, taken as a whole, were to some degree, representative of teachers at these kinds of schools. I attempted to capture this broad perspective by analyzing the common themes that were discussed across teachers using techniques of content analysis. These teachers, taken individually, were just that, individuals. In order to make sense of each narrative as a whole, I have analyzed each transcript more holistically, guided by a more formal analysis approach.

Content analysis entailed the inductive categorization of themes within the data using open coding techniques. These common themes included issues concerning reform and school structures, individual experiences, and roles concerned with group membership. How teachers described themselves in relation to others was of particular importance. According to Holland and her colleagues, “positional identities are about acts that constitute relations of hierarchy, distance, or perhaps affiliation” (1998, p. 128). These various connections and comparative points were examined. How teachers addressed themselves and others said something about positional identities. Descriptions of relationships and interactions provided a social context in which teachers constructed images of themselves as teachers.

Teachers also spoke directly about their professional identity by defining their goals, responsibilities, and practice. In addition to stories about their experiences, the participants in this study made evaluative statements about their roles and self-image. Interview questions were, in part, directly related to teachers’ identity and narrators’ responses to these queries were important data sources.

Formal analysis focused more holistically on the storytelling process and the methods and style with which the narrator expressed his or her feelings and reflections about experiences. How stories are constructed can say much about the narrator’s attitude about the events within the story. “Narrative inquiry captures how people make sense of the world” (Riley & Hawe, 2005, p. 230). The forming and telling of a story provides insights into meaning that the storyteller gives to the experience. Clues such as the sequencing of events, the choice of starting and ending points, as well as the

examples within the story help give an indication of how the narrator makes sense of experience (Doecke, Brown, & Loughran, 2000).

One way of performing a formal analysis was to examine the structures of each narrative. These commonly include orientation (introductory remarks, set up), complication (a problem or conflict), evaluation (commentary on the significance of the issue at hand), and resolution (conclusion or result) (Johnson, 2002; Labov & Waletzky, 1967/1997). The interplay of these structures and the overall form of the narrative can also be examined in terms of the genre of the story. The characters, conflict, and conclusion of the story may be in the form of comedy, tragedy, farce, satire, and so on (Bruner, 1991). Viewing a narrative, or a part of one, as an example of a kind or story can lead to deeper understanding. A story may gain meaning when it is seen in comparison to others of a kind. Expectations for a particular genre of narrative may be reinforced or ironically withheld and so emphasize additional meaning beyond the surface-level content of the story by itself (Guerin, Labor, Morgan, & Willingham, 1979).

The descriptions of events within the teachers' narratives were also analyzed in terms of the relation of smaller parts or units to one another and to the whole. The story's elements can be viewed as an interacting system (Guerin et al., 1979). Patterns of these elements may be discerned in terms of ascending and descending action. Structural analysis of this sort may reveal crisis points in the teacher's experience. Narrators may present their stories in a way that can be described as progressing, declining, descent and gain, or steady (Lieblich et al., 1998). Analysis of this sort can yield meanings that may be held by the teachers concerning their positions on

trajectories of action and professional or social change. Images held by the teachers in this regard can help give deeper understanding of the course of restructuring and the prospects for lasting impact of reform efforts.

Clandinin and Connelly discuss analysis of narrative documents by paying attention to the dimensions of time, place, and relation (2000). This is an additional way of seeing meaning within narratives beneath the surface. The contexts of the narrative can be seen within the interplay of these dimensions. Parts of a story may weave back and forth across time to emphasize comparisons of before and after. Narrators often give examples of “the good old days” or how “things are much better now” as a way of pointing out the changes and attitudes toward them. Place can also be an important context. Comparisons can be made between inside and outside the classroom or school. Places can be sites for “us” and “them” and can also show boundaries and limitations of the effect of change. Relations between individuals or groups can also illustrate boundaries, influences, and variations of practice within the school experience being described.

Methods

Pilot testing

Prior to commencing my research at the two high schools selected for this study, I chose two teachers at a third school with whom to pilot the observation and interview protocols designed for this study. I spent a day with each teacher. I observed in their classroom, and later interviewed them. Following these sessions, I was able to talk with these two teachers and have them review my notes and make suggestions or other comments pertaining to the interview questions. This experience allowed me to see

what sorts of things could likely be observed in the classroom and to take note of typical issues and interactions in this setting.

Selection of Setting and Participants

In any investigation the issue of sampling affects the data that are collected and the questions that can be addressed. The sample of this study has been purposeful as well as opportunistic. The selection of participants was guided by certain theoretical criteria, but was also limited by circumstances and the willingness of school personnel. This was not a random sampling, but rather one of convenience. I sought to include a range of experienced teachers from all academies and from many disciplines, but in the end, these sixteen teachers were those who said, "Yes." The schools and teachers that make up the participants of this research, therefore, include only those who were willing to volunteer.

The major focus of this study is teachers' perceptions of their professional identities as they may be affected by the school organization and recent reform. Two high schools were selected for this study. One school had been restructured five years ago. A second was a start-up school, designed from the beginning to house several academies. Theoretical assumptions indicate that professional identities emerge and develop over time within a social setting. Examining the perceptions of teachers who have experienced the transition for several years helped provide a deep understanding of how school restructuring has affected these teachers' professional identity.

The selection of participants began with the identification of public high schools that were currently organized into several schools-within-schools. I chose not to include

freestanding small schools in order to explore issues that may arise for teachers when they work along side other academies and must share facilities and resources with them.

I began my search by looking on the Internet. A web search using descriptors such as “small schools” and “schools-within-schools” yielded a number of schools in the area. The state education office web site as well as those of local districts provided me with more names. A school guide published by a local newspaper also gave me information that allowed me to identify twelve high schools within a reasonable driving distance from my home that met the selection criteria. Each of these schools housed from three to six academies or small schools within a single building or campus.

My goal for selecting teachers included the following criteria: (1) Teachers should have at least three years of teaching experience. I wanted to talk with teachers who may have had experience working in schools that had not been structured in the same way as their current one. I felt that having broader experience would give them a more tangible means to compare school dynamics. (2) At least one teacher was included from each of the schools’ subunits. I wanted to get some sense of life in each of the academies. (3) Teachers were to represent a variety of core subject areas. I felt that talking with teachers in a variety of subject areas would broaden the perspective being shared. Given that different departmental cultures may have been developed or maintained with these schools, I wanted to hear from teachers across disciplines. (4) Teachers were selected so as to best represent the gender and racial make up of each school’s faculty. The experience of male and female teachers as well as those from racial and ethnic minorities may differ. To the extent possible in this small sample, I wanted to include a range of voices.

I began recruiting participants by sending an email to the principals of each of the twelve high schools. Several of these principals responded and forwarded my request on to teachers. From this initial contact I had three teacher volunteers. I followed up on these initial emails to principals by phoning them to assess their interest and willingness to accommodate my research. Following these conversations it appeared that there were three who seemed open to hosting my study. Teachers from two of these schools contacted me to volunteer. I then decided to locate my research in those two schools.

Mountain View High School. In my initial email to the principal of Mountain View High School, I gave him a brief description of my study and asked him to pass along a recruitment letter to the teachers at his school. I followed up several days later with a phone call asking him if he had any questions or concerns about my study. He invited me to meet him along with the leaders of the various academies. At this meeting I presented my proposed study and asked for their help in lining up willing participants. The next day I received emails from two teachers from one of the academies. The next morning I arrived at Mountain View ready to begin my fieldwork. From this point my recruitment proceeded with some purposeful prodding on my part. By striking up conversations in the staff lunchroom and with teachers who introduced themselves to me while I observed their peers, I was able to recruit more participants. Looking through staff lists and literature describing the various academies, I identified teachers who I wished to include. In the end, I was able to speak with eight teachers at Mountain View, representing all of the current academies. Two of the teachers included in this

study had worked with more than one academy. All of these teachers had a great deal of experience, an average of nearly 19 years.

Thomas Jefferson High School. Recruitment at Thomas Jefferson High School occurred in three ways. My initial recruitment letter sent out to the teachers via the principal netted two teachers. I met with one of these teachers in December and was able to observe her in March. I observed and interviewed the second teacher in January. During the March observation I met and recruited one more teacher. The five other teachers included in the study were recruited when I visited the school during the several lunches one Friday. Because there was no faculty lounge at Jefferson, it was more difficult for me to have casual conversations with teachers over lunch and to find out more about who they were before more bluntly asking for volunteers. On that day I went around to the various staffrooms, introduced myself, and asked for volunteers. I was aware at that time of the subjects taught by the teachers and I attempted to recruit an equal number of men and women as well as those representing a variety of subject areas. In the end, I was able to interview two teachers from each academy. Contrary to my ideal selection criteria, two of these teachers were in their first year of teaching and so had less experience to draw upon. Overall, the teachers from Jefferson who were interviewed had an average of nearly ten years of experience in the classroom.

Altogether, sixteen teachers were interviewed for this study. The sampling included nine men and seven women. Nearly all of the teachers at both schools were White. This sample includes one teacher who identified as mixed-race, African American/White. All of the teachers selected from Mountain View, a conversion school, had taught at the school for all four years since the transition. Thomas Jefferson,

as a start-up, had experienced a great deal of growth and turnover of staff since opening five years ago. The teachers in this study from Jefferson have spent on average over three years at the school.

Data Collection

This study used a combination of classroom observations, document collection, and teacher interviews. Data from each of these sources was used to complement the picture created by the other data. By bringing together qualitative data from several sources I hope to capture the complex picture of identity formation and maintenance amidst changing school structures.

Observations. The classroom is a social organization, the location where teachers and students interact (Bidwell & Kasarda, 1980); it was there that I began my data collection. Participating teachers were observed in their classrooms for one to two days. It is important to observe the teachers as they go about their work with students. Notes were taken of statements that teachers made that referred to their roles, experiences, and responsibilities. Also, types of assignments, classroom organization, forms of address, and norms of interaction were described in these notes. Classroom observations allowed me to focus on activities and teachers' practice. I looked for examples of personalization, collaboration, and any practices that might reflect the schools' mission or that of the teacher. I also made note of comments or interactions that spoke to the teachers' professional identity and job description. Notes of these activities led to interview questions that enabled teachers to reflect on specific events in their classrooms. The teachers were not always able to articulate how or if they had changed, but they were able to describe what they did and how activities in their

classrooms have changed. “Focusing on activities rather than people nudges you into an interest in change rather than stability, in ideas of process rather than structure” (Becker, 1998, p. 46). Questions included, what are these teachers doing now that they did not do before? What are they no longer doing? How does the teacher perceive the meaning of these changes?

Documents. Examples of classroom and school-wide documents were collected. Such artifacts as student handbooks, classroom rules, course syllabi, brochures, school websites, and memoranda provided evidence of official norms. Such objects, symbols, and terminology were at times useful for prompting teachers’ stories about their work in these schools. Sometimes artifacts may be culturally recognized symbols that are used as metaphors in storytelling (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000). Documents also included direct or indirect reference to job descriptions and duties expected of teachers. These referents allowed teachers to respond to professional requirements or expectations.

Interviews. Teacher interviews were conducted following classroom observations. “In general, a deeper appreciation for indigenous meanings requires learning when and how members actually make such assessments and what knowledge they rely on in doing so” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, p. 141). The only way to learn about these indigenous meanings was to talk to the teachers at the schools and find out directly from them how they viewed their roles and how they described their activities and goals.

Prior to interviewing each teacher I would spend some time with them and sit in on their classes for a day or sometimes two. Often I would have the opportunity to have informal conversations during lunch, planning time, or before and after school in

addition to the time I spent in the classroom. These interactions allowed me to get to know the teachers a little before conducting the recorded interviews. I sometimes found out something about their experience, family life, or attitudes that I could then include in my interview questions. Informal conversations also allowed teachers to get to know me. Interviews lasted on average 60 minutes and were audio-recorded. These interviews provided qualitative data that could be used so teachers' own words described phenomena and perceptions of school conditions.

Data

This study generated three types of data. Fieldnotes from classroom observations provided descriptive data of interactions in the classrooms. Various documents were collected from the schools and classes. These data facilitated the interviews with teachers by giving them something concrete to respond to and describe. Finally, teacher interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

Fieldnotes

I observed a total of sixteen classrooms. During these visits I made note of interactions, activities, and communication that could possibly speak to teacher identity. For instance, I described types of teacher-student interactions before, during, and after class. I recorded classroom seating arrangements and teacher movement. I also noted examples pertaining to small school restructuring such as personalization, staff collaboration, school mission, and parent involvement. Events that occurred during these observations were also noted for the subsequent teacher interviews.

Documents

School and classroom documents and artifacts were collected as they pertained to school mission and restructuring, and teacher roles. These came in different forms: school handbooks, course syllabi, brochures and other literature sent to prospective students and their parents, signs posted around the school or in classrooms, as well as documents posted on the school and district websites.

Interview Transcripts

Following classroom observations, teachers were interviewed. These interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Observation fieldnotes, documents, and interview transcripts made up the data collected for this study. These data provided information on classroom organization, practice, and events as well as teacher perceptions and reflections upon various elements. Examining each of these data allowed for a deep understanding of the interconnection of the teachers' perceptions and the social context in which they were constructed and lived.

Fieldnotes

Notes were examined for common events within each teacher's classroom, practices that seemed to typify the daily routine. What were typical teacher-student interactions? What did personalization look like? What activities and assignments were most common? What were the modes of address in these classrooms? What were the role relationships in these classrooms? Given the changes that these schools have undergone in converting to small schools, it may very well be that teachers had also

changed their activities. "People do whatever they have to or whatever seems good to them at the time, and that, since situations change, there's no reason to expect that they'll act in consistent ways" (Becker, 1998, p. 45). However, if the change was confined to the school outside of the classroom door, the teachers' actions within the classroom might remain much the same as they had always been. Fieldnotes also provided prompts during the teacher interviews for consideration and comment. Classroom events helped create a context in which teacher reflections were situated.

Documents

These data were examined for elements relating to teacher roles and interpersonal relations. What norms, ideals, and goals were set forth in school and classroom documents? What were the rights and responsibilities of students and school personnel? Were these in alignment with one another? Did classroom rules differ from school-wide guidelines? To what extent did teachers and students go along with the school rules? Did teachers get mixed messages from the different sources? How did these reinforce particular roles and identities for teachers? The contents of these documents and the patterns and issues that arose from them led to questions that were addressed during the interviews with the individual teachers.

Interviews

Analysis of the teachers' stories began with the transcription of the audio-recorded interviews. My primary interest was in the content rather than the performance of the interviews. I, therefore, chose to transcribe the narrative accounts as prose. I used a minimal number of conventions to convey the teachers' speech patterns. For instance,

I ellipses mark lengthy pauses and italics note when stress was put on words or phrases. Otherwise, I put into prose form the teachers' words as they were spoken.

Following transcription, the content analysis continued with an initial read-through and the creation of a preliminary coding scheme. After this reading of all sixteen interviews, I identified common themes. Five of these themes were inherent from the framework of the interview questions. Personalization, parent involvement, school mission, collaboration, and teacher identity were all areas of questions built into the interview protocol. The other themes arose from the details of the teachers' responses and issues that they brought up.

With these themes in mind, I read through each transcript and extracted passages related to these various topics. The next phase in this analysis was to look in more detail at each collection of extracted passages organized by theme. For instance, looking at the collected passages dealing with "collaboration," I further analyzed the different ways in which collaboration was described and defined by the teachers. In this manner each general theme was broken down into sub-categories related to that theme.

At this stage of the analysis I was aware of the danger of possible biases and preconceived notions on my part. In order to counter inadvertent selection of only those statements that supported one point of view, I consciously looked for contrasting perspectives and opinions. I also chose to include large portions from teachers' narratives in order to provide readers with a significant quantity of such evidence used to illustrate claims and generalizations.

A later analysis entailed reading each narrative with an ear for how the storytelling was shaped by each teacher. In this more formal analysis I wanted to listen

to what broad story or stories each teacher was telling. Often, phrases or issues would come up frequently and in response to very different prompts. In this way many of these interviews built up an image or feeling that went beyond the particular details that were shared. I wanted also to capture the tone of each teacher's account. Some spoke in great detail about a particular topic or event. Some spoke with strong emotions about a particular experience or issue. Others brought up very personal viewpoints and convictions. In this round of analysis my focus was more holistic. I attempted to capture the more affective tone of these interviews rather than the specific bits of information that were brought up in response to the interview questions. These analytical profiles are included following the main text as a separate document, Appendix B.

Settings and Participants

This study was conducted at two high schools located in the Pacific Northwest. All names of teachers and their schools are pseudonyms. Quotations will be credited according to their fictional first name followed by an abbreviation identifying their school (MV=Mountain View High School, TJ=Thomas Jefferson High School).

The Schools

Mountain View High School. Mountain View High School is the one high school serving the Mountain View School District and is located in the city of Mountain View. The city's population is currently 11,000. The district covers 444 square miles and has an enrollment of roughly 4,600. The area has experienced a good deal of growth in recent years due in large part to its scenic beauty and proximity to a large metropolitan center whose suburban growth has begun to touch this once rural area. Enrollment at the high school is currently 1,692. The student population is roughly 92%

White, with Hispanics (3.8%) the largest minority group; 14% of the students are reported to be eligible for free or reduced lunches.

The high school campus is composed of seven main buildings and three clusters of portables connected by walkways, many open to the elements. Such an arrangement would be ideal in the warm Mediterranean climate of southern California. In the foothills of these northern mountains, however, students and teachers must be prepared for cold and wet conditions as they change classes or make their way to lunch.

Mountain View High School was restructured into seven academies five years ago. Five of these academies were described as interest-based schools. These academies were designed around a particular area of student interest such as technology, human services, global studies, design, and the performing arts. The target enrollment for these academies was between 200-300. In addition, two subunits, Discovery and Exploration, were designated as Satellite Schools with greater autonomy as self-contained independent schools. These two schools were smaller than the interest-base academies, with a target enrollment of 75-150 students, and both emphasized experiential learning.

After the first year at Mountain View, it was determined that there was a need to combine the design and the performing arts academies. Last year, one of the satellite schools was dissolved and so at the time of this study there were four interest-based academies: Technology, Global Studies, Human Services, and the Arts, and there was one satellite school, Discovery. The interest-based academies have between 375-395 students while the Discovery School enrolls about 150. The student population of the whole school has been fairly stable, growing by approximately 100 in the past five years.

The daily schedule is divided into six 53-minute periods, with three different lunch times. Each Wednesday is a late-arrival day where students start classes at 10:15 rather than 8:00. This allows staff to conduct meetings or have inservice training time on these mornings. On Fridays the schedule is adjusted so that students spend 30 minutes in an advisory class.

Thomas Jefferson High School. Thomas Jefferson High School is one of four comprehensive high schools serving the Riverbank School District. There are also three small alternative schools that serve high school students in this district. The city of Riverbank is located between two large urban centers and the school is set next to a major interstate, near new retail and housing developments. The area has a large and growing suburban population. The Riverbank School District is one of the largest in the state with an enrollment of over 22,000 students. It also serves a diverse population with over 75 languages spoken by students' families.

Jefferson High School opened four years ago, at the same time, the district transitioned from junior highs to middle schools, moving 9th graders to the high schools. In its first year, Jefferson opened with freshmen and sophomores, who were new to the high school experience, as well as a small number of juniors. A new class of 9th graders has been added each year and quickly increased the school's population. With a designed capacity of 1,331, Jefferson now houses nearly 1,800. The student population is 55% White, 22% Asian, 14% Black, and 7% Hispanic; 34% of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

This new building looks very modern and sleek. There are many admirable architectural features, beautiful views, a great hall, and well-manicured grounds and

athletic fields. The building has two stories and is divided into six clusters or wings. Each of these clusters houses six or seven classrooms and a teacher workroom. There are three science labs located along the central corridor on each floor. The band, choir, and drama rooms, along with fitness facilities are located in a separate wing. Classrooms and teacher workrooms are arranged so that academies are largely grouped together. There are no student lockers.

Growth is quickly becoming an issue. With nearly 500 more students than the building was designed for, the school has added portables in a back parking lot and the library space has been reduced by roughly two-thirds in order to make room for added classrooms. Lunch also presents a problem. To accommodate the students, there are now four lunches scheduled around third period. Two of these lunch periods split third period with 30 minutes and 60 minutes on either side of the half hour lunch break. Teachers dealing with this schedule must plan their lessons to accommodate this structure.

The school day at Jefferson is divided into four 90-minute periods. Most courses are offered for one semester only and students earn the equivalent of one year's credit. Twice each week the schedule is adjusted so that students attend advisory groups for 30 minutes following first period. When assemblies are held they occur during the advisory time and are usually attended by only a single academy.

The Teachers

Sixteen teachers participated in this study, eight each from Mountain View and Thomas Jefferson High Schools

Table 1

Teacher/Participant Information

Name ^a	Gender	Age ^b	Experience	School ^a	Academy ^a	Subject
Steve	male	40	15	Mt View	Technology	Science
Kyle	male	45	12	Mt View	Discovery	Science
Tom	male	50	22	Mt View	Technology	CTE
Don	male	55	13	Mt View	Discovery	Math
Catherine	female	40	17	Mt View	Health Science	Social Studies
Kevin	male	40	16	Mt View	Global Studies	Social Studies
Lois	female	55	20	Mt View	Arts	English
Barb	female	60	34	Mt View	Health Science	English
Jennifer	female	35	11	Jefferson	Technology	English
Spencer	male	35	13	Jefferson	Technology	Math
Daniel	male	40	18	Jefferson	Arts	English
Marcus	male	35	10	Jefferson	Math & Sci.	Science
Jason	male	25	1	Jefferson	College Prep	Social Studies
Emma	female	55	13	Jefferson	College Prep	Math
Rachel	female	40	12	Jefferson	Math & Sci.	Engl. & S.S.
Stephanie	female	25	1	Jefferson	Arts	Science

^aAll names are pseudonyms. ^bAges are approximations.

It is the aim of this study to explore the experiences of teachers who were working at schools that have recently undergone restructuring as small schools. By examining the stories, reflections, and other responses of these teachers using the various analytic techniques described above, I hope to gain a deep understanding and appreciation of teacher identity during a time of school change. Asking teachers to change their roles without such an appreciation of teachers' professional identity and how they make sense of their work amidst schoolwide reform may consign such reform to an unpredictable and short life.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Thematic Analyses

After several readings of participants' transcribed interviews, a number of common themes emerged. Five of these were obvious. The interview protocol outlined questions directly related to personalization, collaboration, school mission, parent involvement, and teacher identity. It is no surprise that teachers spoke about each of these themes. In addition to these five topics, teachers also brought up experiences and feelings, in some detail, concerning five other areas that seemed to warrant attention: crossover, departments, student recruitment, the reform, and prior experience. While all of these are related, to some degree, to other themes—there is considerable overlap and interrelation—I felt that the length and detail to which all or most of the teachers discussed these themes gave reason to devote them focused attention.

Personalization

One of the goals for these restructured schools was that there should be a personalized relationship between teacher and learner. Central to this notion was the theory that students must be known and appreciated by adults, and this would only happen in settings that ensured extensive contact between learners and teachers, with whom the learners could form lasting relationships.

One of the cornerstones of Mountain View's reinvention plan was to design for personalized student learning ([Mountain View] High School reinvention plan, n.d.). This is one of the common rationales for creating smaller learning environments such as schools-within-schools. This is sometimes seen as important because it can build closer

relationships, which in turn can mean increased student achievement motivation and a warmer classroom environment, and fewer discipline problems. Thomas Jefferson's school philosophy statement claimed that instructional practices will be "individually focused to meet each student's needs" ([Jefferson] High School philosophy statement, n.d.).

Teachers in this study were asked to talk about what personalization meant to them and how they saw this in their academies and their classrooms. The term, personalization, was used to describe several different kinds of activities aimed towards different goals. What did it mean to personalize student learning? Personalization was described by these teachers in generally two ways. It could mean getting to know students better, knowing what was going on in their lives in and out of school, knowing their interests, knowing how they were doing in their other classes, knowing something of their home life. Personalization was also used in reference to individualized instruction, tailoring assignments to meet the needs, interests, or abilities of the students.

There are various ways by which schools can foster closer ties between teachers and students. A practice common to both of the schools in this study was to provide an advisory class. These advisories were intended to create a group that would meet with a teacher who acted as a guide during the students' high school experience. At these schools advisories met once (Mountain View) or twice (Thomas Jefferson) each week for half an hour. These were treated as semi-structured courses where students must occasionally complete assignments and they could earn credit toward graduation requirements.

Mountain View High School documents explained that through advisories, the school would connect students “with an adult staff member who knows them well and can work to support them throughout their time at our school” ([Mountain View] High School reinvention plan, n.d., p. 3). The Jefferson High School philosophy statement posted on its website described Advisory as

a class where the teacher acts as the primary contact person for a student and their family. The purpose of advisory is to act as a platform for a student’s connection to the school, student-led conferences, and 13th year plan.

- Same-grade Advisory
- Stay with same advisor all years at [Jefferson]. ([Jefferson] High School philosophy statement, n.d.)

From the start, teachers were faced with the question of what to do with students during the advisory meetings. Were these to be times for students and the teacher to hang out or were there going to be structured activities? Were these activities going to be required and graded? Who would design them? Some teachers, parents, and students were skeptical at first and some remained so. “I’d say there is probably a large group of my colleagues, including myself, that still scratch our heads as to why we’re doing advisory” (Don, MV). It sounds good to say that students will be known and cared about, but that is a pretty vague lesson plan come Tuesday morning.

Part of the difficulty came from having required standard activities. If there were no prescribed activities, then what were the students and teachers to do? If the activities were not required, then many students might not participate. If they were not

standardized, then there were questions of fairness. Lastly, if these activities were prescribed, required, and standardized, then the classroom interactions might be artificial and impersonal.

I think that there's been an attempt to provide staff with scripting that suggests that . . . [advisory] is about personalization. I don't think it is. I think that that is more of a lip service. When you have a program where every [advisory] on campus has the same standards and the same program and has the same calendar for completing those things, I think it's pretty hard to make an argument that it's unique and offering personalization for the individual. (Kevin, MV)

In this way, several teachers spoke of advisories as something that actually got in the way of personalization.

We have so many activities that they want them to do, that in my opinion, it interferes. . . . If you want personalization, then I think a piece of that comes from having the informal conversations without tons of prescribed activities.

And that's hard to do. (Barb, MV)

At Jefferson High, the advisories met twice a week and there were many days without prescribed activities.

I know a lot of teachers . . . have a hard time creating plans for advisory, because they're not sure really what they need to do. Sometimes we *do* have very structured things that come down the pipe. Like, "We need to do scheduling" and we use that time for planning for next year. "We need to do certain portfolio things that we'll do during advisory." They have a culminating

project, which is their portfolio, and we work on that during advisory. But, there are many days when they are just hanging out. (Spencer, TJ)

Others spoke of the positive side of meeting students in these groups. It has been a chance to get to know a number of students on a regular basis for several years.

But I think what we have done to improve connections with kids has been good. . . . Advisory, for instance, that we have. I have some kids in my advisory class that I've had all four years that they've been in high school. And most of them I've had at least three years. (Lois, MV)

Some difficulties that were brought up relate to how the advisories have been organized. For instance, at Jefferson the stated school policy is for students to meet with the same advisor for all four years. However, at least two of the academies have decided to have students change advisories after their sophomore year. This has made it difficult for teachers to establish the kind of relationships that they would like and that they feel called on to create. Indeed, if students switched from one advisor to another, it was difficult to claim that the students would become known in a continuous way.

I would prefer to have them for four years, because then there's something constant in their life at school. Because our job as advisors is to get to know them so the slightest sign of something's going bad, you know. And I mean, they're going to have to start all over again junior year. (Stephanie, TJ)

Problems also arose when academy leadership and policies changed and teacher assignments were shifted from one arrangement to another.

And so there were kids now who were going to graduate who've had four different advisors in four different years. When they showed up, they were told that they were going to have one advisor for the entire time. And so I feel that's a betrayal of them. (Daniel, TJ)

Daniel felt that this had broken the promise made to these students and that it flew in the face of what the school had said that it wanted to achieve. "The idea behind advisory is that the kids *don't* get lost. But if they had a new advisor every year, then it's kind of hard to have that continuity" (Daniel, TJ).

Many teachers described some degree of dissatisfaction with advisories. Some felt strongly enough that they wished to do away with them altogether. Most expressed the feeling that if its structure and practice were left alone for a while, then advisories might evolve into something useful. They valued the goal of personalization.

The advisories and sometimes the small size of the academies, have allowed teachers to see students often and in contexts that encourage familiarity. All of the teachers spoke about how they were able to get to know students in this way. They universally felt that this was an important part of their job and that getting to know students made their work more meaningful and rewarding.

Many teachers described their practice and the importance of relationships with students in ways that were independent of school structures and reforms. Establishing a positive rapport with students was seen as a way to help them to be motivated and engaged in the classroom.

I think if the students sense that people care about them, and a lot of these students don't have a lot of caring going on at home, then if someone believes in

them, then that's going to do a lot better. And they appreciate that. And they'll come to see that that's what we're here for, to help them and be successful. And I think seeing us and knowing us, that we really care and that we're here day in and day out and year in and year out that can make a big difference. (Emma, TJ)

I guess it goes to the relationship piece . . . and so letting them know that I know them, I'm thinking about them and talking to them as a person, as opposed to they're just a student in the class that I don't know. (Daniel, TJ)

This was a way that teachers hoped to build rapport with his students.

Some of the teachers made the point that their relationships with students have not been affected by the small school structures at their school.

In terms of the classroom, it really hasn't changed much for me. My style is one where I like to interact with the kids. I like to get them in good moods. . . . They'll get more involved with the class and it also makes the class more fun for them; it makes it fun for me. And the more you're having fun doing something, the more likely you are to get involved in it. (Steve, MV)

Don, for instance, did not feel that relationships with student were necessarily dependent on a small school structure.

If you *make* your class personable, if you make the attempt to reach out to students and to find out what's going on in their lives, it doesn't take a small school to do that. I think that's an individual decision on the part of the each teacher as to whether or not that's how they're going to be. *Maybe* the small

school structure *might* give you more opportunity for that, perhaps, but I haven't seen it. I haven't seen it. It hasn't changed how I've been with kids from year one to year fourteen. It's just, I make those decisions myself and it's not based off the structures, it's based off my attitude. (Don, MV)

Kevin was particularly unimpressed with advisories. He saw them as contrived and even counter-productive.

To me the idea of building relationships with kids in an artificial manner in [advisory] is ridiculous. I think that where we build the relationship is in the classroom where it has an authentic connection between the student and the teacher. (Kevin, MV)

Marcus went deeper to try to explain the importance of relationships.

Because really helping all students gets down to the relationship that you have with the student. The fundamental thing for a teacher is can you connect with that student as a human being, not simply as someone sitting in your class who is supposed to do what you say, but as a human being. And let me ask, "Well, what does that take?" That takes communities. Well, how do you have communities? You must have a structure. (Marcus, TJ)

He did not feel that advisories by themselves created this structure. Instead, he felt that such a supportive community structure would include the academy and teachers who were themselves supportive of one another and supported by the school administration and the community at-large.

Getting to know students was the result of the whole picture that included not only advisory, but also seeing the same students in classes more frequently because of the smallness of the academies.

Well, with our—in advisory—with our relationships with kids and with relationships we try to build with their families. We have a lot, I mean, I know more kids better because, number one, I have them in [advisory] so I get to know their families and I deal with their grades, and I deal with the overall kids and not just that kid in my class, in my English class. I have them; I need to check their math grade. I need to see what their attendance is like. I want to see what their health concerns are. You know I just kind of need to know the whole picture. So, and then because I see those kids over and over every year, and because this is the [Arts Academy] hall, I see them coming up and down the hall. I see them anytime there is a gathering, they tend to go together. So, I just have more contact—it's much easier getting to know 300 students than it is to get to know 1,500. (Lois, MV)

Jason's new academy had few students for now and this made it even easier. "I know all the students in the academy, because it's such a small one. I don't think there's a student that I don't know the name of. You know, I know them all" (Jason, TJ).

Teachers told how closer ties to other teachers was another way to get to know students better. When you knew who students' teachers were, it made it easier to check up on them.

And another thing that helps to know the students well is the common planning space and planning time that we have. So, when we're sitting in there together

during our planning time we can talk about the kids that we have in common and it's always very helpful. (Rachel, TJ)

Stephanie described how knowing students well helped in making decisions about how to respond to their social and emotional needs.

I am able to get to know them a little bit and at least you get to know which kid smiles all the time, which kid always looks sad but they're not, and which kid, you know, are drunk a lot and so you know which ones you have to worry about. It's much better than having to worry about 500 freshmen; a hundred is a much easier number. (Stephanie, TJ)

Teachers at Jefferson High worked with students in 90-minute periods. This longer class time was seen as another factor that contributed to getting to know students. "Well, 90 minutes a day, you get to know [laughs] personalities" (Emma, TJ). These longer meeting times allowed one teacher to spend more personal time with his students during class. Marcus described how this longer class period allowed him to modify his teaching style and how he interacted with students.

One of the things is differentiating instruction. And that is when I'm able to really see this when I do my orbiting it's how I talk to that particular, to that group of students. I can change my inflections, I can change my voice style, I can change the diction that I use, and I can't do that in front of the whole group, because honestly it might not be appropriate. But if I can change that *style* of communication, that's what allows me to talk to that students. And I know that it might be just a little mundane to think, but it goes for miles when you change

from talking in multi-syllabic words to single-syllable words for some students, but doing it in a way that's respectful, not disrespectful. Now at the same time, some students do not want to talk in a large group. It's intimidating because they feel that they're being judged by everybody else. But they'll tell you things that they won't do in a large group in that small group setting. That's something I can do in 90 minutes. (Marcus, TJ)

The other teachers saw little or no structural influence on their instructional practice. "As far as individualizing instruction, I don't think that we do anything noteworthy in that area" (Rachel, TJ). Part of this was time and part of it was the number of students each teacher saw. At Mountain View, with its six-period schedule, teachers still saw a good number of students each day.

I'd say we've never really achieved personalization because the volume of kids that we still see on a daily basis is still too many. You know, I see—a typical English teacher would see from 150 to 160 today in our interest-based schools and I see from about 130 kids a day. And so, we do some superficial personalization, you know. (Tom, MV)

Given such a schedule, with class size sometimes over thirty, it would be an awesome task to design individualized assignments and provide personalized instruction for each student.

Well, in my mind, personalization means looking at an individual student, where they've come from, where they're at, where they're going, and designing a lesson to meet a specific target that will allow that child to reach that target in a

way that is most efficient for them, so the shortest amount of time to learn and to be able to retain, long-term, the information that they need. So, that's what it means, or that's, I guess maybe what it means to me, or the goal. That's what I would say. I think that in today's society with the model of school, the public school, that we have, that's impossible. It's an impossible goal to meet.

(Catherine, MV)

Another idea that came up in the discussions of personalization was the continuity of instruction that could occur in smaller learning communities. The smaller size of the subunits often meant that there were fewer teachers responsible for particular subject areas. Teachers described having the same students in more than one class at a time or looping with them as they progressed from one course to another. This was seen positively as a means of providing coordinated instruction over time and sequence. "It's great because I taught Algebra 2 to these kids first semester and I'm teaching pre-calculus and since those two classes kind of flow together as far as material, I was able to just, you know, a seamless continuation" (Emma, TJ). In such courses, where one skill is built upon another, it could be particularly useful to have had the same teacher from year to year.

That definitely does help me to know them, to know their needs as students and their strengths. And it was certainly a big help just starting off this semester knowing what they'd had last year and then with, they already knew me, they knew each other, and I knew them. So, it helps us to go deeper and so I just definitely know them better. (Rachel, TJ)

It's affected me in the fact that I get to see the same kids. So, I have seen that. It hasn't worked as tightly as I would have liked. . . . If we were a little smaller, I definitely, there'd be such overlap, I'd really know the kids well. But I'm still not quite getting that. There is like half the kids in my pre-calc I had in geometry. So it didn't, it hasn't worked perfectly. (Spencer, TJ)

Such overlapping or looping, where a teacher follows a group of students through a sequence of courses was not something that had systematically occurred in most of these academies. Discovery School was the only subunit that incorporated an orchestrated integration of required courses. In the other academies, whatever looping that took place was either an incidental byproduct of the small size, or had been arranged by individual teachers. For instance, Spencer had worked hard to try to make this happen with his math students.

I've managed to finagle my way into classes where I kind of got to follow my students in mathematics. The kids I have now in pre-calculus I had in geometry two years ago, so I got to see them again. And I've convinced my principal to put my, to do a three year loop, where I will start at advanced algebra and then the next year teach pre-calculus, and then the next year teach those guys in pre-calculus. And it's a small enough school where those *will* be the same kids. (Spencer, TJ)

Daniel had experienced this in a less formal manner.

The students I will see many times as they—they either come into my English or my drama class, and sometimes both at the same time. So, I will have students repeatedly through the different subjects, you know, four or five times or more, where I have them as a student of mine. And then with the after school program, with the theatre, then I'll have some students who have been with me or in most of my shows for four years, and very much get to know those kids pretty well. (Daniel, TJ)

In the two-year-old College Prep academy there was, for the time being, only one social studies teacher. This made it quite a simple matter to have all academy students work with the same teacher in that subject. "I think one of the nice things is to be able to tell, you know that I'm going to loop up with a lot of these students when I teach US History" (Jason, TJ).

Personalization was described occurring in many ways. The smallness of the academies allowed teachers to see the same students more often and the advisory groups placed students under the guidance of a single teacher, often, for several years. In these ways teachers got to know some students very well. However, personalization, in the sense of individualized instruction, was quite rare. Teachers spoke of this being no more likely to occur than at other schools.

Collaboration

One of the goals of the small school reform at these schools was for increased collaboration among the teachers. With the small groupings of students and staff centered around a common academic or career interest theme it was hoped that close ties and better communication would develop between teachers in the academies. These

small learning communities would then foster integrated studies and coordinated instruction, which would then lead to greater student engagement and higher achievement.

Teachers in this study were asked about what opportunities they have had to work with other teachers and to describe what collaboration looked like for them. When teachers spoke about collaboration they described formal and informal opportunities to discuss curricular matters as well as issues dealing with shared students. Very rarely did teachers describe participation in direct collaboration in the sense of coordinating lessons or team-teaching.

The clearest example of this kind of collaboration was in the satellite schools at Mountain View. Discovery was the smallest subunit at Mountain View High. It was designed to have more autonomy than the other, interest-based academies at that school. Its enrollment had purposefully been kept small. It was the goal of its leaders to have no more than seven teachers so that they could better communicate and collaborate with one another. Discovery teachers had designed English/Social Studies/Science block classes for 9th and 10th graders where teachers worked in pairs to offer quarter-long courses. Teachers paired up to teach theme-based courses twice each year for two years. The teams would switch, depending on the themes of these courses. In this way, Discovery students rotated through a sequence of eight such courses during their freshman and sophomore years.

The block class, and the block class *is* collaborative, and we just carve out time whenever we can and meet as block class teachers, when you're teamed with somebody else. . . . This quarter I'm also teaching *Commerce & Trade* with L.,

and next quarter I'll teach *Environment* with D. And so, all the 9th and 10th graders get *Environment* and *Commerce & Trade* and then they get the other two blocks that are not my team. (Kyle, MV)

The teachers of the Discovery School had spent many hours working together to plan course sequence, curricula, and assessments. This experience at Mountain View's satellite school was unique in this study.

One of the teachers in the study, Barb, had worked for a time in the now defunct Exploration School, which had been a second satellite school at Mountain View and similar in style and focus to Discovery.

In [Exploration], we did our culminating projects and research projects at the end of each semester and all of us graded them, not just the English department. It was *really* nice. They were accountable and we had two or three people evaluating them when they gave their oral presentations, at least two. And then, we shared out the research papers and discussed our rubrics and things like that. And that was another *great* idea that doesn't happen in the larger schools. (Barb, MV)

These satellite schools seemed to differ from the other academies in this study in at least two regards. They were designed to be and to remain small (no more than 150 students) and they were granted greater autonomy, including leeway to arrange their own schedules, courses, and requirements. No other academies in this study, for instance, had the freedom to adjust their daily bell schedule. Teachers stated that these differences greatly supported their efforts to collaborate and integrate curricula.

Some of the teachers from other academies described occasions to meet and discuss curricular matters. Time is short, so these discussions were often described in limited terms.

We've got three math teachers in Tech—and we allocate some time within our small school time for those three math teachers to be together; these three English teachers within our small school make sure that we're on the same page related to our academic mission. (Tom, MV)

At Mountain View High School there was a late-arrival day each week when students came two hours later than usual. This provided a regular time for staff meetings and training. One teacher noted that on those days, “Most of the time we spend, at least an hour, hour and a half ... we talk about kids and we talk about curriculum and we, you know, we plan together as a group. So, that's real useful” (Lois, MV). A teacher at Thomas Jefferson High described limited connections within his academy. “We had three or four meetings, I guess, this entire year where we've come together as an English department. We talked about English things. We talked about book lists. How to increase student reading participation” (Daniel, TJ).

Even though these teachers told of there having been goals for integration and coordination of instruction, twelve of the sixteen teachers interviewed spoke of there being little or no collaboration. “Case in point, I originally had a fully integrated math/science model. [sigh] The reason it got shot down was because we couldn't staff it” (Marcus, TJ). Others felt that size affected their ability to plan together. “There hasn't been that much improvement in [curriculum integration]. Partly, I think it's

because the schools are still big” (Catherine, MV). Time is a limited resource. How it was allocated has been, for some, a hindrance.

Originally, that was supposed to be part of our late-arrival days, where we could discuss things like that break out into groups and figure out what we can integrate. But, anymore, our late-arrival days are filled with meetings. (Steve, MV)

I don’t think it’s much more than it was before. Our small school meetings in the morning that we have on Wednesdays aren’t really directed at collaboration.

(Kevin, MV)

Another facet of the issue of collaboration that was mentioned related to the selection of teams. Teachers might decide by themselves to work together or these groups might be assigned by school leaders.

We’ve learned at this school, forced collaboration DOES NOT WORK. I don’t care who you are or who you think you are, it doesn’t work. . . . Organic collaboration, organic teaming, where the teachers make a choice, works, forced does not. (Marcus, TJ)

Teachers can choose to work together whether or not the school is organized into academies. An interesting case arose where two teachers had previously teamed together and now were not. Prior to the restructuring at Mountain View, Barb and Kevin had worked together for several years, combining classes that they taught.

It was US/American Lit. . . . and I really liked it. I really liked it. I like having the students for a longer period and I like integrating with another subject. . . . Interestingly enough, that opportunity went away even though [Kevin] and I were in the same small school and wanted to continue, that opportunity went *away* because it didn't fit the schedule. (Barb, MV)

Apparently, the smaller size of the academies meant tighter scheduling that limited teaming possibilities. Ironically, the smallness of the academies has not made it more likely for formal collaboration to take place.

Collaboration, however, can also occur in less formal arrangements. Rather than team-teaching or otherwise coordinating course content and instruction, teachers talked about collaboration in terms of sharing ideas and concerns about individual students.

I think, one of the most important things we've done is we've talked about students of concern. Here are kids that are falling through the cracks and a student that three of four of us might have in common. (Tom, MV)

Being able to talk to other teachers about students who were struggling has made teachers feel that they were noticing those who might otherwise be unseen.

I look at that and go, "Wow, there's a lot of kids that are staying in that probably, six year ago would not have stuck with it. And I think that's because of the collaboration between teachers, of working and helping students.

(Catherine, MV)

Talking with other teachers was seen as a means to learn more about students who might be in trouble or to cause trouble.

But it's been really good because sometimes we talk about student motivations, sometimes we talk about certain kids who are "hot-list" kids, who need extra help, either behaviorally in the classroom, they need specific seating or to let us know there's going to be a parent meeting and here's a chance for everybody to jump in who has contact with this particular student or whatever the issue is at the moment. Like what we did in our last meeting was go through our class lists for next semester and talk about if we have any kids who shouldn't be together and kids who work really well together, those types of things, and or kids who might need preferential seating right at the beginning, so you don't have to come to your own – surprise. So, that was good. (Jennifer, TJ)

Marcus described this sort of teaming as a means of creating a community of caring adults.

If four of us can focus on that one student, guess what we just did? We gave that kid a support structure. . . . Since I have a support structure, . . . I have a support structure now that I can then extend to my students. . . . I feel stronger in supporting my students no matter what their issues are. I feel that if a student is not coming to class, I can contact everybody else, and we're all saying, "Get to class, get to class, get to class." It's like my father's old neighborhood. (Marcus, TJ)

Sometimes teachers described the opportunities to share ideas with one another in informal settings. Finding a group of teachers that one can work with in a collegial manner was seen as a way of finding professional as well as emotional support. At

Jefferson, there were teacher workrooms that brought together six to nine teachers in a common space where teachers usually ate lunch and spent their planning time.

This collaborative workspace, this is something from the beginning that was built into the architecture of the building, was that teachers would have common planning areas. And that was something that we thought would be very, very important to enhance collaboration and enhance employees working together and to have teachers working together. (Marcus, TJ)

These workroom groupings could become their own small communities or teams of teachers. At Jefferson, these rooms might be organized to house a particular group of teachers from a single academy, such as all of the 9th and 10th grade teachers or all math teachers. Each academy filled one to three of these workspaces.

Where our office is, there's nine of us and we're, our personality, I guess, of that room is very different from the upstairs room. We're all a lot younger teachers and we tend to be a little bit more new age when it comes to teaching tactics. Whereas upstairs is a little more old school, by-the-book, kind of—great teachers upstairs, just very different teaching styles. (Stephanie, TJ)

These common workrooms created a place where teachers could easily converse with one another about personal and professional concerns.

Informal discussions, however helpful, do not necessarily lead to collaboration in the sense of formal curriculum integration. Rachel, who has a desk in the same workroom as Marcus noted, “We certainly have the opportunity because we have the time, the time is there everyday, we're together there everyday. We haven't really done

any sort of interdisciplinary planning” (Rachel, TJ). Common time and space were necessary, but not sufficient conditions in this case for collaboration to take place.

The physical layout of Mountain View did not provide teachers with common workspaces. The older building was set up in a more traditional, egg-crate type of design. Teachers were more likely to see one another in the staff lunchroom or if they made the effort to visit each other’s classrooms.

Yeah, we always do some networking and stuff during lunch. It’s kind of a time off to talk about different things, or before school/after school, if you can catch each other, or just real quick email stuff. And that’s just pretty much how it’s always been. There’s some teachers that you’re really good friends with, so you make a point to touch base with them. (Steve, MV)

For Steve, this meant teachers outside of his academy as well as those inside.

Relationships established prior to the school redesign were still very important and rewarding.

The academies also provided a ready-made group of colleagues in much the same way that academic departments have done in traditionally organized high schools.

I really do like working with [Health Science Academy] staff. I mean that definitely adds a lot of joy to the job, is working with a group of people. I wish we were a small enough group that we could do more integration right now.

(Catherine, MV)

These new groups of teachers might be small enough for collegial ties, but not necessarily for curricular coordination. Most of these academies had from 15 to 25 teachers. The satellite schools at Mountain View were much smaller and had the

potential for much closer ties between teachers. With only six or seven teachers, these small units also placed demands on teachers' abilities to get along with one another.

The people—and that's why it has to be voluntary really—but the people I worked with in [Exploration School], I just loved. We didn't have any prima donnas and we were very encouraging of each other and we had disagreements, but people had enough interpersonal skills to solve those disagreements in an adult way. So, it was a really great group, which I truly appreciated. (Barb, MV)

In contrast to the experiences of close relations with fellow teachers, some of the teachers told of instances of isolation. With their schools divided into separate academies, there were teachers on campus who had never met one another. Jennifer described this experience, "You know, sometimes when you're walking in the halls you see people sometimes who you know look like grown-ups and look like they might be teachers, but you don't really have a clue who they are" (Jennifer, TJ). Another teacher at Jefferson has had the same experience, "We don't get to do socializing and meet the other teachers. . . . All I do is walk by and say "Hi" to people, I don't even know what their names are (Emma, TJ). Even teachers at Mountain View, where the academies were not as physically isolated from one another, have encountered this experience.

I heard someone say the other day in our training meeting for the [State test], that there were people in the room that they didn't even know. Well, that *never* would have been true under the old system. You know, we were a high school and you knew all the teachers. But, in today's time, you know your small

school's cohort real well, you know your department pretty well, but there's other people you don't know at all. (Lois, MV)

With the division of these schools into separate academies, teachers often felt disconnected from others in the building. Initially at Thomas Jefferson there was an attempt to build connections by assigning teachers to groups for mutual challenge and support. These formal learning communities were referred to as Critical Friends groups. When Jefferson High School first opened teachers were required to take part in these groups. Several teachers spoke of their experience.

It was nice because instead of just critiquing – like, what we found is that, you know, I typically see things from an English teacher's perspective and that you know, L., who teaches shop, and B., who teaches PE, and a teacher who teaches math or science would, we see things different ways because our minds work differently. And so, the good thing was we got to see that because our students reflect a variety of different learning styles and perspectives, it was really beneficial to us to have our peers see different perspectives too. (Jennifer, TJ)

Rachel and Daniel also spoke very positively of their experience with Critical Friends groups. They regretted that these had been changed after the first year to include only members of the same academy and then abandoned altogether the following year.

We haven't had critical friends groups here in two years. So, that was our opportunity to speak with teachers in other disciplines and other academies and really help each other out, but that's gone now. (Daniel, TJ)

It had been, to some extent, confusing and frustrating for teachers to adjust to shifting priorities of the school and district leaders. For instance, there were no longer CFGs at Jefferson and even staff meetings within academies had also largely ended. These groups were replaced by core teams within each of the academies. Teachers at Jefferson High, in particular, described feeling more and more isolated from peers in the school at large.

In the daily experience of these teachers, collaboration meant talking to other teachers about students they had in common. Within the smaller groupings of the academies, it was more likely that teachers would know the same students and sharing information helped them keep track of those who were having trouble. However, teachers spoke of rarely having time to work with other teachers on curricular matters, even within the same academy.

Crossover

One of the aspects of school organization that could affect teachers' efforts to collaborate was that of student crossover. A key decision that schools-within-schools must face is whether or not to allow students to take classes outside of their home academy. If they are not allowed to do so, the range of courses available to them may be limited. This is not often popular with students and their parents who are used to the wide variety of courses offered in large comprehensive high schools. On the other hand, if students are allowed to take classes outside of their academy, then the smallness and continuity of these subunits is compromised. These students will be in classes with teachers and students with whom they are not familiar. Teachers will have students in

their classrooms that they do not know. The closeness and sense of community are blurred, if not lost.

The two schools in this study went two ways on this question. Mountain View decided from the beginning to allow some crossover. This has allowed them to offer a wide range of electives and advanced courses to students in all academies without needing to hire additional staff. This created some tension as the administration tried to balance the goals of the reform effort that called for academy identification and coordinated instruction within the subunits with the desires of parents and the limitations of staffing and the schedule. Mountain View teachers expressed their frustration with these compromises.

Because there were so many—this is how it gets all mixed up, because there were so many inflows and outflows going on with schools with the administration trying to put out the community fire of, you know, allowing students to be able to have their electives because now all of a sudden the whole basis of a small school is that you have a small group of kids with a small group of instructors to get to know each other well, while that, in fact wasn't happening because the administration was trying to deal with the community demand for allowing their students to have their electives. (Don, MV)

Instead of working with a student population of 350 and trying to coordinate the work of 15 teachers, crossover meant that hundreds of more students and dozens of additional teachers were thrown into the mix.

And that's one of the things we'd like to work on. We'd like Tech students to have Tech teachers, so we *can* do full collaboration between teachers and say, "You've got this teacher and I've got this teacher." And those teachers can then go through and basically set up something where all the Tech students are doing the same thing. (Steve, MV)

The decision to allow crossover therefore meant that collaboration and course integration were no more likely to occur than they were before there were academies.

The number one thing that's stopping that integration piece . . . is the crossover and how large the groups are. You know, trying to work with two or three English teachers. And the crossover in small schools, especially with juniors and seniors, isn't just between the two English teachers in Health Science. I've got kids from all of the schools, and then it's completely pointless. There's no way that we're going to get all the social studies teachers and all the English teachers to integrate and collaborate. (Catherine, MV)

Teachers described how they felt crossover affected the quality of the reform.

This aspect of their experience seemed to contradict one of the major goals of the reform. "I think the big parts are, because of so many inflows and outflows in the interest-based schools, it really didn't feel much differently than school prior to the small school experience" (Don, MV). "I don't think it's really small schools in the career pathway schools because there's so much crossover and again, it has to do with the schedule" (Barb, MV).

I don't think we ever went far enough to really become small schools. We're not separated by anything and we're on the same bell schedule. We share the same kids for many things. I mean they have, they go back and forth between—we do not have that kind of community, like [Discovery] School. (Lois, MV)

Here again, was the exception of Discovery. This satellite school had been granted more independence and they went to great lengths to curtail crossover. Teachers within Discovery as well as those outside pointed out this peculiarity.

I distinctly remember one meeting where two things were decided: one was that we would allow crossover between the small schools. And crossover means that students can be in School A, but they can take classes from teachers in Schools B, C, and D. When I saw that, that seemed to fly in the face of the research that I had looked at, in that, the more autonomy for the small schools the better. So, I was not in favor of that decision. (Kyle, MV)

This, then, became one of the critical pieces of the design for Discovery School. Kyle and the others who planned this school mapped out a coordinated curriculum that would allow its students to take all of their courses within Discovery.

We don't have hardly *any* crossover. Our kids probably take 95% of their classes with us, all four years. Certainly, in their junior and senior year, they are given a little more leeway. A kid that's *really* interested in welding might take welding. A kid that's really interested in band might take band all four years, and we make accommodations for individual situations. But, the vast majority of our kids take *all* [Discovery] School classes *all* four years. (Kyle, MV)

The situation at Jefferson High was quite different. At this school there had been a concerted effort to limit crossover. With the exception of band and choir, students were restricted from taking electives outside of their own academy. Because of scheduling conflicts, a few individuals, however, have been granted exceptions. “I happen to know one of the kids in my chess club, he’s a B&I student and he’s in my advisory, but he only has one B&I class. The other three are outside the academy because of scheduling issues” (Spencer, TJ). This seemed to be more likely for students who were taking AP classes or other singleton courses such as band and choir.

Student crossover was seen as an important issue at both schools. At Jefferson High it was tightly restricted while at Mountain View it was fairly common. Because it was so rare at Jefferson, that school has had to make tough choices about scheduling and course offerings. By allowing more crossovers at Mountain View, the teachers there spoke of some classes having as many or more students in them from outside the academy as in. They complained that this negated much of the benefits of having small schools at all.

Departments

The academy structure at both of these schools cut across the traditional boundaries of academic departments. At Thomas Jefferson, school-wide departments were not supported. “There really aren’t any right now” (Rachel, TJ). This has, to some degree, disrupted teachers’ prior sense of belonging as they found themselves in new groupings and old ones no longer there. “There is not a department structure. . . . There’s no formal way for like English teachers to get together or history teachers to get together and meet. We don’t have anything like that right now” (Spencer, TJ).

Many teachers recalled how things used to be and how academic departments were much more of a part of high school life. “It used to be high school was driven by departments. Here, it’s been driven by small schools, and the departments were just a kind of a, more of a technical aspect than they were a driving force” (Lois, MV, p. 4). As teachers were moved around the campus to be placed in proximity to their academy peers, they had been moved away from subject area colleagues.

There was one point before this whole small schools things started, that we actually had the entire math department down here, in the portables, and it was great! Because we *were* a team, we *did* communicate with each other. We were *always* in each other’s rooms saying, “Hey, how did you deal with this issue?” or “What was your approach for this content?” and that is sorely missed. (Don, MV)

Assigning teachers to the different academies has distanced them from their department peers. This left many of these teachers feeling a void.

It’s been frustrating a little bit, coming here. And I’ve heard frustration from others. . . . We don’t have that traditional department structure. It’s especially tough on new teachers. As a new teacher being thrown in and you don’t know who’s your go-to person and it’s a lot less formal. So, that’s been tough.

(Spencer, TJ)

One of these new teachers, Jason, spoke about the difficulty of being a new teacher without the benefit of departmental support.

Even though there were more social studies teachers in their academies, the same kind of attitude, the same thing, dealing with, you know like, not having

access to a whole, a department kind of attitude, you know, a social studies department in which to draw stuff from. (Jason, TJ)

Time being a finite resource, the emphasis on small schools and meetings focused on issues related to the subunits, meant time away from other issues.

It's interesting; because anytime you put your focus one place you lose it somewhere else. There's no way in the scheme of things that you can focus on everything. So, four years ago, or five years ago when we started this, we *really* focused on small schools. And so, our teaming efforts, our collaboration efforts, everything went with small schools. We had very little time as a department to work together. (Lois, MV)

In recent years things had been changing somewhat at Mountain View High. Teachers described that there has been increasing time allocated for department meetings and subsequently less time for academies meetings.

In the last year and a half we've spent less time in small schools and allocated some of that time to department time. Because that's one of the things that staff missed is, "I'm spending all of this time with my small school, but I'm spending less time with my department. And when we're talking about specific standards in English, I need to talk to all of the English teachers instead of all my colleagues in Tech." And so, there was a need to have some more of the late arrival time be spent within department. (Tom, MV)

What about the communication or collaboration with departments?

For two or three years, that was in my view almost completely gone.

Departments, for the most part don't have budgets anymore unless they're taking a major book request or something to our secondary instruction council group for approval. This year has been somewhat better. There have been six or seven late arrival sessions that have been set aside for department meetings.

(Kevin, MV)

Teachers throughout the school were beginning to get a sense that things were changing. The teachers and the new principal saw this trend as a move toward achieving a balance between academies and departments.

While at Mountain View there had been a recent resurgence of the role of departments, the teachers at Thomas Jefferson spoke of no such move. At Jefferson, the few subject specialists within each academy formed the departments. In the larger academies there were three or four teachers of each core subject (e.g., English, math, science, and social studies), while the new College Prep Academy had only one or two. Some of the academies at Jefferson had organized themselves into Core Teams of four to six teachers. These teams were interdisciplinary groups who worked, usually, with a particular grade level (i.e., 9th grade team, 10th grade team, and a 11-12th grade team). This further served to divide teachers' time and focus away from traditional departments.

Mission

Teachers were asked to talk about the mission of their schools and to express how this may be influencing how they go about their work. They were also asked to

describe their academy's character or flavor, and what sort of culture seemed to be developing. Several of the teachers interviewed were part of the original planning teams that helped develop the designs for their respective schools. They spoke of how the original missions had been put together.

I was part of the team that went back to Harvard to plan the, what the process would look like. I spent two; I've been to two summer school institutes that had been sponsored by Stanford, down in Palo Alto. They were small school project related. So, I guess—I still believe in the overall vision of our reinvention plan. You know, we had a good high school that some of us wanted to be better than good. "How can we be better than okay?" And so, our vision of all students achieving at a higher level, I think that's still an important vision, still an important goal. Along with that, we thought it was important that if we're asking students to achieve, staff have to perform at a different level as well. And so, that's where you see the vision of our reinvention plan: student achievement *and* staff performance. (Tom, MV)

Looking back now, after four or five years, teachers felt they could see that some of the ideas had been unfulfilled; some of the plans had not been thought through. Kevin had very strong feelings that the planning process had gotten off to a bad start and that a clear mission had not been developed before undertaking the implementation of the reform.

I remember going to that meeting with Revision Team II and thinking that it was absolutely ridiculous, that you would take the people who were, in my mind, the

most enthusiastic about small schools, and you would let them go off and to be satellite schools before the school itself, the main school, had transitioned, that you really needed those enthusiasts in the big picture and then, if you're going to form the satellite schools, you do that after the fact. And I think one of the things is that they allowed an enthusiastic vocal minority to go their own way and have too much leeway at that particular point. At a time where we really needed, you know, if this is going to be maximized in its success, those folks were allowed to go off and do their own thing before the school was ready for that. (Kevin, MV)

Now that nearly five years had passed since the new plan was put in place at Mountain View, there had been a high turnover of the staff that knew the original mission.

On the wall over there in the faculty room you can see a staff compact that was signed at the beginning of this change process. And I think if you went through person by person, there's custodial staff and secretarial staff and classified and certificated, and I haven't counted, but my ballpark estimate is there's probably 25-30% of those are the same as that signed that compact. And so you've got a ship that's on a course that only has 30% of the crew that actually signed on for that mission. (Kevin, MV)

A next step in the process was developing a vision or mission for the individual academies. Teachers and other school leaders tried to make sense of their academy's identity as they planned courses and activities for the students.

Yeah, once we were selected as a team, pretty much we had to go through and start from square one, “What is our academic mission?” “What do we view as the parts of [The Technology Academy]?” “What is the meaning of Tech?” So, at that point, basically, we constructed everything from the ground up given only the title of the school. So, we’ve had a hand in everything we do and everything we’ve created. That doesn’t mean that everything has gone our way, but we at least had input into everything. (Steve, MV)

Another Tech instructor had a clear vision of what the academy mission meant to him. First, I would say that when you think of innovation, that’s the big idea, innovation, the school of innovation and technology, Tech. That’s that *wonder*, that’s that *problem solving*, that’s that *thinking*, that’s that *inquisitiveness* piece. And so, teaching kids how to think like a scientist, how to think like a historian, how to think like a mathematician. All of those things, that’s the thinking piece. And then, using technology, defining technology as a tool, material, or resource to solve a problem or meet a need. What technology, or how can we use this technology to do those things? Now, so that would be probably the academic mission of Tech. And the personalization thing means some other things; it means different things to different people. (Tom, MV)

Having a clear sense of mission then led to questions of implementation. Spencer described how his academy struggled to establish required courses that would help provide a common experience for students in the Tech Academy at Jefferson High School.

I did the *Invisioneering* course, but then we had a requirement that students would take that Principles of Technology. We had all freshmen take it. There were some complaints from the community that we couldn't *require* that. And so, we could no longer require it, so it became an elective. And the enrollment dropped off in that class. . . . It's somewhat frustrating, the idea of small schools, where typically in a small school, if it's a really good small school, a lot of times you don't have choices, if it's small enough. I mean, it's just really hard to create electives. It's one of the trade-offs of small schools. But, the parents won out, I guess, and so we had to back off on that. (Spencer, TJ)

The mission of the academy came into conflict with the vision that parents had for their children's high school experience.

A newer academy, started just two years ago, had a vision for itself that went deeper than just a title. The College Prep Academy at Jefferson, as part of its mission, incorporated aspects of the AVID [Advancement Via Individual Determination] program. AVID is a college prep program, supporting students who may be the first in their family to attend a four-year college (T. Jefferson website).

This academy? I think that if I was going to say, I think our main goal is to, I think, the ideal is to identify students that come from backgrounds that are not traditionally well served in higher education, and that kind of the AVID mission also, and to help, this is where it's a college preparatory academy, to help those students go to college. To give them the skills and support they need to go to college. I think that's pretty close to the party line, but that's what I think we're trying to do here as well as we can. (Jason, TJ)

Some teachers had no clear idea of what their academy's mission might be beyond the title and a broad sense that they should strive to teach well.

We originally, when we opened up, we were suppose to put together our mission and vision statement. But the committee, and I was *on* that committee because I had just worked with another group outside of school where we had just gotten through that process for a year and a half and that's what we did, so I felt up and ready for that. But then when we formed the committee, then we never had time for that committee to meet. There was never a time set aside for any kind of vision or mission to be explored and established. And then [our committee chair] had to fill out the Gates report, she had to write her own vision for the academy because they needed one in the report, so she wrote one. I don't know what it was. (Daniel, TJ)

In this case, it appeared that a mission statement was required, but not necessarily a mission.

The satellite schools at Mountain View High School, on the other hand, were described as having been planned from the ground up with missions affecting many levels of their design. These smaller schools were designed to have more autonomy than the other subunits. Teachers who had experience at these expressed the personalities and pedagogical vision in much more detail than the other, interest-based academies. The remaining satellite school, Discovery, has had some success in establishing a clear mission or character for their school that affected many facets of the school's culture. Kyle was part of the original planning team for Mountain View's reinvention plan.

We decided that there would be allowed formations of Satellite Schools.

Actually, we called them charter schools at first, but the charter school phrase in [this] state, for some reason, has some negative connotations. And so, we decided to call them [satellite] schools. That happened later. [D. and I] got together and said, “We’ve got to make one of these [satellite] schools.” That’s really where we’re at. And we sent out an email that fall and it said something like—gosh, I wish I had saved that email—it said something like, “Imagine yourself going down the Missouri River following the route of Lewis and Clark with students in canoes, and studying that natural history of the areas you pass through, learning math by navigating the stars.” All of this sort of experiential, crazy, Knowles, Outward Bound education stuff. And we said, “If this sounds interesting to you as an educational model, please come meet with D. and [Kyle] in [Kyle’s] room.” So, we had these meetings with people that were kind of interested. (Kyle, MV)

The [Discovery] School is, really makes an effort to be within itself. In other words, they don’t have a lot of inflows and outflows. They really *do* try to build upon the basis of a small learning community. And I guess within the advisory they do, we as a small school *do* things that enhance the identity of each person’s advisory. (Don, MV)

And for the kids, it’s a different type of school too in the fact that these guys are very much project oriented in the block classes and stuff. And the fact that L.’s

[computer] lab is available to the students, if there's any free spots. You know, even if I'm running computer apps, if there's a couple free chairs, I get kids from other classes coming in to work on papers or projects. So, I think those are big differences. There's a lot more mingling because of the nature of the type of work that we're having the students do. This is a very project-oriented school. (Don, MV)

Barb's experience in the other satellite school was similar.

We were able to do more of the small school concept, I think, because there were only five or six of us, so we would get together and we did more cumulative projects at the end of every semester. We adjusted our class time; if we had something—we had student governance once a quarter and they did projects for that and things. We could adjust. If somebody said, "I really need a block of time for this science that we're doing" the rest of us would say, "Okay, today we'll shorten ours, or tomorrow, or Friday, we'll shorten our class." And we could make the adjustments, which I *really* liked. We also did a lot more collaboration because we sat together, we ate lunch together usually, and we could call a meeting so easily. But I felt we were much more flexible. (Barb, MV)

But all of us, again, we all came in with a vision that this kind of flexibility would be part of our school, and not everyone has that vision. And you really all have to share it, if you're going to do that kind of thing. But it's so much easier with small numbers, it really is. (Barb, MV)

When asked to describe how the school's mission or that of the academy had affected how these teachers viewed their work, most responded that it has had very little impact. "Setting up the mission and all that—that's actually stuff I've pretty much followed all along, I just hadn't seen it in words yet" (Steve, MV).

I was placed at first in an interest-based school and I'll be honest with you, it really didn't feel different as we continued to do it, it didn't feel much different than what we had done before. . . . I think the big parts are, because of so many inflows and outflows in the interest-based schools, it really didn't feel much differently than school prior to the small school experience. It really wasn't that much. (Don, MV)

"I think one of the things that surprised me was that I don't think it's much impact at all" (Kevin, MV). Something felt missing. Teachers didn't feel that there was much to distinguish their academies. "Because it pretty much feels like a regular comprehensive high school. . . . Something I've spoken out-slash-complained about since the beginning is that we really don't have an identity" (Rachel, TJ). Kevin suggested that more than titles and a list of electives were necessary. "We don't have much more than superficial small school character. And I think that the only way to develop that in a meaningful way is to have unique instruction" (Kevin, MV).

The experiences of these teachers have not been uniform. Some saw a fairly clear mission; such as the teachers in Jefferson's College Prep Academy with its AVID program that put the focus on serving students whose background made them less likely to go to college. Teachers in that academy expressed frustration with attracting students

that met the criteria for that mission, and this issue of recruiting students is discussed below. Another academy that appeared to have a clear mission, the Discovery School at Mountain View, worked hard to organize around pedagogical ideas of hands-on, project-based learning. In contrast to these, most teachers in this study had little awareness of just what their school's mission was and could say even less about its impact on their classroom practice.

Recruiting

The various academies were designed to have different characters, academic themes that would give them a focus setting each apart from the others. These teachers observed that, indeed, the academies have begun to develop personalities. However, these differences were most often described in terms of students, not in terms of pedagogical practice.

I think what it's done is that it's kind of created student pools that have very distinct personalities. And it's emerged in only the last couple of years. I don't think it happened right away. But, over several years, what's happened, I think, is that you have, and I don't want to stereotype or to be too cliquish, but if I was going to boil this down you have kind of very cut-throat, straightforward, ethically challenged sometimes students in Global Studies. They're sort of like the Donald Trump wannabes, and there's a gender balance, fairly equally in the Global Studies school. I look at the [Health Science Academy], they're kind of the school of "nice." They have a high proportion of young women. They aren't necessarily the greatest academicians in the world, but they are friendly. They tend to care about others a little bit more. They tend to be interpersonally quite

affective. If you look at Tech, they tend to have people who are interested in technology. They are *very* slanted toward young men in their student makeup. And they tend to be, there is a disproportionate number of students from Tech in my AP classes. They tend to have the academically more capable students. . . . [The] Arts School, that school seems to be a lot of the disenfranchised drama types, a lot of black is worn by the students, that kind of thing, semi-gothic sort of feel to it. (Kevin, MV)

Some of the teachers noted a circular relationship between the academy name, the students attracted or assigned to the academy, and the culture created there.

The drama kids, the theatre kids are in the Arts & Humanities Academy and that gives it a certain atmosphere, and kids who are more creative writers, you know, who see themselves that way. . . . So, on the one hand . . . it has that ready-made atmosphere because of its name, because it attracts those kids and it just, it's a sort of feedback loop like that. But also, it's, it has happened that students who are not, have not been very successful in school, more students of color, students with higher needs, more students with more needs have ended up in that academy. So that also shapes things there. . . . And also the Arts & Humanities Academy, in the beginning had, the student population was lopsided in terms of many more girls than boys. The opposite was true in the B&I Academy, many more boys than girls. That affected dynamics there and the atmosphere and there were a lot more challenges in the classroom. Teachers struggled a lot more. And the Math & Science Academy was pretty much even. And I think because that

happened early on, that also shaped the atmosphere in those two academies in ways that we did not experience in this academy. (Rachel, TJ)

Students were said to have been influenced in their choice of academy by who was already enrolled in each academy. Kids wanted to be with their friends. So, the students who initially signed up for a particular academy would then influence the subsequent years' enrollment. Whatever stereotypes were in place would tend to be reinforced.

The enrollment process was complex as students went about choosing from among the different academies. With the differences between academies, teachers brought up the question of how students and their parents chose or were counseled to select one rather than another.

As word got out of what the schools are like, who's in them. That's been trickling down to the middle schools, so they already have an idea of where they want to go. . . . Kids are going to look for, okay what school are their friends going to. Parents are going to look at, "Okay, who's the staff in those schools?" and "What is their reputation behind rigor and all that?" So, pretty much, they have a good idea. It's beginning to be more equitable across the board. [Global Studies] and Tech still close out, and then they have to be able to go to whatever's left. I don't know how many didn't make it last year, but it was a small number. (Steve, MV)

Students were not always able to get into the academy they selected as their first choice. "Well, like anything in high school, there's an economy and the economy of choice happens by word of mouth, and the students sign up for what they think is going to be the best fit" (Kevin, MV). In this economy, there were winners and losers. Neither the

student nor academy teachers were altogether satisfied when a student was placed who did not want to be there. There might be other reasons too, why a student and academy might be a poor match. In some cases, a remedy could be found.

There were times when students moved from one academy to another. This was uncommon and discouraged in most cases. However, there were occasions when a student was not doing well and, for them, a particular academy was not a good fit.

For some kids this isn't the right place for them and so they're counseled by either parents or administrators or us that Job Corp might be better, or this alternative school might be better you know, for you because you haven't been successful here and you've had all these meetings. But at least we know, you know, that we gave it a shot, that we've tried, exhausted all different efforts before we counsel a kid to do something else. (Kyle, MV)

Because the academies had different offerings and to the extent that they provided different instruction, there was not always a good match between student and school.

For various reasons the academies attracted different types of students. Sometimes this created an imbalance of one kind or another. For instance, at both high schools the technology-oriented academies attracted a high proportion of boys and the Arts academies enrolled a high number of girls. This affected the character of the academy and sometimes led to discipline issues. At Mountain View, Barb recalled imbalance at the Exploration School that might have led to its demise.

The first couple of years there was a really good mix of ability levels and so on. And then, word got out to one of the junior highs that it was a good place to put Special Ed kids, so we got the *entire* group of Special Ed one year, which was

really difficult. And we got a Special Ed teacher to work with us, which was great. But, we didn't have the diversity of student population. And that really affected our program too, which I think was too bad. (Barb, MV)

Sometimes the selection process was described as a competition between academies as teachers tried to attract or recruit preferred students to their academies.

We're still [Mountain View] High School. We're still all the [Cougars]. But, we're one of seven small schools trying to make it better for the kids that go to school here. Well, some people never really understood that concept. All of a sudden there became some competition. You know that, "My school is better than your school" or "We want these kids to come to this school." And when the competition piece came up, that was back to the—when I said people like to feel safe, comfortable—when that piece came in, people started doing weird things. It was weird for people, saying, "Wait, this isn't so safe anymore; this isn't so comfortable." All of a sudden, people are signing up for schools based on what team I'm on. (Tom, MV)

For students and staff alike, joining an academy was described as joining a team, picking sides. This reinforced the feeling of competition between academies.

The naming of an academy could also be a means of recruiting the right number or type of students. Sometimes students knew little more about an academy than its name. The name of one academy at Jefferson High was being changed next year in order to attract more and better students. "The Humanities & Arts, which is changing their name, is smaller and they are trying—they're changing their name in order to

increase enrollment. They're changing their name to Global Leadership & Economics. They're infringing on Business & Industry [laughs] (Spencer, TJ). It was interesting to hear teachers at small schools talk about competing in order to become larger.

I think the problem that we had is that when you hear the term, "Humanities & Arts" people focus on the word, "Arts" and they immediately assume that this is the academy for people who want to be artists. And so parents thought that if you want your kid to go to college, then they shouldn't be in the H&A Academy, they should be in the Math & Science Academy, or Business & Industry Academy, or the College Preparatory Academy. And we're not changing the identity of the academy. Our classes are still very much humanity-focused and we've got some amazing art classes for those students who do want to be artists. But by saying, "School of Global Leadership & Economics" I think it's more for the, it's all red tape, and politics, and how to make sure we have kids coming to our academy, and how do we get those kids who are interested in the world to come. And the economics is there for the, "Let's make it sound hard." It's all politics and it's the one part of education that I don't like. But, then again, wherever you go, there's politics. (Stephanie, TJ)

The politics of this situation involved a competition for students who would do well and make teachers' jobs easier. "We have to figure out a better way of recruiting students that want to be here, that want to be involved" (Jason, TJ). Without this desire from the beginning, teachers feared that students would be unmotivated and even

disruptive. “I think there needs to be a better system of how we figure out who gets into the academy, what’s going on with that, what kind of set up that works” (Jason, TJ). This might involve marketing or product development.

One way that academies differentiated themselves and attracted students was through the elective courses they offered. At Mountain View, students were given priority when signing up for electives offered within their home academy. At Jefferson, students were generally not allowed to take electives outside of their academy at all; band and choir were the only exceptions. These electives, then, became the primary recruitment tool as academies competed with one another. For teachers of these elective courses, the competition could be quite personal. Their job satisfaction, if not their employment, was dependent on student enrollment in the courses they taught.

The other thing though that’s different is that there still is a competition among elective teachers to get kids interested in their particular school. . . . In Career and Tech, there’s twelve other teachers like me that are trying to have kids in their class. . . . If you don’t have those classes, then you are teaching that section of senior English that nobody wants, or one of those areas. So, there is still a little bit of competition amongst elective teachers for students. (Tom, MV)

Elective teachers, in particular, described competition for students as potentially affecting their position at the school.

This process of recruitment could create a game of winners and losers. Teachers expressed this in terms of getting the best students and attracting those who best fit with the academy’s mission. For instance, two teachers from the new College Prep Academy

at Jefferson spoke of difficulties in attracting students who fit well with the academy's mission.

I think that one thing that is difficult is we do have some students that have chosen to be here and we have some students whose parents chose for them to be here, and we have some students who really don't want to be here at all. And so, that presents a whole set of problems which is, you know if we have this idea of college preparedness and we have some students that have never even thought of going to college. That's not really what, a forethought in their mind, it kind of raises some issues of how to motivate those students, how to reach those students when the mission is one thing, but the students are not really buying into it. (Jason, TJ)

I don't think the students that we have, necessarily are fitting the mold of what we're looking for. We're not able to pick and choose. We haven't been or it hasn't been easy to do that. So, that's where the problem lies. There are students in this academy who have no interest in being here, no interest in going to college, don't even have basic skills, so they're just not the kids that have the potential. Some of them don't have the potential to go to college, a four-year college. So, that's where I think there is a problem. And there needs to be a better way to choose or get the right students to be here, for the theory of what we want to do with them. (Emma, TJ)

Most of the traditionally college-bound students at Jefferson were enrolled in the Math & Science Academy. That didn't leave as many of these "desirable" students for the

other academies. Ironically, parents and students had discovered or decided that the College Prep Academy was not the place to be for those wanting to prepare for college.

As the academies continued developing their own cultures, they attracted and sought to enroll students who fit in with the goals of that academy. Many teachers spoke of the importance of getting the right kind of students. Because students had a choice of which academy they wished to join, teachers hoped that more of certain types of students would choose their academy and so help to build a particular kind of culture within that academy. Teachers spoke of this leading to competition with other academies for the more academically successful and behaviorally compliant students.

Opinions About the Reform

A major difference between these two schools in regards to how teachers have responded to the academy structure rested in the fact that one school, Mountain View, was restructured and the other school, Jefferson, was a start-up. Many of the teachers included in this study from Mountain View had been working there for quite some time prior to the school breaking into academies. They had established ways of working with one another within departments and even team teaching. Five years ago they had been asked to change all that. Given this background, teachers at Mountain View had a clear means to compare before and after. They also had a perspective on how the decisions were made that led to the restructuring.

There was this big design team that kind of oversaw all of these lead-teacher teams. And they approved each one of the recommendations. And then the recommendations were taken—I can't remember the order, but—school board, community groups, teachers at a retreat in the summer, to approve that. And so,

we had a couple of summer retreats for the staff. The first one was really important because we didn't talk about *structure*; we talked about *us*. (Kyle, MV)

Some of the other teachers, however, did not feel as enthusiastic or as involved.

I don't recall there being really a discussion. There was certainly research teams and revision teams and that sort of thing. But what I recall is that there was sort of a small group of people who were either excited or approached about getting financing from the Gates Foundation. (Kevin, MV)

While the process leading to the decision to restructure was presented to the teachers as an open one, with leaders considering all options, some of the teachers expressed their skepticism. "We spent a year doing all this research for an outcome that was pretty darn obvious" (Catherine, MV).

Well, I think the whole staff was involved with it. I'm not sure they had much of a choice with that. [laughs] It was pretty much, "This is what we're doing and climb on board." And so, we were, you know, and I embraced it not knowing everything about it. (Don, MV)

I don't know if others would characterize it that way, but I think that if you're, if you as a district are applying for the funds from the Gates Foundation with the premise that you're going to go to smaller learning communities as part of the grant proposal, it steers you in a certain direction. (Kevin, MV)

Both of these schools were initially aided by grants that helped pay for research and planning time for teachers and other staff. This extra funding was now gone and, among other things, teachers no longer had release time for extra meetings and collaboration. This has left some teachers feeling like they have been set on a course and left to drift.

When we originally had Gates funding there was a lot of cash that was thrown around to pay people to be on committees and meetings and things *did* happen more quickly. And in my view, the Gates Foundation sort of cut and ran on us. (Kevin, MV)

More than half of the staff at Mountain View who had signed the original compact was no longer working at the school. Some of this turnover was attributed to the reform. Some of the most dissatisfied teachers had left. There have also been some difficulties dealing with parents. It's been hard for some of them to accept changes that seemed foreign to them. Many in the community have also felt that they were not properly informed or consulted.

If we were to do it again I would, I'm not sure I would want to do it the way that we did it. I think that the community was not really brought into the mix or the decision to do this and I think that the repercussions of that have been pretty long lasting. (Don, MV)

Many teachers were not necessarily against the restructured design, but have felt frustrated about how it has been put into practice.

I think that the mode has kind of been survival. It's like we jumped into the stream, we didn't have—and maybe we couldn't, I'm not really trying to place blame here. I just don't think we had a realistic idea of what the change process was going to entail. (Kevin, MV)

Given their experience living and working with the new structure, if they had the chance to do things over, they would want things done differently.

We spent hundreds of hours in meetings and stuff . . . we saw it as this was kind of a beginning place and that we would separate more as the years went by . . . but it hasn't worked like that. If you're going to make the move, if you're really going to small schools, make the break, make it bloody, get it done, and go for it, because that's what Adventure School did and they have managed to survive out there. (Lois, MV)

Some felt that parts of the plan have worked.

I wasn't on the design team, but I was on—I can't remember the name of the committee—that was looking at the idea of small schools. And I was very much in favor of it. Then the focus that I had once we started researching was on job-embedded staff development. That was my group's focus. And then we presented our findings. And *that* particular piece of it has . . . happened. But, again, the difficulty is that if you really want many of the benefits of a small school, then you need to contain those students in that small school, and that's very hard to do. (Barb, MV)

As a start-up school, Thomas Jefferson High School had no history of being a traditional comprehensive high school. Still, the teachers at Jefferson have also seen the reform process played out at their school. They have heard and read about small schools and some had even taught at other small schools before joining the Jefferson staff.

The Medical Magnet School was a true *small* school, with 200 students and ten teachers and then with the administrator and counselors, we had to take care of everything that they needed to take care of for high school. And while they all choiced in, for many kids going to their, going back to their home schools is not an option. Students were there, not only by their own choice, but parents wanting them to be there to get out of Krenshaw or whatever high school they *would* have been going to of, you know 2,500 students and some very difficult situations. *Here*, we're more that twice that. I think we're closer to 500 students and more than twice as many faculty members, just in my academy. We have, all told in this school some 110-120 staff members. *There*, if you saw somebody on campus, you knew immediately if they belonged there or not. *Here*, there are teachers working in different academies for two or three years that I've never met, because we do not get together as an entire school faculty to see each other and meet. Our academy, with 450 to 500 students and mid-twenties in the number of teachers, I believe, it still has the feeling of a large comprehensive school. . . . *There* . . . flexibility was a hallmark and something that we were told that we absolutely needed. Sometimes, for example, we would be told we were having an all school assembly in fifteen minutes [laughs] and we'd have the all

school assembly for whatever reason that we'd have these. Those would come up and we'd have to be very flexible. Or, if a teacher ran their class over or if they needed more time, then we were flexible with our program. Here, we can't do that nearly as much because of the bell schedule and keeping things going. (Daniel, TJ)

Several of the teachers voiced the opinion that their academies were not living up to their expectations of what a small school should be. "I don't think of it as small schools. I think of it as a comprehensive high school with academies" (Spencer, TJ). People are most familiar with traditional comprehensive high schools; there is a constant pull in that direction.

I feel there is a pressure to become a comprehensive high school, because that would be easier. And then there's the pressure of momentum to remain in a small schools model. . . . Arguably, we're not really a small school. We want to be, . . . so we set up these three academies, with their specialization and then began plans for what each academy was going to do. And they were going to be autonomous academies. That did not happen. (Marcus, TJ)

Many obstacles seemed to be getting in the way of full realization of the original plan. Scheduling and staffing limitations as well as conflicting ideals have put pressure on both schools to take on more characteristics of a comprehensive high school.

For one, there are too many students. It's too big. And that has interfered with elements of the original design and principles that were involved in this school.

And also in looking at things that maybe hadn't been considered then but would be helpful, and so that's one thing, that it's just bigger than where I want to be. And the leadership, that it's just, I mean I think that I'm lucky to have a principal, an academy principal who is supportive of me personally and professionally, but is not a leader in terms of really envisioning of what school could be and taking risks to do what is or could be possible, but isn't the way things are right now. (Rachel, TJ)

There are risks involved in stating clearly what you're going to do and what you're not going to do. It's not easy to please everyone.

But you need to know going into it what the limitations are with the small school. And that is that you are not going to be able to offer everything that everybody, and you need to make very clear decisions as to what you're going to do and what you're not going to do, and then set your expectations accordingly. . . . You just need to know what it is that you're doing away with in order to get small. (Daniel, TJ)

We also did some community nights where we went and spoke with the community. And I remember I had to deal with some very, I had a lot of parents who were very upset that their kids were going to go to a high school that wasn't like their high school, and that was wrong. What that taught me was that Americans expect cultural tradition of American high school as it was in the 1960s and '70s. That's what people expect. It's a right. It's an American tradition. And what we were doing was we were changing it. We were changing

it. How *dare* we change it? Some of our staff also felt this way. So this was one of the things that we had to work out. (Marcus, TJ)

One of the teachers at Jefferson brought up another political reality. Federal and state legislation is putting pressure on schools to focus on particular educational products: test scores. This has raised the anxiety level of many school leaders who don't want to take too many risks for fear that students' test scores may falter, even in the short run, as new school practices are tried out.

A good part of the summer was on helping gear everyone up to be able to teach in a 90 minute period and—that was a big thing, and to do certain teaching practices like Socratic seminars and there was, there seem to be some effort to remain true to the design of the school, the principles that were in that design. But then it, unfortunately, the timing was very unfortunate because it was the same, it coincided with the announcement of the details of the No Child Left Behind legislation and so people, besides the administrators, reacted very strongly to that, they seemed to be very scared and the focus shifted to making sure we were going to get all of those boxes on the grid filled in with the right numbers to comply with the law. And my impression is that the focus, ever since we opened has really been on testing and . . . the state test, and very little—and anything that's related to that. So, anything that can kind of help teachers to conform to a sort of foolproof system for making sure that the school and the district are protected, and I guess individual teachers I suppose, are protected from any accusation that we are not doing everything that we can to prepare students for those tests. (Rachel, TJ)

The high-stakes tests mandated by the No Child Left Behind legislation have overshadowed the goals of Small School Reform. This has led some of these teachers to feel that they and other school leaders must be cautious and even defensive about how they go about their work.

Teachers' opinions about the reform process varied. For the most part they were supportive of the goals for small schools, but had differing opinions concerning the implementation of the policies. Some felt that they had been informed and involved in the decision making while others felt that the process had been predetermined and undemocratic. As policies continued to be reformed and enacted, some teachers were optimistic and others skeptical about the ongoing process.

Parental Engagement

Teachers were asked to describe what sort of interactions they have had with parents. In their responses, parent communication usually took two forms: occasional contacts and scheduled conferences. Teachers and parents might contact each other by phone or email and parents at both schools had access to student progress via online software. Both schools held conferences organized according to students' advisory assignment. One school experienced high attendance at these student-led conferences (80%+). The other had fewer parents attending (20-30%) with upperclassmen involvement even lower.

Computer technology has influenced parent-teacher communication making it easier for each to contact the other. Email and internet-based programs allow parents to contact teachers and to access their child's progress. At these schools, most of the communications were about day-to-day issues concerning attendance and progress. "I

would say the typical interaction I have with a parent is an email that asks me why an assignment is missing or something like that” (Kevin, MV). Jennifer has had a similar experience. “My interaction with parents is mostly with parents who have access to the Internet” (Jennifer, TJ).

Parents email me back and forth all the time, or call me and say, “I checked so-and-so’s grade and what does this mean?” or “Why does he have a zero here?” and usually I say, “Well, he doesn’t have a zero, I just haven’t entered in those grades yet” or whatever. (Lois, MV)

The familiarity that many parents had with the Internet added to the occasions they might have to interact with teachers. The ease of these contacts could help to establish some relationship. “The parents know that they can call on us and they call or they come in and so there is a starting to get to know you and meet them at social events and things and it’s very nice” (Emma, TJ).

Nearly all of my parents have email access and so can easily get in touch with me. So I send home a weekly newsletter that says what we did in class, you know, “Grades will go out this day.” I try and send home progress reports every six weeks. (Stephanie, TJ)

These types of easy and frequent communication made teachers feel that they were readily accessible to parents.

There were also more formal occasions for parents and teachers to communicate. Both schools regularly held parent/student conferences based on the student’s advisory. These were typically scheduled for the late fall and again in the spring. At these conferences students were often responsible for showing to their

parents the work they had done. The advisory teacher could also go over grades and attendance as well as discuss up-coming concerns such as course planning and college admissions.

The staff at Mountain View worked hard to encourage participation in the student-led conferences. “Our one-on-one connection with kids and knowing their parents and all of that is tremendously improved” (Lois, MV).

We get kids’ first quarter grades, first quarter attendance totals, so we can talk about all of those things. It’s a thirty-minute meeting. And we have specific time set up to do that during the day and during the night. And so, staff were held accountable for 80% attendance, so you had to—you either did a live one-on-one or there’s a process that we went through to do a phone conversation with the parent. . . . That’s been a plus over the last three years. (Tom, MV)

We’re doing so much better. I think we’re doing better than almost any high school I can imagine. We have almost all of our parents come in for a meeting with their kid’s [advisory] teacher. And the parents here are working really hard. I honestly believe that most parents are doing *the* very best that they can.

(Catherine, MV)

One incentive that was used was granting credit to those who attended.

Because they’re attached to [Advisory] credit, some parents, who might not otherwise come *will* come. We don’t get everyone, but—but I like those because the student explains his or her grades, explains his or her attendance, you know, if there are discipline issues, etc. And I really like it because the kid is in charge,

which I think is really good for them, you know, to be in charge, to see that they can run a small meeting, but also to be accountable for not only when they're doing poorly, but also when they're doing well to kind of remind themselves of what they do. So, I like that a lot. And having a face to face with the parent is really nice. I think we get more cooperation from parents when they come in and meet us personally and we're kind of on the same team and all that sort of stuff. So I really like that. (Barb, MV)

Thomas Jefferson has had a tougher time getting parents to come in for these conferences. "Parents don't seem as involved or as enthusiastic about them. They don't really want to do them. It's hard to get the parents to come in and actually do them" (Spencer, TJ). This could be particularly true for parents of older students. "I have not found a grand percentage of pupils showing up. I think maybe 30% of the parents" (Daniel, TJ). This was sometimes discouraging for teachers and students who had put effort into preparing for these meetings. "Actually, parents have not been what I would have liked them to be. It's been low, very, very, very low" (Marcus, TJ). This was attributed to different factors. "You know, I think by the time students are in high school, parents don't really come to those things much anymore" (Jason, TJ). Some parents were not used to or comfortable with the student-led aspect of these conferences.

Occasionally, I mean there are some parents who object to the student-led conferences. If anything, they want a traditional teacher-led, parent-teacher conference where they sit down and I tell them what their student's grades are

what their student is doing wrong and what they can do to do things better, and things like that. And/or parents who just don't want anything. (Rachel, TJ)

Some communications between parents and teachers were more sporadic, occurring when one or the other had some particular concern to share. These sorts of contacts were not always pleasant. When the reason for the phone call was a behavior issue or poor attendance or performance, it could be an awkward communication. It could be as uncomfortable for the teacher as it was unwelcome by the parent. Some teachers hesitated to make contact.

That first contact when you don't know if you're going to get yelled at or know what's going to happen. You call and you get swore at. . . . I'm very thin skinned with that, so it's like a lot of times I live with something like behavior in class or I'll try to solve it a different way because I don't like, I'm scared.

(Catherine, MV)

Some teachers felt that by the time students got to high school they were old enough to be dealt with directly, they were responsible for their own behavior. "I think that...students in high school developmentally are trying to establish their own identity, they're trying to become an adult, so they want to distance themselves from mom and dad involving themselves to some degree" (Kevin, MV). Some teachers, therefore, decided not to contact parents about what they felt were discipline issues best resolved directly.

If I have to call on the parents, yeah, things will probably get solved, but unfortunately that's now set up kind of a block or barrier between me and the students, because they feel kind of a betrayal there. So, I avoid doing that as much as I can. (Steve, MV)

Beyond the particular concerns of students' progress in the classroom and advisories, parent involvement was also described in response to school-wide issues. Some teachers spoke about parents' feelings and concerns about the school's structure and the reform process. Some of these had to do with the initial decision to restructure at Mountain View and the planning process that was undertaken.

I think that there is and continues to be a segment of the population that really believes that small schools is *not* the way to go. And that, and that what existed here before *did* work. It worked for them and it worked for their kids and so why change something that works? (Don, MV)

And I don't think there was adequate—during the process of going to small schools there was adequate opportunity for people to give input. But I think that, like most things, the people who give input are not necessarily representative of the community. They are the typically wealthier, better educated than average folks who are on the school board and they're on the Rotary and the typical community organizations. (Kevin, MV)

Kevin felt that those opposed to the reform had not been as vocal as its advocates during the planning stage.

Part of what made the experience for the Mountain View community complex was that this school had been in existence for decades and many parents in the area had gone there themselves. Now, what they had grown up with was being changed.

I think we've had a lot of backlash in the community because their comfort level is different from where we are. Even though they haven't been in high school for twenty years or fifteen years, or however long it's been, they're all experts. It's the typical thing. Everybody has gone through their schooling and they've been in school for however long and they think it's no different in this situation in that people have this feeling of expertise, when really they don't. But they feel that in their gut. (Kevin, MV)

Many, many people who go to school here, students who go to school here, their parents went to school here, and they want them to have the same experience as they did. So, they don't want things to get too weird up here. They were pretty afraid that small schools were weird. That they weren't still going to have high school. (Lois, MV)

For those in the Mountain View community, this is the only public high school in the district. That severely limits the choices available for the parents and their children. Beyond hearing of these concerns directly or indirectly from parents, the teachers in this study did not describe parents actively challenging or supporting the school's structure or governance. As the years have passed, teachers described that the school structure has appeared more traditional and less threatening to parents and to the

community. Potentially contentious choices, such as not allowing student crossover or altering the schedule, had been avoided at Mountain View. For most students, their experience at Mountain View was not much different from that of their parents. There was still one high school football team with cheerleaders and a marching band. Teachers, however, felt that the reform had been watered-down in a way to made it easier for the community to swallow.

The most contentious issue related to Jefferson High School's design was the plan for the four-period day. In such a schedule classes are 90-minutes long and courses typically last for only one semester. Parents were concerned that courses such as band, foreign languages, and math would be best taught over a full year. These arguments almost led to giving up the idea of the block schedule. An agreeable compromise was reached and the 90-minute classes were instituted along with a yearlong option for some courses.

Both of these schools continued to face parents' concerns about their children's education. For these teachers, the biggest worries revolved around students' progress and the involvement of parents in conferences. One school has enjoyed high turnout, while the other struggled with how to bring more parents into the school.

Prior Experience

One of the interesting things that came out of hearing these teachers' stories was to hear about their varied experiences. They've come from many different places. Many of the teachers spoke about their prior experiences as a way of telling why they came to their current school and also to explain how they felt things were going. Where they've been has helped to shape their views of where they are now.

Some of these teachers spoke of powerful experiences at other schools before coming to either Mountain View or Thomas Jefferson.

[Sometime during] my second or third year of teaching at S_____ Jr. High several of us kind of decided that, you know, wow, we really work well together, we were an interdisciplinary team and then when the district opened up a new junior high school, we applied to be on the advance team. So, we got to help design the school, set up everything from student handbook, discipline, schedule, parent group. You know all that kind of stuff that makes a school a community. You know, curriculum, classroom supplies, furniture. . . . And then, out of that the group of people that kind of started seeing this . . . the synergy of having kind of an integrated curriculum and the power of the ropes course, the philosophy for the ropes course, Outward Bound, Project Venture, they're all kind of connected as a, they call it a full value contract, to value everybody, work towards goals, personal and group goals, protect emotional safety, physical safety, no derogatory comments or put-downs of yourself or others, and to enjoy what you're doing. You know, it's kind of hard to explain, kind of a, like Gandhi's quote, "Do it with joy or not at all." Once you're there, you might as well experience joy. . . . So, you saw it in school rules, classroom rules, we took all the kids out on the ropes course. It became part of—especially when the first couple years when we were really small—it became part of the culture. You know, and you could see the difference. (Catherine, MV)

For Catherine, this prior experience influenced her expectations and her level of satisfaction at the high school. She often spoke of conditions at Mountain View in comparison to what she had experienced before.

Jennifer was another teacher who had come to the high school from a junior high. She felt that working with the younger age group there taught her to focus more on relationships than on subject matter.

I found that when I was observing at middle schools that most of the, it was more about – instead of teaching about a curriculum, you’re trying to engage them and help them to self-discover, and the only way to do that was by building a relationship with them. (Jennifer, TJ)

Jennifer had also worked at a Native American school.

I was there for three years. During that time I got to watch their new school open. They got a new facility. It was *really* an exciting time. I got to learn a lot about what the priorities of the elders were as they were creating this new school, and having some sacred ground and honoring the place where they were building. (Jennifer, TJ)

This gave her experience, not only at a school with a different culture from her current high school, but also with opening up a new school building and all that that could mean.

Some hoped to be able to repeat the experiences that they had had elsewhere. Jennifer, for instance, came to Jefferson along with some of her junior high colleagues.

There are some people here, in the building who were at L. too. And when we came here, we decided that we were going to try to keep some of that connection

going. And they're still some of my best friends in the building, because we had that time invested with each other. (Jennifer, TJ)

Daniel had worked at a small magnet school in southern California that was connected to a local medical school.

It was an intimate setting with 200 students and ten teachers. There were two English teachers, two math teachers, one history teacher, three science teachers, because of the bent of it, and then we had one foreign language teacher who taught Spanish. And so, you really got to know the kids well in their three years there. They either had the other English teacher or me as they moved through and you learned about the students and you were completely responsible, the ten of us, for all of their education. (Daniel, TJ)

This gave him a sense of what it could be like to work with a small group of teachers in a school with a particular career interest theme. That experience gave him reason to be attracted to the academy structure at Jefferson and also influenced his satisfaction with what he has experienced there since joining the staff.

Some teachers had experiences that had previously turned them off from teaching and saw coming to a new school as a chance to start over.

I was getting ready to quit. I thought teaching was the wrong career for me. I had made a mistake and I should have listened to my mentors in college who told me I was wasting my time. This was about four years into teaching junior high. I was like, "Yes, I had clearly made a mistake. This was the wrong choice. They were right; you were wrong. And your holding to your principles was the

wrong thing to do.” This was the point where I was at. I was a very low point in my career. (Marcus, TJ)

Now he felt like he was giving it a second chance. This was his opportunity to teach in a way that he felt was meaningful.

Another teacher who felt that she was getting a new start was Emma. She had moved to the area from the east coast and was excited by the prospect of having a different experience.

I’ve always taught in very large schools, huge graduating classes. You just got lost in the numbers. Kids got lost in the numbers; teachers got lost in the numbers. This is a very unique situation. I feel very honored to be here and be able to work in this situation. (Emma, TJ)

Don spoke about his first teaching experience, more than twenty years ago. At that point he had decided to quit teaching and was not sure if he would go back to it.

I believe, I think that students learn from each other. I think she [the principal] came from a very old-school style of teaching where the kids sit in rows and are quiet and teacher lectures and students listen and take notes and regurgitate what they’re given. And I, I based education more on, I guess seeking information and trying to assimilate and groups interacting with each other. The classroom is not necessarily a quiet place at times. There is discussion and things going on in the classroom and she had a hard time handling that. And, and so it came down to either her way or my way and she was the boss and I wasn’t. So it was like,

“You’re here and I guess I won’t be.” So, that’s basically how it went. (Don, MV)

Don decided to come back to teaching some twelve years ago and now the circumstances have changed with the school’s restructuring. He described feelings about teaching and learning that seemed to fit quite well with his current position teaching in Discovery, which fostered an experiential, project-oriented approach to learning.

Another teacher in the Discovery School explained how some of his experiences had influenced how he wanted to teach.

As a geologist, that, experiential education is *deeply* engrained in me, because I used to teach field camp. I used to teach these six-week geologic mapping courses for seniors, and they just did it, they had all this book learning and they didn’t know *anything* about actually how to *be* a geologist. And so I was going, “Why are they waiting until their senior year to take this sort of experience?” Because my own experience as a geology undergrad, I petitioned to take it early and I took it as a sophomore and it changed my life. I *knew* that that was what I wanted to do. I got it, and so when I took the classes later, I had this contextualization of everything. And I think it put me way ahead of people. And that shaped my whole philosophy of education. (Kyle, MV)

With the autonomy available at the satellite school, Kyle had been able to help create a school that emphasized hands-on learning and projects.

For Rachel, her experiences with school reform began even before she became a teacher.

While I was in graduate school I worked at the Coalition of Essential Schools and I was there for three years. . . . I learned a lot about the principles of the coalition and also school design that was different from traditional high school. And, so then, at [Adams Jr. High], I did a lot of work. [Adams] was a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools and we did a lot of work there, restructuring work, and classroom-based teaching and strategies. That was along those lines. And so I was looking to continue with those things. And although [Jefferson] was not in any overt or formal sense, or at all associated with the Coalition of Essential Schools, the people on the design team had clearly been influenced by those ideas. So, there was that natural connection for me. (Rachel, TJ)

Several teachers at Jefferson brought up the point that many teachers had come in with experience at junior highs. The opening of Jefferson coincided with the district's shift from 7-9 junior highs to 6-8 middle schools. The first year all but a few of the students were freshmen and sophomores, both groups just out of junior high. Many of their teachers moved up with them. Both Marcus and Daniel supposed that these junior high experiences had influenced how teachers at Jefferson had envisioned their roles.

I'm going to argue the small school piece is not what I saw it was going to be. For example, 400 students per academy, that was one of the things that we were going to make solid. 400 students per academy, and those students would have the same teachers again, and again, and again, and again. Which meant that we wanted to move our teachers away from being specialists to being generalists.

That was actually an issue that really blew up in a way that we didn't think.

But then again, you've got to remember, all of us who were on the core planning team were really K-8 teachers. (Marcus, TJ)

Marcus, and other teachers too, remarked that junior high teachers were different.

Daniel and Jennifer had mentioned that those who had come to the school from junior highs had a more student-centered approach to learning and were more inclined to integrate subject matter.

All of the teachers in this study have had school experiences of one kind or another leading up to this year. For some, it seemed that being at this school was like a step forward; other felt that they were going backwards. All of these experiences came together to give meaning to these teachers about where these schools may be going next.

Teacher Identity

The central question of this study concerns teacher identity amidst school reform. During the interviews participants were asked a number of questions relating to how they viewed themselves as teachers. They spoke of how they became teachers, what kind of teacher they were, and what goals or hopes they had for the future. The teachers interviewed described themselves in many ways.

A common way they described themselves was in relation to their students. Several teachers spoke of how they liked to actively involve students. "I describe myself as a teacher who's always . . . trying to meet the needs of the students, who believes in kids being actively engaged, involved with their hands and with their minds" (Tom, MV). "I'm a huge fan of students being in control and learning who they are—I

see myself, in the future being less of a control freak and being more of, like a life-guide for my kids” (Stephanie, TJ). Sometimes this could take the form of being more or less strict in the classroom. Emma described herself as being “kind of laid back and kind of easy-going and students take advantage of that at times” (Emma, TJ).

I think I’m pretty informal, I guess I would say. I’m kind of an informal guy. I think I’m pretty laid back, maybe a little bit more than I need to be. But I think I’m engaging with the students and I think that’s where I try to bring it back. I’m really big on building personal relationships with the students. (Jason, TJ)

I think I’m reasonably demanding because I want them to do the best they can do. I hope I’m fair; that’s something I’ve always worked at is treating kids fairly. I think I have a pretty good sense of humor. Most of all, I hope that I can challenge them. I hope they see my class as challenging enough to make them think. (Lois, MV)

I’m kind of serious. Serious about learning and about helping students use their minds well, and I’m definitely sort of intellectual and like to do intellectual things. I like to have students do intellectual things in the classroom. (Rachel, TJ)

I wanted to be a kind of teacher like the ones I’ve had where they’re very interactive with the students. They were very personable, it was a fun class; it

was a fun learning environment and that helped kids to be hooked on.

(Steve, MV)

I think I'm very interested in trying to ignite students' interests as a way to get them to be powerful learners, life-long learners. So, rather than dispensing information, I really try to move to the kind of guide-on-the-side type of method. (Kyle, MV)

Some spoke in terms of strengths or weaknesses. "I think that my communication with the students, I'm always sincere and I'm up front. I'm there for the students to try and enhance their learning. I wish I could say that I'm organized" (Don, MV).

I tend to be able to build relationships with kids regardless of whether they're like me as a student or not. And so I think that they feel, I think that most, I know there are some students who don't feel sort of connected or engaged, but most of them seem to feel comfortable with me and I'd say, like me even if they don't like the class, don't like the subject or the work. (Rachel, TJ)

One way that some teachers described their roles was in terms of the long-range goals they held for students. Some of these goals related to specific subjects. "They're not afraid to walk into my math class. They know that they might have fun and they might laugh and if they have any problems, they know they can talk to me during or after the class" (Emma, TJ). Many teachers strove to make lessons in their classroom relevant. "That's one thing that I do pride myself on is being able to take the math and make it meaningful" (Don, MV). Some goals were more general, dealing with skills that

reached across subject boundaries. “My passion is reading. That really is my passion. And I think that it helps with *so* many things: attention span, higher-level thinking skills, you know, so many things. Just by sitting and reading” (Barb, MV). Some of the goals for their teaching went beyond subject matter all together. They spoke of teaching their subjects as a means of teaching something deeper, something more personal.

One of the things about theatre that I enjoy is that it deals with the affective and with our emotions and we are more than just a test score on English or math or whatever it is. And treating people well is an important thing that people have to learn how to do. (Daniel, TJ)

And I have learned over the years of teaching that my job is not to teach English, that’s a piece of my job, is to be sure that my students leave with the skills to be successful with communication: reading, writing that will help them as adults – but my job is really to figure out what are the needs of this particular child to move them forward with their goals. (Jennifer, TJ)

I think my primary interest in going into teaching and my continuing interest in staying in teaching has to do with the students. I really think for me, out of student relationships come other things, the teaching of English comes. I think we teach a lot of things in addition to their subjects, but for me, helping students make progress is really what I’m interested in. And sometimes, it’s not progress in the subject. (Barb, MV)

I'm the kind of person who's constantly looking for ways to make improvements to what I do. So, I guess I'm more determined than average with that. I tend to be a little bit obsessive about some of those things. (Kevin, MV)

[Teaching is] "part of my nature" (Spencer, TJ).

What kind of teacher are you? "Insane. I am the crazy, weird, kooky teacher, the young—I just turned twenty-five." (Stephanie, TJ)

As they spoke of themselves as teachers, many of their comments had to do with the goals they held for their teaching, how they wanted things to be in their classroom.

Everybody has to succeed and get something out of it. Otherwise, it's meaningless. In too many cases, that's what kids go out with. They say, "You know, that class was a waste of my time." And unfortunately, in quite a few places, they're correct. (Steve, MV)

Kyle related classroom activities to the hands-on experience of sports.

You know, when I'm coaching soccer, I don't talk about corner kicks for twenty minutes. I talk about them for thirty seconds and then I have them practice corner kicks. And then, at first I'll be interrupting them a lot and as they get better at it, I interrupt them less and less until finally, it's just play. And that's what I'll say in class actually. I'll give them instructions and then I'll go, "Play."

(Kyle, MV)

Kevin went into great detail describing how he organized a typical lesson plan and how he went about planning a course. “I’m going to set up that big picture frame and then I’m going to figure out what I need to do within that playing field to get the students from where they are to where they need to be” (Kevin, MV). Another teacher described his approach more broadly.

I like to go into depth instead of breadth. I’m a very, I describe myself as more of a relationship and personalization guy as opposed to—I’m not super structured. You probably saw that as you observed. I’m very reactive to my students as far as their needs. (Spencer, TJ)

I asked teachers to talk about any changes they might have noticed about themselves since working at their current school. Some described changes that have taken place over the years, not just recently, but how they had grown and what they had learned about themselves and about teaching over the course of their whole career.

Patience and just—yeah, when I started out I was much more sarcastic and verbal, verbal wit and stuff and that doesn’t always work well with the students. And so I try to cut that down to, I try not to be sarcastic with them, and try not to use that as a teaching tool . . . so much. (Daniel, TJ)

I think I’m probably less intense than I used to be when I was a younger teacher. I always thought I had to get through all of this stuff. You know, and get through chapter 42 by the end, and I think that I’ve come to realize that it’s what I give them, not how much I give them. (Tom, MV)

I love my job and I think I spent my first ten years living for other people's kids, and now I realize I have a responsibility to make sure that I'm home to help my kid with her homework and that *I* go into *my* kid's class and do the things that I know that help kids achieve. And so these last seven years I haven't, you know, it's been kind of different. (Catherine, MV)

Right now I'm learning to let go of that control and to trust the kids so, because you're always told you can't trust teenagers, but I'm slowly understanding that I actually can. They're not so bad. You just have to tell them what you want. (Stephanie, TJ)

For some the structure of their schools was seen as having an influence on how they went about the job. Most commonly this had to do with the size of the academies. "In [Exploration], that was much easier in that school because I had fewer students and I got to know them" (Barb, MV). The size was also mentioned in relation to a teacher feeling at ease.

Being in a small academy is just better for my personality. It lets me feel comfortable, and I know if I didn't feel comfortable, I wouldn't want to go to work, regardless of how great the kids are, if I felt that I was constantly either alone or over-scrutinized. But this is enough that you don't feel alone, but you're not constantly being watched either. (Stephanie, TJ)

Stephanie explained that the school was small enough that she felt needed and powerful, yet the school was large enough that she did not feel solely responsible for all students or “in the spotlight.”

Some teachers described feeling that their teaching had changed as a result of the new arrangement and also of the planning process that took place leading up to the reform.

The first [meeting] was really important because we didn't talk about *structure*, we talked about *us*; we talked about how we treat each other, and sort of team-type stuff and we made this thing we called the *Compact*, that we agreed how to treat each other. . . . For me, it transformed what I do. You know, I used to fall into the trap of, you know, you can have sort of a toxic culture where people talk about other people. And I sort of fell into that sometimes. I'm not really a gossipy person, but you know. And I really took that to heart and I talk *to* other people instead of about them. It's kind of changed the way I think about things, and so, yeah, I took it to heart. (Kyle, MV)

Tom also spoke in terms of change, a reaction that at the same time said something about who he was before and continued to be.

Have you noticed any change for yourself in these last four or five years?

Yeah, change in the sense that—I think that—I know what's possible. I know—I've seen how good it can be. And so the change would be, there's still a frustration that says that, “We're still okay, but it's not as good as it could be.” I want, I'm one of these people that, you know, probably a Type-A personality that wants things perfect all of the time. You know, and I want things to get

better and better and better. So, I'm constantly looking for improvement and so the—for me the change has been that, the understanding that we need to change a little bit more. You know, and continue to grow and get better. (Tom, MV)

As the years went by, these teachers, like others, were concerned about improving their skills, developing courses, and increasing their knowledge in order to develop personally and professionally.

An interesting lesson took place during an observation. As students were working on a project in his computer programming class, a handful of students seemed to be respectfully taking charge. Don later discussed his feelings about what had happened.

So, we've got, it's really an interesting class. I'm not sure how you would label the dynamics. It's a collaborative, facilitated effort. . . . You have these kind of hot spots in my computer science class, there's like five out of 25 kids that are just like heads above everybody else, you know. They sit there, first of all, they're the teachers; I'm simply the facilitator. (Don, MV)

Don reflected on how this kind of thing was changing his role in the classroom. "It's a little scary to some extent because I don't feel like I'm in the driver's seat so much. . . . It's like the steering wheel keeps getting moved from person to person" (Don, MV). Working with these students provided Don an opportunity to rethink his approach to teaching. Perhaps, the project-oriented curriculum of the Discovery School made this more likely.

Some teachers felt that the school structures have had no impact on how they viewed their role and their work. “The reason I became a teacher is to be able to . . . see that [learning] come about with students. But I’ve been doing that since I got hired, and small schools really haven’t changed any of that (Steve, MV). Steve explained that he was teaching his courses the same way, relating to students and staff in the same way as he always had.

For some teachers, what they were called on to do as part of the academy structure and advisory just felt like more work, not necessarily different work. “The only difference was the advisory. And that was pretty shaky in terms of many people, including myself, felt like, ‘Gee, we were just given an additional prep’” (Don, MV). Teachers have been experiencing this aspect of reforms for years. The district or the building administration was asking them to do more work and take on more responsibilities.

Right now, I always say that we talk about your plate being full, Right now I feel that most teachers, our plates are buffet full, they’re completely—and they didn’t give us the nice Chinet plates, we have those thin cheapo paper plates and you didn’t even get to double up, you just got one. And you’re doing your best. You’ve got all the gravy, the thing, and it’s soaking through and you’re doing your best to keep it together, but they never take anything off your plate. They always just keep adding thing after thing . . . and nothing ever gets taken off. It just gets piled higher and higher. (Catherine, MV)

Overwhelming feelings such as these could lead to despair. Indeed, one of the teachers spoke of being in such a state and being on the verge of quitting just prior to transferring to the new high school.

After . . . four years, I no longer believed in public education. I saw it as just glorified babysitting, and it really wasn't even that important, because society didn't care. So, after four years of teaching I was really at a low point. I was like, "If society doesn't care, why am I wasting my life doing this? (Marcus, TJ)

Teachers often keep going in this challenging profession because they feel they are performing meaningful work. However, some of the compromises that teachers must make can be hard to reconcile with their ideals. "It's really hard to come to work every day and know that you're never going to get everything done. . . . But it is hard, knowing that you can't make a difference for everybody" (Catherine, MV). It is a powerful feeling to know you've made a difference in someone's life. Yet, there are always those whom you do not touch.

Some teachers spoke of how they were encouraged and reinforced in the work they were doing.

For some reason, they think I'm an awesome teacher. So I have a, I get a lot of attention. The head principal thinks very much of me and so does my other principal. And I think it's somewhat deserved. The students like me and the students feel like they're learning from me, and I've gotten that feedback. So, that's really the job satisfaction. So, if I can keep that going, I'm going to be a happy camper. (Spencer, TJ)

Marcus explained the importance of sincere recognition.

I find recognition is, it's very important to recognize teachers, but not in a sappy way. Like, "Here's a certificate" but respectful, equal recognition, such as asking someone to help with a project. Not always a pat on the back, but asking for respectful help. That's recognition for someone like me, not giving me an award, not giving me a certificate, not say, "Hey, you did a good job," but saying, "Hey, can you help me with this?" and it might be work that I don't ordinarily do. That's recognition. (Marcus, TJ)

During his time on the core planning team, Marcus felt that he received just that sort of recognition. He was waiting to see if school leaders would continue to ask teachers for their input and assistance.

Conclusion

Teachers' perspectives on these many issues were varied and complex. Their experiences and sentiments spanned a wide range. Within this limited sample, I did not find clear patterns showing differences across the dimensions of gender, age, years of teaching experience, or teachers' subject area. A study using more controlled sampling techniques and examining these variables could provide additional understanding of the issues explored in this study.

For these teachers, many events, problems, and circumstances past and present have affected how they went about their daily work at these two schools. They spoke of working with students and colleagues in these schools that have now been organized into smaller subunits. They spoke of how various aspects of small school reform have been manifested at their school and how the academy structure has affected their work.

Teachers also talked about themselves and their hopes and doubts concerning life with academies. In the following chapter I will discuss the various topics that I have described in this chapter, their meaning and implications.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

The teachers at these schools have been trying to make sense of what it means to be a teacher amidst changing school organizations. They have been called upon to take on new responsibilities and to be members of new groups within their schools. As they spoke with me about experiences, hopes, and fears their stories described tides and currents through which they have been navigating. In order to discuss these teachers' identities I must also examine the context in which they went about their daily work. While I will examine teachers' professional identity more directly later in this chapter, the topics below are not separate from it. One cannot talk about teachers' worries, values, roles, and responsibilities as if they are not connected to identity. The navigator is largely defined and understood by the sea through which he sails.

In this chapter I will summarize and discuss what the teachers in this study have said about the various topics raised in the interviews. While these teachers' experiences and perspectives varied somewhat, they provide a range of viewpoints on many topics that help to describe the life of teachers in these schools and the challenges they have faced in this reform environment.

Personalization

When the teachers in this study talked about personalization, they did so using two definitions. Personalization either meant individualized instruction where assignments and teaching methods might vary from one student to another in order to meet the particular needs and abilities of the students, or it was defined in terms of getting to know the students on an individual level, being aware of each student's

situation and progress, knowing something of their home life and interests outside of the one classroom.

For the most part, teachers said that the academy structure and the advisory classes had given them a greater opportunity to get to know students better. The small academies made it more likely that teachers would see students more than once in their classes. To the extent that academy classrooms were grouped near one another, teachers might also see the same students in the hallways and interact with them in such informal settings. In addition, teachers described the advisories as structures that allowed them to get to know students and, at times, their parents, in a personal way.

However, they almost uniformly explained that they did little individualized instruction. Outside of the Discovery School and the individual projects that were a part of its curriculum, the classroom experience of many teachers had changed little. Class sizes were at the same level as before (between 25-35) and the number of students seen each day was also unchanged (90-150). These numbers and the prevailing culture of uniform accountability precluded them from introducing any real differentiation of instruction and assessment. All students had to prepare for the same state tests and each course had to satisfy a list of district and state objectives. Those teaching AP courses felt additional external constraints on how they could approach classroom assignments and instruction.

The smallness of the academies and structures such as advisories might have made certain aspects of teachers' jobs easier (i.e., getting to know students). However, few talked about this affecting how they went about doing their jobs. They were still

doing the same job. Advisory was just one more class to prepare. Personalization might be seen as improving relationships, but it had largely not affected instructional practice.

Collaboration

When the participants in this study spoke about collaboration, they weren't always talking about the same things. As discussed by these teachers, collaboration could take several forms. It could mean working directly with one or more other teachers to plan and integrate curriculum or team teach, it could mean informally sharing ideas about content and methods, or it could also mean formally or informally discussing concerns about individual students.

Kyle, in the Discovery School, was the only teacher who was team-teaching in the current configuration. Two other teachers (Barb and Kevin) spoke of having done so before the school was restructured, but they were no longer collaborating in this way. Informal sharing was described as teachers visiting one another or meeting in the halls and at lunch. A few of the teachers at Jefferson, where teachers shared a common workspace with others in their academy, spoke of informally exchanging ideas with each other.

By and large, however, collaboration usually meant no more than talking about students of concern. Whether as part of scheduled meetings or casual conversations, teachers often spoke of sharing information about students they had in common. They saw this as an important way that they were able to keep students from "falling through the cracks." The academy structure and the advisory groups were seen as facilitating this form of collaboration.

Many teachers expressed frustration and disappointment concerning the lack of collaboration on a curricular level. Several factors were suggested that they felt related to their ability to work more closely with their peers. Some mentioned that the academies were still too large to facilitate coordinated instruction. Three of the academies at Jefferson, for instance, had well over 500 students and 25 teachers. Teaming efforts between English and social studies teachers, for instance, would require coordinating the work of a half dozen or more instructors. Since no two teachers could safely assume to share the same students, teachers felt it was not worth the effort.

One of the difficulties that were mentioned by these teachers involved the dispersal of the staff into the small schools and how that has made collaboration and communication among department peers more difficult. For instance, math, English, and social studies teachers were now physically separated throughout the campus in order to be closer to their small school peers. This has made it more difficult for teachers to informally visit with subject area peers. More effort was required to communicate. There was little or no time to speak with subject area peers outside one's academy. Teachers generally described there being little time for talking to or working with teachers within their academies either. Only one teacher was actively team-teaching. For most, even these small schools were too large to allow coordination of assignments or other forms of collaboration.

A second obstacle to this kind of collaboration was the occurrence of crossover. While not as common at Jefferson, Mountain View teachers regularly reported that 25% or more of the juniors and seniors in their classes were from other academies. This

compounded the difficulty involved in collaboration to the point that it was not considered outside of Discovery, where student crossover was nearly nonexistent.

Crossover

The issue of crossover was dealt with differently at the two schools in this study. With few exceptions, Jefferson High limited students to classes within their academies. At Mountain View, while it was not encouraged, students were allowed to go outside their academies. This was fairly common for juniors and seniors, who were more likely to take elective courses.

There were costs and trade-offs associated with these choices. Restricting crossover limited students' options. Such limitations were rarely popular with students and their parents. School leaders and teachers then felt pressure to offer many courses within each academy, sometimes duplicating specialized courses such as AP classes. This placed a burden on teachers within each academy to teach a range of courses that at times went beyond their experience or expertise. It was also mentioned that in order to fill these courses, students were sometimes enrolled who did not well qualify or who had limited interest in being there. This was seen as a particular concern in the AP classes, where course content and timelines could not easily, or legitimately, be modified to accommodate the range of students' abilities.

Allowing crossover created another set of problems. As discussed earlier, crossover affected teachers' ability to collaborate in their work when students might be working with many other teachers. It was also mentioned that having students in their classes from outside of the academy made it difficult to get to know students and to

share concerns with their other teachers, thus affecting personalization. Crossover was also seen as limiting an academy's ability to develop a unique culture and mission.

This issue seems to be at the core of many problems that are faced by schools-within-schools. As several teachers pointed out, in order to achieve the gains that are associated with small schools, a choice had to be made. Teachers mentioned that either course selection needed to be limited or more staff must be hired in order to provide the desired variety of classes. These schools were still operating within the framework of traditional high school models. Students still came to school five days a week and met in classes with 20-35 peers. There were four to six class periods each day. The year is divided into semesters and quarters. The daily routines were no different from other high schools. Within this model no other options could be seen. However this may be, the fundamental choice remained: you could retain all of the trappings and selection of a comprehensive high school or you could have small schools with more personalization and collaboration. You couldn't have both and hope to realize the benefits of both.

Departments

High schools have traditionally been divided into academic realms. Teachers belong to the English, math, social studies, or some other department, and the high school culture is defined for teachers by academic department. These departments provide teachers with a group of peers who often have similar backgrounds and perspectives. "In the secondary school, and other educational institutions, the department provides the basis for political action and as such demands allegiance from its members" (Ball & Lacey, 1995, p. 99). When teachers need resources, support, or

action, it is usually through the department that this help is found. When teachers unite as a department, their voices are more likely to be heard.

Structuring a high school into separate academies challenges these subcultures. If academic departments are maintained across the whole school, then academies add an additional, parallel organizational and cultural structure. If academic departments outside of the academies are no longer supported, the new academies may replace one organizational structure with another. This organizational displacement may leave teachers feeling the loss of what they had come to know. Teachers at both of these schools spoke of wishing to have stronger ties to their subject area colleagues. However, it was not a simple matter of having it both ways. With a new principal, beginning the year of this study, Mountain View High School had decided to support departments across academy lines. More time lately was being allotted for department meetings and consequently there was less time for academy concerns. At Thomas Jefferson the academies were more separate from each other and there was no move to support departmental coordination. The administration had chosen to stress subunit autonomy. Despite the focus on academies and cross-disciplinary teams, teachers within the larger academies at Jefferson (520-590 students) often formed small departments within the academies; such was the drive to work with subject area peers. For some of these teachers, affiliation with these mini-departments was stronger than that with their academies.

Mission

One of the goals of the Small School Reform is for each academy to have a particular mission and character. After several years at these schools, visions were still

emerging and teachers found it difficult to articulate them. The teachers in only two academies expressed a sense of there being a unique mission for their subunit. Mountain View's Discovery and Jefferson's College Prep were described as having particular visions that guided their classroom practice and goals for the students. Most other teachers could not articulate a particular mission that set their academy apart from the others.

Most teachers, however, did describe a developing student culture within their academies. This was most commonly spoken of in terms of the kinds of students who were enrolled. Teachers could easily describe the stereotypical student who was enrolled in each of the academies. Few mentioned being influenced by the academy's title or stated mission. Most often, the distinct flavor of the small school was seen in terms of the electives that were offered, but did not go far beyond that. For instance, the Art Academy offered art and theatre classes, but this did not influence the content or structure of the English and math courses in that academy.

Recruiting

The way that these schools have been arranged, students must choose, before the start of their 9th grade year, which academy they will join. This act of choosing set up a kind of competition between the academies as they tried to attract the "right" kind of students. Some teachers saw the process of selection as very important. For them it made a great deal of difference if the students entering their academy did not fit the mold of the type of student the academy was designed to serve. For others it was a matter of wanting to attract more of the traditionally successful students.

This practice of recruiting students brought to the surface contrasting views on the role of the teacher and the school vis a vis students. One view held that, the student population was a given and the school or teacher must then discover or decide how best to teach them. The other perspective viewed the teaching design as a given, and it was up to the counselors and parents to provide the correct type of student to fit the school. Holding the first view could lead a teacher or school to examine curricula and instruction and perhaps to make changes in response to students' abilities and goals. The second view, in contrast, might lead teachers and schools to examine their students and perhaps to seek out better ones.

The search for better students brought with it competition between academies for this finite resource. In order to bring about a balance of genders or ability levels, academies became focused outwardly toward students and other academies to see how they could attract more or better students than the other academies. The academy structure intensified this competition for students in a way that department structure did not. English teachers don't have to compete with math teachers for students who are required to take both subjects. This was a new experience for most teachers.

Opinions About the Reform

Several of the teachers included in this study had been active in their school's original planning teams and were very familiar with the aims of the reform efforts at their school. Even those who were not directly involved with the planning felt that they were well informed and in general, teachers expressed support for the goals of the reform. Where teachers were more likely to express concerns and reservations about the reform was in regard to its planning and implementation. At the conversion school,

some teachers felt that the community and staff had not been fully included in the decision process. They stated that the plan to go to small schools had already been decided before discussion began. They then felt that any debate was meaningless.

Teachers at both schools voiced disappointments with the reform in practice. Most, if not all, felt that the implementation of the reform fell short of its promise. A common complaint, for instance, was that the academies were still too big. While they often did feel that they were getting to know students better, the size of the academies and the limited time available for the necessary planning had not allowed teachers to collaborate with others or to integrate curricula in a meaningful way.

Parental Engagement

The development and availability of Internet programs and email has made it easier for parents and teachers to communicate with one another. This was the sort of parent contact that teachers described occurring most frequently. Teachers also spoke of being able to easily send out notices and class information via email. Communication via computer, however, could be a mixed blessing. Online programs that allow parents to log-on and see their child's grades could sometimes have the unintended consequence of distancing parents and teachers because it depersonalized communication and the grade reporting process; parents and teachers might not communicate with each other directly*

The other sort of contact that teachers had with some parents, at least, was during the student-led conferences that took place with parents of advisory students. Here the difference in participation between the two schools was striking. Mountain

* My thanks to Dan Lysne for sharing this insight.

View teachers described being able to meet with over 80% of the parents, whereas, less than a third of Thomas Jefferson parents showed up for these conferences.

It is yet to be seen just how the level of parent involvement will affect the long-term community support for the schools' non-traditional structures. The high numbers at Mountain View may be related to the external pressures to move toward "balancing" the new structures with traditional ones (i.e., allowing crossover and more departmental coordination across academies). The low numbers at Thomas Jefferson might mean that there is little support. It could also mean that uninvolved or alienated parents will allow school leaders to do as they see fit. Attendance or absence at student conferences does not necessarily relate to parent support.

Prior Experience

Examining the holistic analyses of the individual interviews, it became apparent that these teachers came from many different backgrounds that in many cases have had a clear influence on their current perspectives. These teachers often contrasted their current situation with what they had experienced before. For instance, four of the teachers came to the high schools after having taught at a junior high or middle school. At these schools the teachers had often experienced close interdisciplinary ties with teaching teams. They often described their work at these schools as being more student-centered than subject-centered. With the younger students at these middle schools the teaching goals were more focused on community building and collaboration than on subject specific achievement. With such a background, these teachers often described their experience with the academies at the high schools as somewhat disappointing. Catherine missed the closeness and camaraderie of the junior high. Others mentioned

that they had not experienced the same kind of collaboration or teaming that was practiced at their previous school. They had hoped that by coming to a high school that had academies, that they would not be lost in its overall size. While they did say that the schools did not feel huge and that improvements were being made in terms of building a sense of community, in comparison to what they had known before, it was still only “middle of the road.”

At the other end of the spectrum was a teacher who had come to Jefferson High after working on the east coast in a high school with nearly 3,000 students. To her, the experience here seemed significantly more intimate; she was amazed by what she saw and felt “honored” to be at her current school. Teachers perceived their current experiences in terms of them being better or worse than what they had known before. These past experiences, therefore, had a lot to do with teachers’ evaluation of events and job satisfaction.

Teacher Identity

The main question of this study concerns the impact of school reform on teachers’ identities. Teacher identities are varied and are shaped by many different factors. In order to discuss this complex topic I will now discuss these teachers’ experiences in light of the theories of professional identity presented earlier, in chapter two. In that section, I expanded on Firestone’s (1996) conception, describing professional identity in three domains: cognitive, organizational, and emotional. I then discussed identity during times of change and emotional vulnerability. Professional identity was then related to forms of job satisfaction. Finally, I described possible conflicts and tensions between professional and personal identities.

Cognitive domain. The cognitive domain describes those aspects of professional identity that relate to how individuals *think* about their jobs, the knowledge and skills required to perform the work. These teachers spoke of the knowledge related to their disciplines, their strengths, and their goals as subject experts. These topics and comments fell into the cognitive domain of professional identity. Some of these teachers had been teaching for many years and had taught the same courses over and over. This gave them a sense of competence and security in their ability to provide the kind of instruction that they valued. Kevin and Barb spoke about the way they went about prioritizing and organizing courses and lessons, starting with the core concepts embedded in the disciplines in general and of each course in particular.

At times, even the experienced teacher finds him/herself called on to teach a course that is new to them or outside of their core experience and training. This can be a challenging, risky, and exciting proposition. Kyle, for instance, described teaching a biology class that was outside his particular background in geology and chemistry. He said he felt confident approaching the subject because he knew he could draw on his knowledge of core scientific skills and concepts and that he could bring in his expertise by emphasizing the geological and chemical aspects of life science. Similarly, Don could bring in his math skills when teaching computer programming. Able to connect to their strengths, these experienced teachers adjusted to new challenges with a core sense of competence.

For the new teachers, the challenge of teaching new courses was particularly intense. They spoke of the difficulties of establishing classroom management routines as well as those of curriculum design and instruction. Jason and Stephanie described

times in this past year when they felt lost. Having now, during second semester, worked through these trials both new teachers spoke with confidence about what they were doing and were excited about next year and the new courses they will be teaching.

Spencer and Marcus discussed the struggle to instruct all students in a given class when students' backgrounds and abilities varied widely. These challenges drove them to think deeply about the concepts involved in each lesson and how to prioritize and organize their instruction. While not all of these challenges may have been met successfully each time, the process of addressing them generated a deep exploration of who they were as subject specialists.

Each of these teachers spoke about their practice in relation to the subjects or particular courses that they taught. The stories that came to mind were often ones of challenge that they responded to and mastered. Drawing upon their subject knowledge and the skills they had to learn, these stories displayed their competence and confidence. Part of who they were as successful teachers was their ability to master the subject matter and adjust to their students' needs. It also pointed toward the future as they discussed prospective goals for the years to come, developing and expanding their range and depth of competencies. With the exception of Kyle, who, alone among the sixteen teachers, was team-teaching and working directly with his fellow academy teachers to coordinate curricula, the teachers in this study did not describe their work in ways different from what they had done before. Within the cognitive domain, these teachers were experiencing nothing unique within the reform setting.

Organizational domain. The organizational domain describes those aspects of professional identity that relate to how individuals *position* themselves in their work,

how they relate to others and fit in within a workplace structure. The academy structure has called upon these teachers to think in new ways about where they fit in within the high school organization. One of the concerns brought up by these teachers was the additional identification with small schools as well as with subject area departments. Time available to meet with other teachers had become fragmented when it was divided between whole school, small school, and department meetings. Each of these interactions took time and served different purposes. Whole school meetings were most commonly used to dispense information. Small school meetings were used to discuss students-of-concern as well as curriculum planning. Department meetings were seen as important in order to discuss common standards and course content across subunits. With limitations on time available for collaboration, these several cultures have competed for teachers' attention and identification. Am I an English teacher who is assigned to a particular academy or a Health & Science teacher who teaches English classes? Do I belong primarily to Jefferson High School or to the College Prep Academy?

At Mountain View the organizational boundaries were not strictly differentiated. Each teacher belonged to an academy; however, they also felt a clear sense of belonging to the high school at large and to school-wide departments. The trend this year had also been toward more time and work with departments across the whole school. By reaching to achieve a balance between academies and departments, school leaders may have blurred the distinction between them. The English teachers at Mountain View, for instance, began scheduling more time for planning and observations across academies. More time for these activities meant less time for similar collaboration within

academies. It is possible that affiliation and loyalties that were being strengthened by departments may soon weaken those in the academies that have little history and tradition to bind them.

The situation at Thomas Jefferson was different. At this school three of the academies were larger than those at Mountain View (550 compared to 350) and the staffs were correspondingly larger. At Jefferson there was much more focus on academy autonomy and most teachers described no interaction with subject peers outside the academy. As a start-up school, Thomas Jefferson also had no history of school-wide departments. Teachers, however, did describe departments within their academies. They also described the academy staff being further split into grade-level teams. Instead of becoming cohesive subunits within the larger school, the faculties of Jefferson's academies were large enough to then be subdivided into still smaller groups of teachers.

Most of the teachers at Jefferson spoke of being in such teams. Not all of the academies had them organized in the same manner, but one had set up a 9th grade team, a 10th grade team, a 11th & 12th grade team, and a career & technology team. With these groups of four to seven, teachers found themselves as part of several different units. Within the school they were members of an academy. Within the academy they were part of a department and also part of a core team. Each of these different groups had its own goals and different cultures or emerging traditions. At any given time, these various goals might push or pull teachers in different directions. For instance, the curricular goals of the social studies department may not be the same as those of the 10th grade team that must focus on preparing students for the state test that doesn't have a

social studies component. Discipline and security issues of the large school may not be the same ones for the academy. All of these different groupings made claims on teachers' time and attention. For most of these teachers it seemed that the core teams were getting the bulk of their attention. More time was spent meeting and planning in these groups than with departments or with the whole academy.

While these core teams appeared to be the primary organizational unit, several of these teachers were not particularly happy about it. It seemed that this division had quickly established a caste system within the academies. Teachers in the 9th and 10th grade teams resented having to work only with the younger, less mature students. They felt that they had been relegated to training incoming students and getting them ready to pass the state tests. This gave them little chance to flexibly explore their subjects with enthusiastic students. Teachers in the upper-class team were seen as the ones who got to teach the "fun" courses to the "good" students. The career and technology team teachers had their own worries. Given the priority and focus of the state tests, these teachers often felt on the outside and in danger of losing their positions if not enough students enrolled in their courses.

The teachers in this study were experiencing a reshuffling of organizational boundaries. At Jefferson, these boundaries were even more complicated. Some teachers expressed frustration at the loss of old departmental groups and some were trying to find their way among the new groups where they found themselves. It was not yet clear where the dust would settle and until then, the teachers might likely remain unsettled themselves.

With organizational boundaries unclear, teachers sometimes found it difficult to establish their place. Conflicting and overlapping loyalties increased demands on teachers' time and energy. Without a clear institutional priority, teachers were individually choosing to identify with different levels of the organization. For instance, some chose to see themselves as core team members, some as subject teachers, some as academy members, some identified more with the whole school. They were not all identifying with the same units. This sometimes led to conflicts and competition between teachers and between the various subunits. Teachers who identified with a given unit saw others as outsiders and as potential rivals for school resources, including students. Teachers who identified with larger units saw those who identified with smaller units as not being team players. To these teachers, the school organization seemed fragmented. This organizational fragmentation, in turn, has led to identity fragmentation for the individual teachers.

Emotional domain. The emotional domain describes those aspects of professional identity that relate to how individuals *feel* about their job, often associated with motivation and satisfaction. One of the major goals for the small school structure at these schools was to create a greater sense of personalization for the students and teachers. Ideally, teachers would get to know their students better than they did in other, more traditional school designs. The push for this has come directly from district and building administrators who have stated this goal and encouraged teachers to make it happen. The pressure has also come indirectly, as teachers worked to make sense of the reform and of the advisory classes, in particular. They have been told that a major reason behind advisories was to create a space for teachers and students to get to know

one another better. Teachers, as well as students for that matter, were trying to make sense of just what that means. Some of the activities that took place in advisory were plain enough: going over reports cards and signing up for classes. But, just how teachers and students were to develop close relationships during these meetings was described by some teachers as “unclear” and “fuzzy,” even as “anti-personalization.”

In their prior experiences as teachers, relationships were built around some common purposeful activity such as mastering a course of material, rehearsing a play, or training for athletic competition. Advisory, for many of these teachers, still had no such clear purpose, and so the emotional experience sometimes felt frustrating or contrived. The obligatory nature of advisory activities could make them feel like a form of emotional labor that went uncomfortably beyond the teacher’s traditional role as instructor. They felt that they were supposed to display caring and supportive behaviors outside of an academic context. To the extent that advisory felt stilted and obligatory, many teachers found it difficult to continue investing emotional energy in something that held no tangible benefit. Advisory was, for some, a meaningless task to which they paid lip service. Personalization, then, might be seen as a pretense, a set of tasks or a meaningless slogan that did little more than distract from the real purpose of school and learning. Some teachers felt that personalization, in terms of individualized instruction was a worthy goal, but beyond their ability to implement, given time constraints and the number of students in their classes.

The discussion of reform goals associated with personalization led teachers to value and anticipate a more individualized approach to their work. The experience of advisories and the limited time and resources available for personalization in the

classroom has not supported a realization of these expectations. This has left teachers feeling frustrated and ineffectual.

Identity and change. The changes in these teachers' work settings have affected certain aspects of their jobs. At least one teacher, Kyle, spoke of a transformation in how he communicated with other teachers. He also showed and described teaching methods that he said had been influenced by the structure of his small academy. Most of the other teachers, however, said that their classroom practice had not been affected by the reform. What had changed, they explained, were the duties they were asked to perform related to advisories. These were seen not so much as a change, but as merely additional work and responsibilities; their list of duties was getting longer.

The changes going on around them, nonetheless, produced pressures upon these teachers' identities. The goals of the reform as well as dictates from school leaders had created an expectation of change. The non-traditional organization of these schools created new groupings, with new boundaries and expectations for membership. Teachers have had to navigate these as they made sense of new roles such as being an academy member as well as a subject specialist, a whole school faculty member as well as a part of a core team. These new roles have brought with them new expectations for performance and group loyalty.

The changes experienced by these teachers were not just a one-time occurrence. The teachers continued to confront change as the reform and restructuring evolved. Not only were these schools different from the way they were before there were academies; they were also different from how they were just one or two years ago. Change continued as new personnel joined the schools, new administrators and new teachers.

New administrators often came in with new ideas and expectations for programs and practices. New teachers brought in different perspectives usually without the benefit of team-building experiences that had taken place at the beginning of the changeover or opening of the school. Even new students affected the life at these schools. Each year's group of incoming freshmen brought different personalities and issues.

Changes in school policies have also impacted teachers' roles and responsibilities. For instance, both schools experienced changes in how the advisories were set up. Early on at Mountain View, advisories were organized with mixed grades. It was felt that the older students would help mentor the underclassmen. Now, most of the academies have grade-based advisories. This was done to simplify the counseling functions. At Jefferson, some of the advisories were now arranged so that students changed advisors after their sophomore years. At the same time, the school web site stated that students were to be with the same advisor for all four years ([Jefferson] High School philosophy statement, n.d.). These changes have increased tensions between philosophical ideals for relationships and the school structures that supported them. The changes to the advisories generally made them more suited to meeting administrative goals of orientating incoming students and career advising upper-classmen rather than developing close relationships over all four years of a student's time at the high school. Teachers have gotten the message that for all the talk about small schools and developing relationships, administrative functions have priority.

Changes at these schools have also affected teacher grouping and membership. For instance, Mountain View has experienced the closing of two academies in the last four years. The first of these necessitated the combination of the Design Academy and

the Performing Arts Academy. The second took place when the Exploration School was closed. When these changes occurred, teachers found themselves regrouped into other academies with a new set of teachers and students. They had to start over to develop a sense of place.

Teachers at Thomas Jefferson also experienced some regroupings. When teachers first started working at Jefferson, there were Critical Friends Groups: groups of six to eight teachers who would meet periodically to give one another challenging feedback and support. The original groups included teachers across discipline areas and academies. The next year these were modified to include only same-academy teachers. After two years, they were abandoned altogether. These several changes have served to direct and then redirect teachers' focus and affiliations as groups were formed and reformed. The message received was that there was not enough time or support for this form of collaboration or relationship-building. Further cuts or changes might be forthcoming.

Pressures from outside the schools have also impacted life inside. Parents have put pressure on building leaders and teachers to provide what they wanted to see in a high school. For instance, when the Technology Academy tried to require all its students to take *Principles of Technology*, parents at Jefferson complained and now that course is just an elective. It was originally thought that this course would provide a foundation for what the academy was trying to teach all of its students. That is no longer the case. The Tech Academy's requirements became no different from those of the other academies. Teachers and students now had to find other ways to establish an identity within their academy.

This time of transition, of trying out new arrangements, could be an emotionally trying time as teachers found themselves in new roles and worked to establish a sense of competence and belonging within the new groupings of academies and teams as well as within the traditional groupings of school and department. Some had found new leadership roles that gave them a sense of efficacy and accomplishment. Some had found new friendships that helped to give them a sense of attachment to their academy. Others have felt left out or left behind by the changes going on around them. For all, it has been a time of navigating new boundaries with the challenge of new expectations and possibilities.

Emotional vulnerability. Two of the teachers I spoke with taught elective courses. Tom taught wood shop and drafting; Daniel taught drama. At Mountain View, Tom's courses often drew students from all of the academies and so he had a full schedule of vocational classes. For Daniel, the small school structure at Thomas Jefferson has meant that his drama classes were open only to the 520 students in his academy rather than the roughly 1,900 enrolled in the high school. This has caused two problems. Fewer students were signing up for drama, and so he taught only one section a year. Also, because the students in his academy had fewer electives to choose from, a good number of those who did sign up were not particularly interested in drama. They were just looking for an easy elective among the few that were being offered within the Arts Academy. Low enrollment has meant that Daniel's role as a drama teacher was in jeopardy. He was feeling squeezed out and was not sure how long he would remain at the school. Other elective teachers were feeling a pinch as well. More and more they were being called on to teach courses other than their specialties. This problem was

more acute at Jefferson, where crossover was restricted. An art teacher there explained that he no longer taught pottery, drawing, or painting. Instead, he had nearly a full schedule of digital photography. He explained that not enough students in his academy signed up for the other art classes to justify offering those courses. This sort of pressure was pushing teachers to alter their expectations about what kind of teacher they were going to be. Daniel, for instance, felt that he was being cornered into choosing between being the academy's remedial English teacher or looking for work elsewhere. In Daniel's case, this pinch was being felt not only because of the limited schedule of the academy, but also because of departmental and core team politics being played out between senior and junior members of the staff. As the school became more and more divided into subunits-within-subunits, some teachers were feeling squeezed or left out.

Job satisfaction. Rewards of various kinds, tangible and intangible, keep people going. In teaching, it is rarely money, but other, often intangible rewards that lead to job satisfaction. Some of these come in the form of professional rewards. Several of the teachers in this study had been part of planning teams. They spoke with pride about the work that they did researching various aspects of the new school organization. Marcus spoke at length of his feelings about authentic forms of recognition. He felt that being asked for one's opinion, being asked to help with a project in some meaningful way was a powerful form of recognition. Having been a part of his school's planning team, Marcus felt recognized for his ability to contribute. However, as with other forms of extrinsic reward, when someone does not receive such recognition, it can be experienced as an affront or even a punishment. Some who felt left out of the process spoke of their frustration and disenchantment with the planning process.

Job satisfaction can also be experienced when one receives intangible, psychic rewards (Lortie, 1975). Almost all of these teachers talked about their relationships with students and the satisfaction they felt seeing students succeed. They spoke of their identification with the service aspect of teaching. Many teachers talked fondly about working with students over the course of several years and seeing their growth. Particularly satisfying were the cases when a struggling student was able to work through difficulties and finally succeed. To the extent that the small school structures encouraged lasting relationships such as these, teachers' psychic rewards may increase. There is a danger, however, that the new and additional stress of working at these schools may lead to teacher burnout or compromise. Some teachers mentioned that as more and more responsibilities were added to their plates, it has become increasingly difficult to perform all of these tasks well. These teachers then faced the choice of exhausting their energy, compromising the quality of their work, or opting out of certain roles.

Tensions between identities. For the first few years while these schools were planning and developing their new structures, grant money from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation helped to pay for release time that was used for teachers to research, plan, and train. That money was soon gone and the reality set in that whatever time was going to be spent on collaboration, education, or reflection would have to be found during the regular workweek.

Time is a finite resource and these teachers were very aware of that fact. Scheduling occasions for meetings and training was a zero-sum game. Something more over here meant that much less over there. Meetings with one group meant less time to

plan with another. The schools did not have funds to hire substitutes or additional staff. Within the daily schedule teachers needed to prepare lessons and grade papers. There was not an endless amount of time available for meetings with departments, teams, and academies. The teachers in place were the ones who would do what was going to get done.

The limited schedule of the academies also called on teachers to perform a variety of tasks and teach a wide range of courses. These teachers stated that it was unlikely that more teachers would be hired, so the pressure was on them to do as much as they could to fill the gaps. Whatever tasks they did not perform would not get done. The courses that they did not teach would not be offered. The pressure was on them to fill many roles. They were teachers of a subject and they were teachers of students. Now, they were also advisory counselors as well, helping with career planning and personal issues. These teachers were members of a school faculty and of a department. Now, they were also members of an academy and perhaps a core team. Each of these roles made great demands on the individual teacher if the parts were to be played well and with conviction.

These tensions could take their toll on job satisfaction. Where is the satisfaction in doing many jobs if there is not enough time to prepare and to do them well? What is the reward for juggling multiple demands if not all can be kept in the air? These teachers were feeling these pressures and one thing that was happening was that most were choosing to focus on one or two of their many responsibilities, but not all. Not all teachers felt comfortable and competent in fulfilling each of the many roles they were being asked to perform. Some had chosen to abandon departmental ties and to go it

alone. Some had chosen to ignore prescribed advisory activities and made it a free time. Others spent time with subject matter peers and largely stayed away from their academy colleagues. There were many ways that these teachers were able to respond to the increased demands upon their time and allegiance, but most were finding it impossible to do and be all that they were being asked.

The changes that were experienced by the teachers in this study touch on the several domains of professional identity: cognitive, organizational, and emotional. The effects of changes within the cognitive domain have been mixed. Here, teachers were given tentative messages about being teachers in these new settings. For most of these teachers the Small School Reforms were not seen as transforming the definition of what it meant to be a good teacher. Instead, the new policies and school structures were perceived as yet another addition to their job description, one more set of tasks to perform. There continued to be a demand for teachers to provide rigorous instruction in order to prepare students for the state tests and college entrance exams. However, on top of this there was now a call for them to be more personable. These are not mutually exclusive traits, but they are also not the same traits. Indeed, some teachers discussed the conflicts they felt about providing individualized instruction while at the same time meeting the strict guidelines of state and district objectives.

Changes within the organizational domain have been the most notable. With the advent of academies and the subsequent de-emphasis of subject area departments, teachers were experiencing many alterations of traditional school organization. Teachers have responded in different ways to the new structures as they negotiated positions within units and subunits, academies and teams. For some, there have been

opportunities to assume leadership roles. For instance, because there were four academies at Jefferson High School, there were four English department chairs instead of one. As the only social studies teacher in the College Prep academy, Jason referred to himself as the head of that department. In practice, it seemed that these organizational changes have had their impact outside of the classroom door. With the exception of Kyle, at Mountain View's Discovery School, teachers described few, if any organizational changes impacting their classrooms and teaching practice.

Within the emotional domain, new roles have been suggested for these teachers as advisory leaders. Some have taken this on as a new aspect of their professional identity, while others saw it in terms of one more course to teach. Advisories have given teachers an opportunity to expand the counseling aspect of their jobs. At least one teacher, Stephanie, has included counseling exercises in her regular classes as well as her advisory. This may be easier for her because of the 90-minute periods at Jefferson. Others saw advisories as a waste of time and a distraction from their true roles as instructors. It is difficult to say whether advisories and the call for personalization have pushed teachers to broaden their roles or if they have merely provided an occasion for teachers to express, or not, their "inner counselor." Many of these teachers expressed a hope that organizational changes, particularly those involving advisories, would subside and that they would begin to develop more lasting relationships with students and so gain some of the emotional rewards of seeing these young adults mature during their four years in the academy.

While there have been structural changes that touched on the several domains of professional identity, these teachers described a range of responses. A few have

modified their practice but most have not. Some agreed with the goals of reform and saw no need to alter what they have always done because they already worked toward those goals. Others disagreed with some parts of the reform and feigned compliance. A few found policies unclear or inconsistent and strove to navigate expectations while going about the daily business of teaching. Most, if not all, of these teachers were still waiting for the dust to settle. For them, the changes that have occurred portend more changes yet to come.

Implications and Limitations

This study sheds light, not only on what changes had been made at these two schools as a part of the Small School Reform movement, it provides insight into the experiences of teachers at these schools and how they perceived the changes affecting their daily practice. Speaking to teachers who worked in different academies provided views from a range of different settings. The satellite school perhaps provided a glimpse of a small school that has experienced the autonomy necessary to realize the goals of personalization, collaboration, and coordinated curriculum that might have been closer to the ideals of the reform. Future studies that make a closer and more thorough examination of the different types of small schools could help to shed light on the different experiences within these academies. An examination of teachers' experience of school change that systematically takes into account such variables as age, gender, and years of experience might also produce important insights.

This study explores the revealed experiences of sixteen teachers working at two schools. All participants were volunteers who were willing to let me observe them and talk with them. As such, this is not a comprehensive examination of all teachers who

work in schools within schools, nor is it a random sampling of such teachers. It is my intent to present an interpretation of the perspectives of a range of teachers who are navigating the world of the Small School Reform being played out at their schools.

Conclusion

These reforms hold a promise of improved conditions for teachers and students. It has already been reported that in many schools-within-schools there is a feeling of a positive and supportive culture (Kahne, et al., 2006; Shear, et al., 2005). Attendance and dropout rates are improving (Kahne, et al., 2006). However, there is not a clear indication that instruction has changed or that student achievement is significantly different from that at other schools (Fouts, Baker, Brown, and Riley, 2006; Kahne, et al., 2006; Mitchell, et al., 2005; Rhodes, et al., 2005).

The experiences of these teachers, however, are about more than attendance rates, test scores, or even instruction. These teachers have been asked to do many things, take on many responsibilities, play many roles. These sixteen have told parts of their stories so that others can more fully understand who they are and where they have been and how all of that contributes to how they make sense of being a teacher within these changing school organizations.

Most teachers in this study voiced support for the reform goals of greater personalization and increased collaboration among teachers in small learning communities. They recalled being excited about what it was going to be like working at a small school. Even those who were most skeptical or negative about their experience were supportive of these reform goals. Instead, the complaints concerned the implementation of the policies and how the goals had not been achieved. While teachers

overall had positive attitudes toward reform goals, they were often disappointed with what they had experienced so far.

A common statement was that the academies were too large. There were still too many students and teachers in the academies to allow for close collaboration and personalized instruction. Another, closely related, complaint was that crossover undermined autonomy. Allowing students to take courses outside of their home academy made it even more difficult to get to know students and to coordinate their instruction. Teachers recognized that in order to reach the goals presented to them during the planning and training that preceded the change, that some tough choices would be necessary. Most were ready and willing to make those choices and to face the challenges ahead. In order to achieve the goals of the reform, the new academies would need to be different from traditional, comprehensive high schools. They could not merely be small versions of the same thing. As the reform has been played out, however, teachers saw that the tough choices had not been made. Compromises were made in order to satisfy various stakeholders. The academies were trying to offer a full range of options, to be comprehensive while also trying to be small.

Teachers saw that these factors came together to make the goals of collaboration and personalization all the more difficult to achieve. With too many students, some from different academies, and wanting to enroll in a wide range of courses, teachers felt that curricula and instruction could not be meaningfully coordinated and personalization would be limited.

An exception to these experiences was that described by teachers who had worked in satellite schools at Mountain View high school. These schools were smaller,

with roughly 150 students. The small faculties of these schools had planned cohesive, coordinated curricula. The remaining satellite school, Discovery, had more autonomy than the other academies at Mountain View; very few students took courses outside of the academy. This allowed the staff in this academy to work collaboratively with a cohesive group of students. They could know that Discovery students would take certain courses and had been trained to do certain types of assignments. For these teachers, the promises of Small School Reform had largely been realized.

Teachers' experiences at Discovery served to contrast those at the other academies observed in this study. The three teachers who had worked in a satellite school at Mountain View described close relationships with students and fellow teachers that arose from the small size and autonomy experienced by those academies. These teachers seemed to be the only ones who had a sense of control of their academy's schedule, course designs, graduation requirements, and assessment tools.

Teachers in the other, often much larger, academies seemed to be less clear about how their jobs had changed. These teachers felt that they had been given mixed messages. Excited by the promise of what Small School Reform would mean, their experience had, instead, been one of half measures and compromises. The academies were smaller than the high school-at-large, but not small enough or autonomous enough to support much personalization or collaboration. This, along with continuing changes and modifications to policies and programs have kept teachers from realizing the full promise of the reform. Without being able to see structural changes that they felt would adequately support the reform goals, teachers often held skeptical or cautious expectations for the future. Given that these teachers did not view the structure of the

schools as having changed that much, or being fundamentally different from a traditional comprehensive high school, they then did not see themselves as being fundamentally different kinds of teachers. Within their chosen circle of colleagues or within their own classrooms they would continue to do the best they could on their own terms. No matter how much a school may be restructured, if life inside the classrooms goes on as before, no meaningful change is likely to be experienced by the teachers and students who are engaged in the real work of schools.

Given this perspective, it may be good to ask policy-makers, administrators, reformers, parents, and teachers, “What do we want to accomplish?” or, “What do we want teachers to do?” even, “Who do we want teachers to be?” For example, the goal of personalization requires training and a variety of resources as well as time and flexibility. If there is to be individualized instruction, teachers need to know more than one way to instruct. They need to have access to a range of resources beyond a single textbook. This sort of personalized instruction might then lead to different products and evidence of learning. Are we ready to deal with that? How would that fit into standards of accountability? Once this has been figured out, it might be good to ask teachers, “What do you think?”

The teachers at any given school have a wide range of training, experience, and expertise. Their perspective and perceptions are often keen and insightful. These are the “street-level bureaucrats” who are charged with the task of teaching in these new and developing learning environments. They should be given a voice and heard.

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Appendix A

School Descriptive Statistics

	Mountain View	Thomas Jefferson
Students: Total Count	1,692	1,794
American Indian	1.6%	1.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.0%	21.7%
Black	0.4%	14.0%
Hispanic	3.8%	6.8%
White	92.1%	55.5%
Free or Reduced-Price Meals	14.5%	33.7%
Annual Dropout Rate	2.5%	4.1%
On-Time Grad Rate	90%	75%
Extended Grad Rate	94%	78%
Teachers: Classroom	79	82
Average Years of Teacher Experience	11.8	9.4

Appendix B

Teacher Profiles

These were the sixteen teachers included in this study. For some, this was their first year of teaching; others had been at it for more than twenty or thirty years. Some have spent all of their teaching careers at the school where they were now; others had experience at other schools, in other districts and states, or teaching levels other than high school. These teachers have also taught a wide range of courses: English, math, science, social studies, PE, art, woodshop, drama, computer programming, and drafting.

With all of these differences, the voices of these teachers deserve to be heard individually. In this section I present a short holistic analysis of each participant's interview. I have tried to capture a sense of the whole dialogue between each teacher and me. In this way I hope to briefly represent the feelings and ideas that each of them shared with me during our short time together.

I've always been doing it this way

"Steve" has taught science at Mountain View for fifteen years. He is about forty years old. He is a part of the Technology Academy and is teaching physical science, as well as AP and regular chemistry. Steve is soft spoken and friendly. He comes in early and stays late to help students with their work. Several years ago he started and coached the school's water polo team.

Steve spoke a good deal about his practice and goals for his students. Much of this was focused on engaging his students and making his classroom a fun and caring place where all students can succeed. "Everybody has to succeed and get something out of it, otherwise it's meaningless." He spends hours before and after school meeting with

students to give them extra help. “They know I’m available. I tell them up front, ‘My job is to help you succeed.’” This has always been a part of how he views his role as a teacher.

According to Steve, the restructuring at Mountain View has had little impact on his daily practice. A part of this is that as a science teacher, his classroom is located close to those of other science teachers regardless of their academy. Gas lines and plumbing dictate where most science courses are taught and they tend to be in the same area. Given this physical arrangement, it is easy for Steve to maintain departmental ties and be less affected by academy boundaries. His work hasn’t changed that much. “The mission and all that—that’s actually stuff I’ve pretty much followed all along.”

When he spoke of the changes at the school, it seemed that much of what was going on had little affect on his classroom. “The reason I became a teacher is to be able to do that [help students learn], to be able to see that come about with students. But I’ve been doing that since I got hired, and small schools really haven’t changed any of that.”

A sense of joy and play

“Kyle” has a Ph.D. in geology and chose high school teaching over the rat race of university life. He is in his mid forties. Kyle was one of the founders of the Discovery satellite school. He felt that the small school ideals would be best preserved in a more autonomous structure. He has been teaching at Mountain View for twelve years and has classes in chemistry, physics, and a block class that is team taught with another Discovery teacher. Kyle also coached soccer for a number of years.

Kyle has a passion for teaching and he has found in the relative autonomy of Mountain View’s Discovery School a chance to reinvigorate his work. “I thought that

teaching provided me with something that was a balance and something that I was still passionate about, so I went into high school teaching.” Kyle exudes excitement in what he’s doing and how his academy’s structure helps him do his job. The experiential focus of Discovery is partially a product of Kyle’s attitude toward learning. He encourages his students to “bring a sense of joy to the things that you’re doing. ‘Let’s get to it. Let’s get to it with a sense of joy and wonder.’” As a geologist, he described the importance of his experiences doing hands-on fieldwork, experience and exploration.

His work in researching ideas for the school’s restructuring, which involved the Gates Foundation and the Coalition of Essential Schools turned him on to collaborative work. “You know, it’s so often in education you close the doors and everybody’s an island and works on their own, and when you’re really sharing and working with others, it changes the dynamic. And I think the kids see it too.” He and his colleagues in Discovery have spent countless hours planning and developing curricula and rubrics for evaluation. He hopes that the work of laying such a foundation will help his small school weather the pressures to revert toward a more conventional structure. “I’m looking forward to some validation of this [Discovery] School model. . . . I’m also looking forward to the rest of the school adopting some of the things we do. . . . I’m looking forward to lots of stuff, getting a new bike.”

Kyle is particularly excited when he describes connecting with students who would otherwise be the ones to fall between the cracks.

Those are the big success stories for us. It’s not the kid that gets . . . into the . . . honors program; . . . It’s really a kid that like you’re working your tail off and

they walk, you know. And you never would have imagined. And you *know* that you made a difference. You just know it. You know that this kid would not have walked without you. *That* is a very, very affirming feeling, and it just keeps you going. Because you know you're serving.

It's hard to get people out of their comfort zone

"Tom" has been teaching for twenty-two years, all but one of those at Mountain View. He has a confident, calm manner and is very organized. Tom is about fifty years old. He was involved in writing the original grant that led to the restructuring of the school. Tom is a part of the Technology Academy and teaches wood shop, drafting, and other vocational courses. He has also worked as a coach for wrestling and golf.

Tom is a thoughtful and articulate instructor. In his classroom, Tom will patiently ask for and quickly receive his students' attention. He has been involved from the very beginning of his school's restructuring process and he often speaks philosophically about change.

[Most] of the people that get into education like safe, comfortable, predictable, consistent, and this was anything but that. You know, it wasn't predictable. It wasn't safe. In some regards, it wasn't comfortable. And so, you started seeing that human dynamic come out and it was surprising to me now. That was something that never even occurred to me—that that would be a big factor that we'd have to deal with.

After spending a great deal of time researching and planning, Tom and other leaders, then had to face those who were not as enthusiastic. "Maybe the frustration

would be that it's not a very quick process. The students are quick to come on board; the adults are less quick to come on board." The adults have had many more years of doing and seeing things in a particular way.

Tom then discussed the issue of competition, which often arises with academy structures that allow student choice.

We spent a lot of time on team building and trying to get people to understand "team." My take away from that was that some people got it and some people really didn't—some people never really understood that concept. All of a sudden there became some competition. You know that, "My school is better than your school" or "We want these kids to come to this school." And when the competition piece came up, that was back to the—when I said people like to feel safe, comfortable—when that piece came in, people started doing weird things. It was weird for people, saying, "Wait, this isn't so safe anymore; this isn't so comfortable."

The competition for students is accentuated for teachers of elective courses. They do not have the luxury of required enrollment. When Tom sent information to prospective students, other teachers became upset.

You can't step out there too far or the system will slap you back into place and say, 'Wait a minute; you've got to conform here. You've got to stand in line and don't get out there too far' . . . you don't want to do that. "You're making the rest of us look bad and that's uncomfortable. You can't do that."

Tom described the frustration of working for improvement, working for change amidst those who feared and resisted it. "I'm constantly looking for improvement and so the—

for me the change has been that, the understanding that we need to change a little bit more.” Still a strong supporter of Mountain View’s restructuring, Tom continues trying to see through to the original goals of the reform.

There are some interesting ideas out there, but trying to get people out of that comfort zone, that’s a challenge. Getting a large number of people, you know, a staff of 85 out of that comfort zone and not step on any toes, the union-negotiated agreement, and things like that, that’s challenging.

Relationships are built on trust

“Don” is in his early fifties and taught for a few years at a Catholic grade school and then left teaching for ten years to work in the labor relations field. He has been teaching math, computers, and finance at Mountain View for twelve years. Originally, Don worked in the Arts Academy, but has now joined the Discovery School staff.

Don often brought up issues that relate to trust. Trust is built and trust can be broken. In his first teaching position at a Catholic school he butted heads with the principal over issues concerning classroom management styles. He felt that he did not have her trust and this contributed to his decision to leave. After returning to teaching and after several years working at Mountain View, the school undertook restructuring. He wasn’t entirely sure how he felt about the plan, but “I think I went into it with a high degree of trust of the administrators in our building that they knew what they were doing.” He had had an on-going relationship with these leaders and there was a feeling of mutual trust and respect. “I’ve always felt highly supported by those people. So, I felt a certain amount of loyalty in that I would return—how they trusted me to do my job professionally, I would in turn trust them.”

Don also spoke of close ties to his fellow math teachers at the school prior to the restructuring. He and his fellow math teachers were a team; they were in and out of each other's classrooms, sharing ideas. His relationships with his peers were very important.

The kids come and go; your colleagues are with you from beginning to end most of the time. And if you get a good bunch, that's one thing that can sustain you through maybe the tough parts when you go through those, and this is a good group here at [Mountain View]. It really is a good group; that helps.

Trust was also an issue that came up as Don discussed parents and the community at large. Don felt, for instance, that the planning process would have been helped if attention had been paid to gaining the trust of parents. He spoke about the importance of involving the community in the decision process in order to gain their goodwill and support for the changes. Leaving them out was a betrayal of trust.

These parents have trusted him with their children through the years. "I guess the fact that I keep getting families, or kids, brothers and sisters of kids who have had me with parent requests to have their child placed in my class; I guess that says something about how parents feel about the job that I do." Even in his classroom, Don discussed needing to have a trusting relationship with his students and even with the learning process. The programming project in his computer class showed him that he had to trust his students when at times some of them knew more than he did. He had also learned that his relationships with students and authority in the classroom were not threatened by such trust.

It was hard to leave the closeness of the junior high

“Catherine” is about forty and has been teaching for seventeen years. She joined the staff at Mountain View five years ago after teaching at the junior high/middle school level. Catherine is teaching a psychology class, US History, and a combined US History/American Lit, two-hour class.

Catherine spoke a great deal about her experiences working at a junior high school prior to transferring to Mountain View. It is through the lens of that experience that she viewed her work at the high school. Using relationship-building exercises, such as those involved in Outward Bound training, Catherine and her fellow teachers at the junior high developed a strong, supportive culture at their school. They instituted “a full value contract, to value everybody, work towards goals, personal and group goals, protect emotional safety, physical safety, no derogatory comments or put-downs of yourself or others, and to enjoy what you’re doing.” It became part of the school’s culture.

Compared to her experiences at the junior high, the development of a culture at Mountain View and in her academy has seemed unremarkable. “Even though for me, it’s middle of the road from what I experienced at the junior high, for the building, we’ve experienced an incredible amount of growth.” “Even though we’re middle of the pack, we’ve seen 100% improvement in the amount of collaboration, because there was very little.” What’s happening in the high school is always seen through the lens of her prior experience.

Coming to the high school was a new and risky experience for her. “That team aspect, that synergy was really, really hard to give up.” Catherine took the chance to come to a newly reformed school to contribute her ideas and experiences.

I’ve been teaching for eleven years, but I’m starting over, you know, being a newbie again. But, I felt like I had something to offer. I think that’s important for me as a person. I have to feel like I’m helping people. I have to feel like I have something to offer or it’s just done. I don’t thrive otherwise.

She needs to feel useful and needed. This is at the same time the reward and the challenge of teaching. “You’re never going to save all your kids, no matter how hard you try. It’s never going to be perfect, and that is the hardest thing about this job.”

The process has been flawed

“Kevin” is about forty years old and has been teaching social studies at Mountain View for sixteen years. A very organized educator, he is teaching Freshman Social Studies, AP US History, and AP World History. Kevin has been a part of the Global Studies Academy from the beginning.

Kevin is thoughtful and direct. He spent most of the interview talking about the restructuring process at his school. He is not against the reform per se, but he feels that it was pushed through without thoughtful planning and without being done as part of a truly democratic process. “I don’t recall there being really a discussion.”

The initial Gates grant application itself seemed to preclude a consideration of all the possibilities. “It was sort of a done deal when it was presented to the staff.” Early on Kevin had misgivings about how the reform was being instituted. The idea of satellite schools, for instance, seemed to splinter off individuals who could have

contributed to the whole school. “They allowed an enthusiastic vocal minority to go their own way.” All too soon, the debate, discussion, and planning stopped and people went off in different directions. At the same time, when they were just getting under way, the school lost funding that helped support dialogue and planning. It seemed to Kevin that “the Gates Foundation sort of cut and ran on us.”

The reform is instead described as “building a plane as you’re flying.” The restructuring started off before everyone knew what he or she was doing.

And I don’t think there was adequate—during the process of going to small schools there was adequate opportunity for people to give input. But I think that, like most things, the people who give input are not necessarily representative of the community.

Kevin felt that the discussions had not included all voices and that now those who were not heard from were disgruntled and dissatisfied. He expressed that it would have been better had things been more thoroughly planned and prepared. “My feeling is, my personal bias, that when you take on a job, you set it up for success; you do the best job you can. And I don’t think we have set ourselves up to be successful.”

According to Kevin, the academies were formed without due consideration of instructional variety. “Looking back, I feel that one of the biggest surprises to me is the uniformity.” Because inadequate attention was paid to developing instructional ideas, the classroom practice in the academies changed very little. Short of this, “I think what it’s done is that it’s kind of created student pools that have very distinct personalities.” This sort of superficial change does not impress. Instead, Kevin feels that the new

structures, such as the academies and advisory should have real and relevant connections to academic goals.

To me the idea of building relationships with kids in an artificial manner in [advisory] is ridiculous. I think that where we build the relationship is in the classroom where it has an authentic connection between the student and the teacher.

Kevin only hopes that he and others can build meaningful and authentic structures even while the plane is flying.

There's always something going on

“Lois” is in her mid fifties and has been teaching English for twenty years. Her first career was in the business world and she is now thinking of retirement. She comes from the Southwest, where she began her teaching career. Lois has been at Mountain View for nine years. She is part of the Arts Academy. This year she is teaching AP English and Sophomore English.

Lois has always wanted to be a teacher. She likes the interactions and the complexity. Even after twenty years of teaching, she still likes to tinker with lessons, adjusting and changing assignments and sequence. It's rarely a boring job. “Every year is a different experience. You have different kids and you approach it differently and I realize that I see things differently.” She finds this particularly true as she works with the students in the Arts Academy. “Our [students] tend to be pretty individualistic, shall we say, creative, . . . they're always fun, and they always have something going on.” “It seems like a good fit for me.”

She had been discussing sonnets in her classes the day I observed. She made

reference to Spenser's Sonnet 26 as she explained that it's not always easy. The poem begins,

Sweet is the rose, but grows upon a briar;

And then concludes,

Why then should I account of little pain,

That endless pleasure unto me gain.

She knows that the school's restructuring has been difficult. Parents, for instance, have had trepidations, "they were pretty afraid that small schools were weird." Teachers too have had to make adjustments and put in some hard work. But, that's the nature of the game. Those things that are most worthwhile do not often come without a cost. In teaching, there's always something going on.

That was a wonderful experience

"Barb" is in her late fifties and has been teaching for thirty-four years, all but three of those at Mountain View. While currently a part of the Health Science Academy, Barb originally worked in the Global Studies Academy and Exploration Satellite School. This year she is teaching Junior English and College Prep English.

Barb has taught at Mountain View for over thirty years. Following the school's conversion she taught in the Global Studies Academy. Though Barb is currently a part of the Health & Science Academy, she spent most of the interview talking about her experiences teaching in the now disbanded Exploration Satellite School at Mountain View. That school had a small staff of only five or six teachers and had an experiential focus with close collaboration among the teachers. "That was a wonderful experience."

During her two years as part of Exploration, she got a taste of working closely with a small interdisciplinary team of teachers. Although she had team-taught before for several years, this experience was different. The flexibility built into the satellite school allowed her and the other teachers to focus on students' needs in a way that she had not experienced before or since. She spoke often of how in Exploration they could do this and they could do that. "We could make adjustments." This helped them meet the needs of different lessons and different students. "That's where I felt that I made a connection." These connections, to her, are the basis of learning. "I really think for me, out of student relationships come other things."

Working in a school such as Exploration, where teachers often had to stretch to adjust to the students' needs and where interdisciplinary planning took a great deal of time and patience, was difficult but also rewarding. "It's tough, but it's worthwhile."

Building relationships comes easily to me

"Jennifer" is in her mid thirties and started her teaching career at a Native American school. After three years there she worked at a junior high in the district before transferring to Thomas Jefferson when it opened four years ago. All told, Jennifer has taught for eleven years. She is an English teacher in the Business & Technology Academy.

Images of relationships occur often in Jennifer's interview. When she was in high school Jennifer got out of a bad situation and was able to find a school where there were "teachers who cared whether you were successful or not and took extra time." This made all the difference for her and it has set the tone for her own experience as a teacher.

Her first teaching assignment was at a Native American school where she experienced the importance of generational relationships. While teaching at a junior high she found that “instead of teaching about a curriculum, you’re trying to engage them and help them to self-discover. The only way to do that was by building a relationship with them.” There she was also able to build strong relationships with her fellow teachers. During a summer training session, “We all came away from that knowing each other, knowing where we came from, knowing why we had chosen to teach.” This has been an important part of her life as a teacher.

Transferring to the new high school, Jennifer hoped to maintain old and to establish new relationships. Her experience at Jefferson has been mixed. She described an uncomfortable meeting with her principal. The principal told her that teaching AP English was going to be her niche. She found this almost insulting. He didn’t know her. “How does he know what my niche is?”

One way that relationships were fostered at her new school was through the establishment of Critical Friends Groups. Jennifer found these groups very helpful, but now they’ve been disbanded. She continues to sustain ties to some of those from her group and still, her relationships with her students are key and keep her focused. “My job is really to figure out what are the needs of this particular child, to move them forward with their goals.” In her teaching, she continues to be focused on relationships with her students. “It’s fun to have that relationship with the kids. I look forward to sharing.”

Trying to make the system work

“Spencer” is in his late thirties and originally trained as an engineer. He has been a math and physics teacher for thirteen years. Spencer is soft-spoken and quietly confident. He is now a part of the Business & Technology Academy at Thomas Jefferson. This year Spencer is teaching physics, calculus, and pre-calculus.

Spencer studied engineering in college and has many of the sensibilities of a builder, a problem solver. He spoke of his goals for the Business & Industry Academy and some of the obstacles along the way. “What makes B&I Academy different? Actually, as teachers, we’re kind of asking that all the time.” It’s not an easy question to answer. “Our mission in my team was to get business into our classes. . . . we had a lot of energy at the beginning of the year on that, but it’s kind of faded as we get into the everyday hustle and bustle.”

One of the difficulties has been in dealing with the many and sometimes conflicting district directives. “We had district initiatives and it was almost silly. We had our heads spinning from one initiative to another.” Eventually, it came to the point that “we kind of rebelled.” As a math leader in his academy Spencer worked to set up new math requirements. When the district said no, “I even pushed back and I said, ‘Well, aren’t we a small school?’” The answer was basically, no. They do not have that level of autonomy. The reality has not yet caught up with the promise of the reform. “As far as the small schools and the academy, it hasn’t affected me, really, yet. I’m looking forward to it happening.”

Spencer has also had to struggle to put in place a looping sequence for math students in his academy. “I’ve managed to finagle my way into classes where I kind of

got to follow my students in mathematics.” He is also looking for ways to incorporate the academy mission into the classroom. “I’m looking forward to the day when we can really give the B&I Academy its identity.” Spencer believes in the many positive possibilities of the academies and he is trying hard to make the system work.

Lost in the shuffle

“Daniel” is about forty and has been teaching for eighteen years. After teaching for three years at a small magnet school in California, Daniel moved north and has been teaching drama and English in the Riverbank district since then. He is a part of the Arts Academy at Thomas Jefferson.

Early in his career Daniel taught at a small magnet school in California with only 200 students and ten teachers. There, the experience was intimate and flexible. At Jefferson, he has often felt the odd man out. “There, it was a big family, and here it’s more institutional.” “Here, there are teachers working in different academies for two or three years that I’ve never met.”

Given his earlier experience with a small school, Daniel had hopes of a similar environment developing at Jefferson High. Instead of a close-knit and focused group of teacher/leaders, he has experienced frustration and even a sense of betrayal as promises have been forgotten, plans have been made and then arbitrarily changed. For instance, many difficulties arose in trying to institute the school’s ideal for advisories. It was frustrating

to be told I was having one group and then have that group taken away and then I got another group and then I was told I was going to have *that* group and then have that group being taken away as well. Because as different administrators

took over the program and different ideas came into play then we changed it all around.

With new leaders coming in, plans continued to change.

We spent probably four faculty meetings discussing and then she decided that was it . . . and then when we got our new principal for the academy, she decided things should be different and just told us how things would be different. So, that was the third plan.

Some of these new structures were confusing and irritating to parents as well.

They want to meet their teachers, but they don't get to meet their teachers during student-led conferences. They get to meet the advisor and I may or may not be a teacher of the student. And so there's some frustration with that.

Daniel has worked within the school's planning structures to try to address some of these problems, but the results have been less than satisfying.

Last year I served on the advisory committee where we went to different schools and talked about a bunch of different things, about how to improve [advisories]. Our committee made several recommendations last spring, after our yearlong exploration. And all the ideas were largely ignored.

Much of this experience has left Daniel feeling lost in the shuffle. His voice was drowned out by the din of changes as the academy leaders made new rules and assignments. In his position as a drama teacher he felt particularly vulnerable. "I would

love for the administration to change the way they think about theatre and offer those classes again, and to be a theatre teacher. The future is not bright around here for that.

. . . Yeah, I'm the odd man out."

Creating a supportive culture for students and teachers

"Marcus" is in his mid thirties and has been teaching science for ten years. After teaching for several years at a junior high in the district, Marcus was part of the design team for Thomas Jefferson and has been a part of the Math & Science Academy. This year he is teaching biology and geology.

When Marcus was on the planning team for this school, the superintendent told them that he wanted to design a high school that really worked. "Okay, so a high school that really teaches *all* the students?" Marcus was excited to take up that challenge. The start up of this new high school reignited his passion for teaching. "The fundamental thing for a teacher is, 'Can you connect with that student as a human being, not simply as someone sitting in your class who is supposed to do what you say, but as a human being?'" He saw that at this school there was the possibility to be "totally dedicated toward getting *all* students to passing the [state test]. All students, not just the 85% who always pass, but 100%."

Coming from a junior high experience where teachers had worked together across disciplines to focus on students' needs, he advocated for a more integrated approach. "What we realized was the generalist approach could help *all* students in there." As Marcus's ideas about teaching became more radical in his mind, he raised the issue of how this came in conflict with what the public expected. "What did the

community actually want? And that's one of the things that I wrestle with." It's not an easy question to answer. There was pressure from the community to recreate a familiar comprehensive high school. There was also pressure from the district to pull back from block classes. "I need to be able to teach *all* students. Are you really going to let me do that, for real?" Marcus has been testing the waters, but he described himself holding back for now, making compromises, waiting.

Marcus described a tension between serving the community and its desires and serving all students and their needs. He felt himself in conflict. Part of him felt that he knows what is best, and yet he also believed that to impose his priorities might go against the community's need to feel safe.

What I'm starting to come to believe now is that society expects a high school to have a tradition and a culture that can become the identity of the student when they come there. It's how you feel safe. You become that culture.

People don't necessarily like change; it's uncomfortable and sometimes threatening. At the same time, Marcus could see that a school culture was evolving. Change was happening, and if all teachers were supported, they in turn could support all students.

We've got to find a way of recruiting students who want to be here

"Jason" is in his mid twenties and this is his first year of teaching. He did his student teaching in the district and was hired to teach social studies for the College Prep Academy at Thomas Jefferson and to coach football. Jason is the only social studies teacher in this newer academy.

Jason spoke a great deal about the students in his academy and how many of them don't seem to fit the ideal for the academy's particular mission. "I'd say about 75% had no clue. They were just trying to figure out high school. They really didn't want to be here." A part of his job, as he saw it, was to get students and their parents to buy into what his academy was offering. The issue was, "how to motivate those students, how to reach those students when the mission is one thing, but the students are not really buying into it."

The academy's mission was to prepare students for college and yet to attract those who do not have that expectation. "With the goal of going to college and that motivation, maybe it just hasn't clicked for them yet and they just don't understand that that's the goal." Getting these pieces to fit was seen as critical for the academy's success. "I have hope that some of these students will at some point in time, start to see that." It's been difficult to bring this vision to life. "We're college prep *also*, it's just that we're taking students who may not fit that category." The problem was seen to lie with the students. The school was fine; it just needs better students. "I think as we get toward getting some juniors and seniors, I think we'll get a lot more parent buy-in and a lot more student involvement."

Teaching is almost more like marketing. The academy is a fixed product or service that needs buyers. The right kinds of clients need to be attracted and convinced that they want this product. "Another thing is I think we got to, there's got to be something we have to figure out a better way of recruiting students that want to be here, that want to be involved."

I'm very pleased to be here

“Emma” is in her mid fifties and has been teaching math for thirteen years. She began her career on the east coast and took thirteen years off to raise her children. Emma is in her first year of teaching at Thomas Jefferson as part of the College Prep Academy. This year she is teaching pre-calculus and a remedial math course.

From the very beginning, Emma’s experience with Jefferson High School was described positively. The district, the building principal, the leaders of the academy, and the teachers were described as friendly and supportive. She even had a good feeling during a phone interview. “The principal was extremely nice to talk to. I was very comfortable talking with him.” Things continued to look very positive soon after being hired. “Before school started we met and planned for the academy. So, I had a good feeling for everybody here before school even started.” Very welcoming peers have assisted Emma’s transition to the new school.

The teachers that have been here were extremely helpful too and whatever needed to be done, even as far as moving my furniture and stuff, they just were very open and caring. And so that was very nice too. I felt very much at home right from the beginning.

Even the district has provided Emma with positive professional experiences. “The whole district meets, all the math teachers meet together... that’s also something very unique. I’ve never had that before.” All this has made her feel privileged. “I feel very honored to be here and be able to work in this situation.”

As she began to work with students, there were some rough spots, but these seem to have smoothed out. “There were a lot of behavior problems...but this semester

I'm not teaching any 9th graders and that has made all the difference in the world.... This semester is much more satisfying." Just as she has felt warmly accepted by people at the school, Emma hoped to create a welcoming environment for her students. "I think seeing us and knowing us, that we really care and that we're here day in and day out and year in and year out that can make a big difference."

In search of a true small school

"Rachel" is about forty and worked for the Coalition of Essential Schools when she was in graduate school. She began teaching in the area at a junior high and then moved to Thomas Jefferson when it opened four years ago. Rachel has been teaching social studies and English for twelve years. She is part of the Math & Science Academy.

Even before she became a teacher, Rachel was exploring ideas about school reform. "While I was in graduate school I worked at the Coalition of Essential Schools . . . and I learned a lot about the principles of the coalition." She also was able to see what a variety of schools were doing, including creating small learning communities. Knowing what other schools have done has helped to shape the idea of what sort of school she would like to join. It has also affected her level of satisfaction with the reforms at Jefferson.

Initially, Rachel was attracted to the new high school because it held out the possibility of what she was looking for. Up-coming changes in the district were going to affect her position as junior highs were transformed to middle schools. These schools were to become large centers of students. "I did not want to teach at a big middle school." Transferring to the new high school began to look attractive. "There was the

idea of creating smaller learning communities.” This idea, however, did not become the reality of her experience. Her academy “pretty much feels like a regular comprehensive high school, but a medium sized high school, not a small school.” Matched against her ideals, the reality of Jefferson’s development at times has been disappointing. “It’s too big and that has interfered with elements of the original design and principles that were involved in this school.” Somewhat disillusioned, Rachel was beginning to look elsewhere.

I hope to find a small school closer to my home and that ideally is involved with the Coalition of Essential Schools. So, I don’t really have hopes for this school. I mean, there are ways that this is a comfortable place for me, but it’s not very satisfying.

This academy fits my personality

“Stephanie” is in her mid twenties and is finishing her first year of teaching. She is part of the Arts Academy at Thomas Jefferson. Stephanie grew up in the area and did her student teaching at a high school that was similarly divided into academies. She teaches science and math. She is also starting a speech and debate club at the school.

Stephanie was finishing her first year as a full-time teacher. The experience has been emotionally intense. In spite of this, she spoke about her work with confidence and cheerful enthusiasm. “This year has been a matter of pulling from my own personality and I’d say my passion for my subject.” She was so excited about school that after spring break and a week off, “I was excited to come back to work. . . . You want to go back because you truly want to be there.”

Stephanie saw much of her own excitement within her students. She described the students of her academy as having a particular vitality that fit her personality. “It’s really inspiring to see these kids and their ideas and how passionate they are when they’re fifteen.” She has even accepted additional duties, teaching a fourth class and starting an after school club.

The small size of her academy has put her in a position to work independently and take on responsibilities that most beginning teachers do not experience. She said that it suits her well. “I’m a huge individual worker, where I learn better by making the mistake and the going back and working from there.” Stephanie has now also taken on the responsibility of designing a new course for next year. “It’s a huge ego boost for me and it makes me feel really capable.” This new task let her exercise what she saw as one of her strengths. “I know I can; I’m extremely creative; . . . I just pull things out of the drawer and it comes in handy that I *am* an artistic person, because then I’m able to just randomly start thinking of things.” Stephanie felt that starting out her career at an academy that was also new and growing was a perfect fit.

Conclusion

Taken individually, these teachers are who they are. Some are just starting a career; others are considering retirement. They speak for themselves and yet others may share their experiences, feelings, and perceptions. I hope by giving space to each one here, that the following analyses of common themes and issues will not homogenize their voices entirely.

Appendix C

Observation Protocol**General Organization/Activities:**

What sorts of assignments are given to the students?

How is the classroom physically laid out?

How does the teacher conduct the class? Teaching style?

Personalization:

Are there examples of individualization?

Collaboration:

Does the teacher give evidence of collaborating?

School Mission:

Are references made to the school mission or norms?

Parent Interaction:

Is there mention of parent role?

Teacher Identity:

How does the teacher refer to his/herself?

The role of the teacher?

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Outline

Teacher Identity and Small School Reform

Dan Lovitt, University of Washington

Categories and representative samples of questions being asked:

Personalization:

What does personalization look like for you?

What sort of individualization are you able to incorporate in your classes?

How do you see your role in relation to your students?

Collaboration:

What opportunities do you have to work with other teachers?

In what way has that changed since the school's transition?

What sorts of teacher groups exist at this school?

In what way are you involved in department or building decisions?

School Mission:

What is the mission of this school?

How would you describe the character of flavor of this academy?

What role have teachers had in shaping the activities and goals of the school?

What does the school mission mean to you and your practice?

Parent Interaction:

What sort of interactions do you have with parents?

What is your ideal for parents?

Teacher Identity:

How long have you been teaching?

How long have you been at this school?

What courses have you taught?

How do you define your position?

How do you describe yourself as a teacher?

What is your main goal as a teacher?

How has this changed, if at all, since the restructuring?

What would be your ideal teaching situation?

What are your hopes for the future?

Appendix E

**UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
CONSENT FORM
Teacher Identity and Small School Reform**

Researcher: Dan Lovitt, Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, College of Education

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Faculty Advisor: Dr. Brad Portin, Associate Professor, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, College of Education

Telephone: (206) 221-3454 Email: bportin@u.washington.edu

Researchers' statement

I am asking you to be in a research study. The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information you will need to help you decide whether to be in the study or not. Please read the form carefully. You may ask questions about the purpose of the research, what I would ask you to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When I have answered all your questions, you can decide if you want to be in the study or not. This process is called "informed consent." I will give you a copy of this form for your records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I want to better understand how teachers in small schools think about their jobs as teachers and how the school's restructuring may affect classroom practice. I would like to interview teachers about their practice and about how they view themselves as teachers. I hope the results of this study will help us better understand how small school reform may impact classroom practice and teachers' professional identity.

STUDY PROCEDURES

I would like to observe in your classroom for approximately fifteen to twenty hours over the course of three weeks beginning as early as December 2006 and ending no later than April 2007. I will arrange times that are convenient for you. I want to know what it's like to be a teacher at this school. I will not be evaluating teacher practice. Notes from these observations will allow me to go beyond general survey type of interview questions in order to understand teachers' perspectives and perceptions of the roles they play. Conversations that we may have during the course of the study and actions that I observe while I am in your classroom may be recorded in my notes. You do not have to do any special preparation; rather, I hope to see what typically occurs in your classroom.

If you choose to be in this study, I would also like to interview you about your experiences in teaching at a small school and interpersonal relationships. The interview(s) will last about 30 to 60 minutes and will focus on your role as a teacher. For example, I will ask you to describe your professional and personal goals at this school. You do not have to answer every question.

I would like to audiotape your interview(s) so that I can have an accurate record. Only I will have access to the audiotapes, which will be kept in a locked file cabinet. I will transcribe your

interview recording, assign a code to the transcript, and then destroy the recording by August 31, 2007. Please indicate below whether or not you give your permission for me to audiotape your interview(s).

I would also like to collect examples of classroom and schoolwide documents such as student handbooks, classroom rules, course syllabi, and memoranda in order to get a sense of the school's mission and the roles of teachers.

RISKS, STRESS, OR DISCOMFORT

Some people feel that providing information for research is an invasion of privacy. Some people feel self-conscious when they are audio-recorded. Some people may feel stress when talking about their feelings towards their work. Your participation in this study is voluntary and confidential. Your name and the name of your school will not be shared with others nor used in any publication. Audiorecordings will be destroyed following transcription.

ALTERNATIVES TO TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY

You may choose not to participate in this study.

BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

You may not directly benefit from taking part in this research study.

OTHER INFORMATION

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You can stop at any time. All of the information you provide will be confidential. However, if I learn that you intend to harm yourself or others, we must report that to the authorities. To insure your confidentiality, I will code the study information. I will keep the link between your name and the code in a separate, secured location until August 31, 2007. I will then destroy the link. If the results of this study are published or presented, your name and the name of your school will not be used.

I may want to re-contact you to clarify information from your interview(s). In that case, I will telephone or email you and ask you for a convenient time to ask you additional questions closely related to your interview(s). Please indicate below whether or not you give your permission for me to re-contact you for that purpose. Giving your permission for me to re-contact you does not obligate you in any way.

Printed name of study staff obtaining consent Signature Date

Subject's statement

This study has been explained to me. I volunteer to take part in this research. I have had a chance to ask questions. If I have questions later about the research, I can ask the researcher listed above. If I have questions about my rights as a research subject, I can call the Human Subjects Division at (206) 543-0098. I will receive a copy of this consent form.

I give my permission for the researcher to audiotape my interview.

I do NOT give my permission for the researcher to audiotape my interview.

I give my permission for the researcher to re-contact me to clarify information.

I do NOT give my permission for the researcher to re-contact me to clarify information

Printed name of subject

Signature of subject

Date

Copies to: Researcher
 Subject
 Subject's Medical Record (if applicable)

VITA

Dan O. Lovitt was born a small child in Kansas City, MO. His family soon moved to Kirkland, WA. Dan was able to catch up with them a short time later. As he grew up, he became older and did many things that he doesn't really want to go into right now. At the University of Washington he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in drama and history in 1982. In 1989, at Western Washington University, Mr. Lovitt earned a Master of Arts degree in Theatre. In 2007, he earned a Doctor of Philosophy degree in education from the University of Washington. The rest is history.