Stories of Teachers' Long-term Experiences with the National Writing Project

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Jeff and to my sons, Calvin and Trevor. The stories we continue to make together fill my life with purpose, joy, and love.

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This research would have never been completed without the tremendous support of so many friends, colleagues, and family members. Their trust in my work and my ability to do it was sustaining.

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To Calvin and Trevor, my amazing sons. Thank you for being models of curiosity in my life. Your questioning of this world has led me to more questions. You are the inspiration for all of my scholarship and teaching, for all of my living and loving. I am so grateful for your patience through this research journey. You bring me more joy than you will ever know.

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often). This milestone in my life, like every milestone in my life, would not have been possible without you. Thank you for believing. Thank you for loving me.

Abstract

Stories of Teachers' Long-term Experiences with the National Writing Project

The purpose of this study is to utilize an interpretive design with narrative representation to explore the meaning-making of National Writing Project (NWP) participants regarding their long-term association with the NWP. The NWP is one long-standing professional development network that has been shown to impact teacher retention positively. Capturing the stories of educators will provide insight into how educators describe and make meaning of their continued professional development (CPD) with the NWP and how it relates to their long-term career satisfaction.

Employing sociocultural theory and Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) as a framework for investigating the recursive nature of NWP CPD, the proposed research aims to illuminate the *hows* of teacher learning in NWP CPD experiences to inform the field on how to elevate teacher professionalism and dedication to the teaching career. The study fills a gap in the literature about CPD, focusing on the nuances of how teachers learn and grow instead of on the components of CPD. The work also begins to fill a methodological gap, utilizing new narrative data collection protocols to center teachers' voices while also utilizing storytelling-as-research as data presentation.

Keywords: continued professional development, National Writing Project, recursive writing process, Relational Cultural Theory, sociocultural theory, teacher satisfaction, writing process theory, storytelling-as-research

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Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

Action Research (AR): In terms of education, action research is practitioner research that aims to improve the work in the classroom. Sagor and Williams (2017) define action research as "any investigation conducted by the person or the people empowered to take action concerning their own actions, for the purpose of improving further actions" (p. 6).

Continued Professional Development (CPD): As refenced in this dissertation, Continued Professional Development is any structure, mandated or voluntary, that educators participate in to learn and grow as educators. In contrast to PD (see below), CPD refers to continuous teacher learning over time that is connected to participants' current practice in education.

National Writing Project (NWP): The NWP is "the nation's largest network of lead educators, K–university and across the curriculum, focused on improving the teaching of writing and learning in schools and communities nationwide" ("About NWP," n.d.). The NWP is housed in nearly 200 universities (called local sites) under the network's national umbrella organization. The universities, in partnership with local schools, provide hubs for PD and CPD to area teachers, and many provide writing programs for students.

National Writing Project Continued Professional Development (NWP CPD): Any professional development Teacher-Consultants engage in with the NWP or their NWP local site after participating in the Invitational Summer Institute. There are a variety of NWP CPD opportunities offered to Teacher-Consultants at both the

local (varied by site) and national level. This dissertation focuses on participants' stories of NWP CPD.

National Writing Project Fellow: An educator participating in an NWP Local Site's Invitational Summer Institute.

National Writing Project Local Site: One of the nearly 200 sites, usually university-based, of the national network of the National Writing Project.

National Writing Project Invitational Summer Institute (ISI): A four- to five-week (local site's choice) intensive summer professional development opportunity for K-University educators who teach any content area(s). Educators must apply and interview to attend an ISI. Educators focus on learning about writing (their own and that of their students), writing instruction, and writing theory in order to grow as writers and instructors. The ISI is the entry point to becoming a Teacher-Consultant with the local site and the NWP which leads to further opportunities for continued professional development.

National Writing Project Teacher-Consultant (TC): The title an NWP educator receives after completing a local site's Invitational Summer Institute.

Professional Development (PD): As refenced in this dissertation, Professional Development is any structure, mandated or voluntary, that educators participate in to learn and grow as educators. In contrast to CPD (see above), PD often pertains to short, isolated presentations or workshops.

Professional Development Facilitators (PDFs): Those educators who design and provide professional development for other educators.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): As defined by Learning Forward, Professional Learning Communities are groups of educators that engage in continuous improvement and develop collective responsibility. Many PD and CPD opportunities for educators utilize PLCs, but some utilize PLCs as collaborative learning done by teachers. The NWP creates true PLCs as defined by Learning Forward (see Table K1, column 3, in Appendix K, for literature support).

Recursive Writing Process Theory: Although writing is often still represented in classrooms as a linear path of steps to a final product, recursive writing process theory places equal if not more focus on the cyclical processes of writing. In this way the writing process is seen as recursive, a back and forth returning to words and steps along the way to a final piece. This recursive process can go on for some time until the author chooses to pronounce the piece complete. Foundational writing theorist Emig (1983) explains: "processes of writing do not proceed in a linear sequence: rather, they are recursive—we not only plan, then write, then revise; but we also revise, then plan, then write" (p. 140).

Relational Cultural Theory (RCT): Jordan (2017) explains, "Relational Cultural Theory posits that people grow through and toward relationships throughout the life span. Interpersonal connections built on mutual empathy contribute to zest, clarity, worth, creativity, and a desire for more connection" (p. 228). This research utilizes this theory as a lens to see the work in NWP CPD.

Snapshot Writing: Utilized in the focus group and writing revision methods of this dissertation, snapshot writing is defined by Lane (1993) as a focusing in on a

small moment in time to create writing that "contains smells and sounds as well as color and light" (p. 35). This writing is like using a zoom lens or a "magic camera" and tries to capture "close physical detail" that makes storytelling come alive for the reader (Lane, 1993, pp. 34–35).

Sociocultural Theory: The NWP itself is guided by a sociocultural model for learning. Grounded in the work of Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dewey, this theoretical framework views knowledge as "socially and culturally constructed" (Wilhelm, Dube, & Baker, 2001). This research recognizes this as foundational to the work of RCT and how it works in NWP CPD.

Stepping Stones: Originally created and used by Ira Progoff (1975) in his intensive journaling workshops, I adapted the stepping stones protocol for use in the methodology in order to collect touchstone moments participants acknowledge with the NWP. Progoff designed this exercise to have journalers choose influential moments in their lives to write further about; I used the same listing technique for participants to choose influential moments with their association with the NWP to further write about in more specific detail (see snapshot writing).

Storytelling-as-research: Lewis and Hildebrandt (2019) explain "Storytelling-as-research embraces the messiness and recursive process of stories and storytelling" (p. 4). I agree with Lewis and Hildebrandt's (2019) claim that storytelling is "one of the principal forms of human meaning-making" (p. 2). This research aimed to provide NWP TCs the space and time to share their stories of CPD and thus, help them to make meaning of those experiences.

Touchstone Moments: I define these as moments of connection with the NWP (local and/or national site) after the ISI. Participants listed these during their stepping stones exercise and chose one or more to write more fully about using snapshot writing (See Appendix T for participants' stepping stone lists).

Preface: Author's Snapshot Story

In 1997, a National Writing Project (NWP) local site selected me to attend its annual Invitational Summer Institute (ISI), a professional development experience for cross-curricular K-University educators. My advisor at Indiana University, where I was pursuing my master's degree, recommended the ISI. I needed six more transfer credits in order to complete my degree and the ISI would fulfill that requirement. My advisor spoke highly of the local site of the NWP I would attend, explaining that it was one of over 200 networked sites across the country, partially federally funded and supported by the umbrella organization of the National Writing Project (NWP).

At the start of that summer, I wondered if I should remain in teaching at all. I had just completed my fourth year of instructing in adolescent correctional facilities. Before leaving Indiana University to return to my home state, one of my students tackled me in front of the class after I asked him to get on task. The correctional officers were there to pry my student off my back, so thankfully my physical injuries were minor.

Yet more than my knees were bruised as I left the facility a month after the incident. The idealism I carried into the profession only four years earlier was also bruised by multiple clashes with correctional staff about what was and was not appropriate to teach the "kind of students" in my classes. The guards confiscated almost any writing students did in my classes and deemed it inappropriate by court standards. I knew then, as I do now, that writing is ultimately a reflection of who you are. What the guards said was inappropriate writing was just another way of saying my students were inappropriate people. I struggled with supporting their identities as learners, as people, while stumbling through my own early teacher identity issues. All the swirling questions

in my mind from daily classroom interactions (What was my behavior management style?) to larger issues of purpose (What assignments promoted social justice in a jail setting?) to the most difficult question of all (Did I have the necessary skills to be an effective teacher?) intersected on the day I entered the Writing Project ISI. In my heart, I wanted the NWP to affirm that I should continue in the field. My advisor claimed writing project sites were inspirational places. Still, I was pessimistic. I thought the ISI would only provide credits for the completion of a degree I would never use again.

Within the first moments on the first day of the ISI, a tiny woman with a commanding voice, one of the five staff members, stood before the 25 educators in the room and said, "The Writing Project believes teachers are the best teachers of teachers. Without further ado, here is Kim Sloan to teach us." I had been asked earlier in the summer, along with all the other fellows, to create a hands-on presentation about writing and/or the teaching of writing. I had also been told just a few weeks prior that I would be giving my presentation first. Still, I thought we would have some sort of opening activity or mingling. The institute started at 9:00 and I was about to present: 9:03. The presentation I gave was about teaching incarcerated boys poetry; I led the other teachers through the writing, revision, and sharing that I did with my students. I ended the presentation by sharing my students' poems and supporting my methods with theory I had read. I had been instructed on the format of this presentation by one of the staff members when I told her my idea for the presentation's content. In the following five weeks of the institute, I would participate in 24 more presentations structured much like my own and would learn about a variety of writing techniques by doing them myself.

The presentation went by in a blur due to pure adrenaline. I had practiced and knew what I wanted to do by heart, but I only remember the sound of my heart pounding in my ears. What I do remember with crystal clarity was one of the staff members coming up after my presentation to help me gather my materials quickly before the next presenter. He said nothing, but placed a small note in the palm of my hand. When I went back to my seat, I read it. It simply said: "That was amazing. You are going to bring so much to this Writing Project."

I am now in my 28th year of teaching alternative populations and my 20th year of teaching graduate level education courses. As I pursue my doctorate, it seems critical to study the NWP as professional development, the same professional development that not only saved my career but continues to nurture, invigorate, and guide my practice these many years later. As I read the literature on the NWP, it became clear the organization saves and sustains teachers' careers. What is not known specifically is *how* the NWP does so. This study aims to study educators' long-term involvement stories with the NWP in order to demystify teachers' enduring experiences and growth with the NWP.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Widespread teacher turnover is a perilous situation in America. In response, the issue of attrition has been widely researched (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Sparks, 2018; Sutcher, Darling-Hammond, & Carver-Thomas, 2016; Zhang & Zeller, 2016)**.** Studies state an estimated 40 to 50 percent of educators leave the field within their first five years (Sparks, 2018; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). Sutcher et al. (2016) reported teacher attrition is at "8% annually," twice that of other countries (p. 3). Their report demands policy makers focus on attrition, not just recruitment, to mitigate teacher shortages (Sutcher et al., 2016). Due to the growing body of research on this crisis, a renewed interest in how teachers are prepared for the field and their continued professional development (CPD) is receiving increased scrutiny (Loughran, 2014).

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond's (2017) study of national survey data revealed only about one third of turnover can be attributed to retirement, while "about 2/3 of teachers leave for other reasons, most due to dissatisfactions with teaching" (p. 1). Dissatisfactions are defined as burdens related to the accountability movement, not feeling supported by administration, or a sense of not being fulfilled (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The resulting exodus continues the expensive cycle of hiring dissatisfied and/or underqualified teachers and incessant training. Without a qualified, engaged, and fully staffed faculty, students are unable to achieve their potential (Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2005; Guin, 2004; Kraft, Marinell, & Yee, 2016; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2013).

However, some professional development (PD) has been found to have a positive effect on teacher retention (Borko, 2004; Giles, Davis, & McGlamery, 2009; Ovenden-

Hope, Blandford, Cain, & Maxwell, 2018). In fact, Giles et al. (2009) found those who participated in impactful PD stayed in the education field longer. Although there is much discussion about what "impactful" PD for teachers is, most agree PD must be ongoing and create environments for the "improvement in instructional practices and student learning" (Borko, 2004, p. 3). Clearly, teacher learning, although scantily studied, is key to understanding impactful PD and its connection to retaining teachers.

One long-standing continuing professional development (CPD) network, the National Writing Project (NWP), has been shown to dramatically impact teacher retention. The Legacy Study, which reviewed 30 years of involvement in NWP programming, revealed "participation in the NWP helps keep teachers in the profession: 98 percent of writing project teachers remain in education throughout their careers" (Friedrich, Swain, LeMahieu, Fessahaie, & Mieles, 2008; Friedrich & Whitney, 2013; LeMahieu, 2008). The high rate at which NWP teachers stay in the profession is worthy of deeper investigation.

The National Writing Project (NWP)

According to its website, the NWP is "the nation's largest network of lead educators, K–University and across the curriculum, focused on improving the teaching of writing and learning in schools and communities nationwide" ("About NWP," n.d.). The NWP is housed in nearly 200 universities (called local sites) under the network's national umbrella organization. The universities, in partnership with local schools, provide hubs for PD and CPD to area teachers, and many provide writing programs for students as well.

As will be detailed in the following literature review, the NWP's seminal program, the Invitational Summer Institute (ISI), has been studied for its transformative properties (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Kaplan, 2008; Locke, et al., 2011; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Whitney, 2008). The ISI is a four- to five-week experience where teachers of all content areas and grade levels (K-University), called fellows, participate in a variety of experiences revolving around writing and the teaching of writing (see Appendix A for a logic model of a theory of change for ISI components). For example, fellows work in writing groups where they give and receive feedback in order to revise original writing. The ISI fellows also create hands-on and theory-supported demonstration lessons to share with the other ISI participants. These presentations are peer-reviewed by the fellows and staff and when vetted, the teachers may be provided opportunities through the NWP to offer their presentations as professional development sessions at conferences, in courses, and for schools and systems. Once the fellows have completed the ISI, they are given the title of Teacher-Consultant (TC) and are invited back for a variety of continued professional development opportunities with the NWP.

In addition to the numerous studies on the ISI, the NWP has also been examined as a program that creates teacher leaders who give back extensively to the field of education (Friedrich, et al., 2008; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Whitney, Zuidema, Fredricksen, 2014). Moreover, researchers have investigated the transfer of methods learned in the ISI to classroom practices (Gallagher, et al, 2014; Gallagher, Arslan, Woodworth, 2016; Lieberman & Wood, 2003; Locke, 2015; Whitney & Friedrich, 2013). Finally, the NWP has been studied as developing teachers who themselves participate as writers (Lieberman & Wood, 2001; Locke, 2015; Locke, et al.,

2011; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Street & Stang, 2009; Whitney, 2009; Whitney & Friedrich, 2013; Whitney, Zuidema, & Fredricksen, 2014).

What has not been fully explored are the "hows" of the *continual* impact the NWP has on its members long after the ISI has ended. Although it is clear from studies that the NWP invitational summer institute helps to develop teacher leaders who stay in the field of education when so many others leave, it is not explicitly clear *how* continued association—these educators' long-term continued professional development with NWP programming—contributes to a teacher's career. Investigating this topic would be beneficial to professional development providers and policy makers alike as American schools face the issue of teacher turnover and dissatisfaction.

Statement of the Problem

The forthcoming literature review clearly presents a flooded landscape of analyzing critical components and/or design features of effective PD, an aspect I originally thought was central to my study. However, it is evident from the review that PD features have been detailed extensively. In addition, the NWP is an exemplar for the kinds of CPD structures considered effective. What is visibly missing from the literature are the details of *how* teachers learn within these agreed-upon PD/CPD structures. As Kennedy (2016) states eloquently:

> We need to replace our current conception of 'good' PD as comprising a collection of particular design features with a conception that is based on more nuanced understanding of what teachers do, what motivates them, and how they learn and grow (p. 30).

My thorough review of NWP literature points to an exceptionality in how NWP enacts continued professional development that aligns with Kennedy's call for a new conception of PD. The NWP research I found most compelling alludes to "stances" or "orientations" or "core values" rather than a set of practices (Friedrich & Whitney, 2013; Lieberman & Wood, 2002; McCarthey & Kang, 2017; Wood & Lieberman, 2000). More research is needed into how the NWP develops these ways of being, a CPD culture, and how they connect to teacher satisfaction and resilience.

In addition, much of the research I investigated around teacher retention had a strong bias towards studying pre-service and novice teachers. The NWP provides an opportunity to investigate how the network's cultural norms sustain teachers at later stages of their careers. Moreover, when looking at teacher attrition, much of the work views the issue from a deficit model of why teachers are so "dissatisfied" with the field (Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009; Barnes, Crowe, Schaefer, 2007; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Curtis, 2012; Ingersoll, 2004; Levy, Fields, & Jablonski, 2006; Merrow, 1999; Peske & Haycock, 2006; Sparks, 2018; Sutcher, et al., 2016). I propose the research community would be better served by looking at programs that are working and have stayed vibrant in the face of increased accountability and ever-changing pressures. The NWP has been in existence and growing for over 40 years and much can be learned from listening to the voices of its members.

Finally, much of the NWP research focuses on the ISI or the legacy that Teacher-Consultants give back to the field. This study fills a gap in understanding how long-term NWP CPD is enacted and how it supports teachers at any stage of their careers. In other words, what is it the NWP gives to its members? NWP CPD appears to be self-

differentiating in that Teacher-Consultants choose from a variety of experiences. I believe what is needed is the in-depth nature of a qualitative methodology that asks participants to present detailed descriptions of their experiences. This methodology provides the kind of research Kennedy (2016) calls for when she states "Future research should attend more to how PD programs motivate teachers, how they intellectually engage teachers, and to whether programs are meaningful to teachers themselves" (p. 30). In order to get these nuanced responses about teachers' professional dispositions and how they are developed through CPD we must ask the teachers themselves.

Clearly, the research community is grappling with the issues surrounding teacher satisfaction. Although there is much agreement around the components of effective PD, much study is still needed to understand *how* teachers learn through PD. This study utilizes a qualitative interpretive design with narrative representation, storytelling-as-research, to investigate teachers' meaning making of their continued professional development experiences with a successful network, the NWP. Through rich data collection and analysis, the study also addresses a methodological gap since teachers' stories are presented not as snippets of quotes, but as detailed narratives. These stories of teachers' meaning-making are critical to better understanding more about how NWP Teacher-Consultants grow and stay committed to teaching.

Purpose and Research Questions

The study aims to contribute to understanding the role continued professional development plays in sustaining teachers' careers by exploring the meaning-making of NWP participants (known as TCs) regarding their long-term association with the network. The overarching research question and sub-questions designed to do so are:

How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of their experiences with the National Writing Project since their foundational Invitational Summer Institute experience (their continued professional development)?

- How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of relationship building in National Writing Project continued professional development (CPD) experiences?
- How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of recursivity of National Writing Project continued professional development (i.e.: in their teaching of writing, their own writing, professionalism, personal lives, etc.)?

Statement of Potential Significance

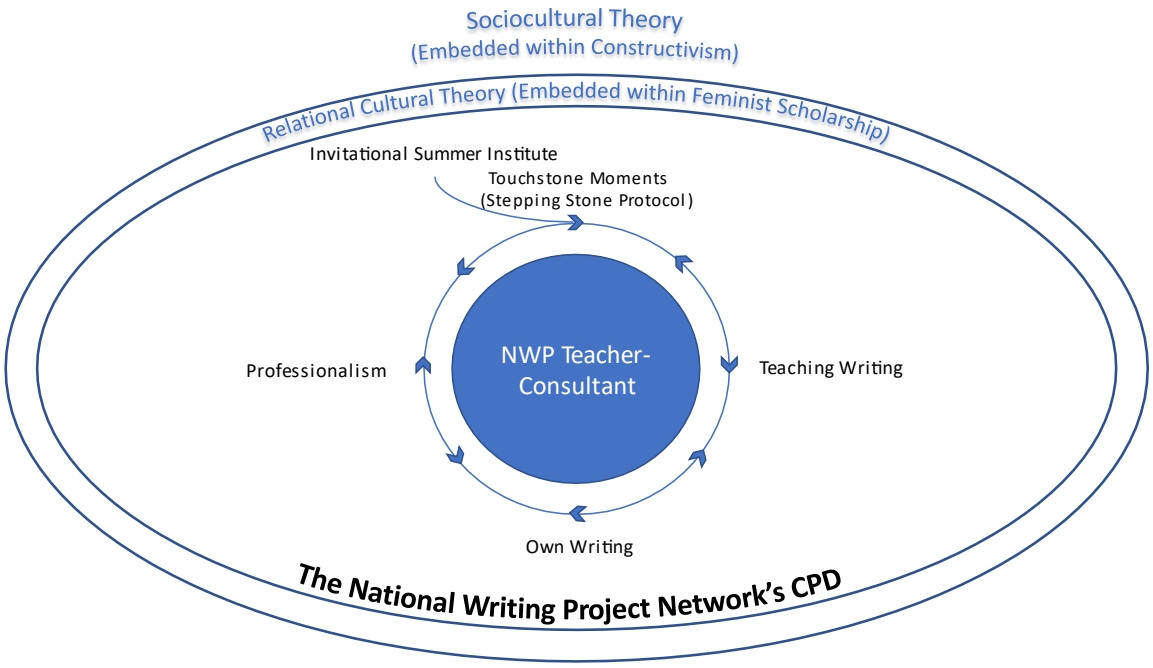
I believe teacher learning and growth are multifaceted and continual over the course of a career. The research community has done much to investigate teacher professional development in terms of its structures and components. The research about the NWP has gone further to investigate the transformative experiences of Teacher-Consultants in its seminal PD design, the Invitational Summer Institute. However, I believe the complexity of teachers' continued professional development is an area the research community needs to further investigate in richer ways. Specifically, the NWP is a network with a proven track record of promoting continued involvement. Therefore, I propose the NWP is an organization that provides a productive environment to study teachers' continued professional development experiences.

The study fills two gaps in the research. One, it holds potential significance in helping the education community better understand the nuances of teachers' experiences with CPD. Learning more about how teachers develop and make meaning can influence CPD providers' roles as well as policy makers' decisions. In-service teachers' learning experiences can be impacted positively which, in turn, helps students. Two, the study fills a methodological gap in its respect for the voices of teachers. Participants in the study will write stories about their touchstone moments, those moments of connection that hold meaning for them, with NWP continued professional development. These stories will be included in the data chapter in their entirety. These "moment in time" stories, also known as "snapshot stories," will be events or instances that resonated with the participants in their association with the NWP (Lane, 1993, p. 32) These snapshots will provide the space for in-depth experiences to be described and analyzed. The presentation of the participants' stories in their entirety allows for teachers' meaning-making to be emphasized, an area of need in the literature as we struggle to understand how teachers learn and grow through CPD.

Conceptual Framework

My conceptual framework, pictured below and also found in Appendix B, demonstrates relationships between Sociocultural Theory, Relational Cultural Theory (RCT), and the concept of recursivity found in writing process theory.

Figure 1.



Conceptually, I see NWP continued professional development functioning in the same recursive way as writing process theory does. Supported by Relational Cultural Theory and Sociocultural Theory, I believe NWP CPD sustains educators' career satisfaction through "touchstone moments." I define these as moments of connection and growth with the NWP after participants complete their foundational Invitational Summer Institutes. In this study, participants' touchstone moments will be collected through the use of a stepping stone writing protocol to be detailed later in this dissertation. The

conceptual framework serves as a lens for better understanding how cultural networks within a writing project local site as well as the larger national organization contribute to sustaining teachers' careers. After completing the forthcoming literature review, I see these constructs working together to help better understand teachers' meaning making through their long-term association with NWP CPD.

Each section below gives an overview of each of these components and then further explains its connection to the conceptual framework.

Recursive Writing Process Theory. The literature review confirmed the concept of recursivity found in writing process theory as a productive lens to view the work of the NWP (Friedrich & Whitney, 2013; Heenan, et al., 2006; Wood & Lieberman, 2000).

Although writing is often still represented in classrooms as a linear path of steps to a final product, writing process theory places equal if not more focus on the cyclical processes of writing. In this way the writing process is seen as recursive, a back and forth returning to words and steps along the way to a final piece. Foundational writing theorist Emig (1983) explains: "processes of writing do not proceed in a linear sequence: rather, they are recursive—we not only plan, then write, then revise; but we also revise, then plan, then write" (p. 140). This process involves a re-visioning of the overall product throughout its own construction. This recursivity also entails keeping the intended audience in mind and receiving continuous feedback for improvement.

Conceptually, I am suggesting this recursive nature also frames the continued professional development of the NWP as each member is invited repeatedly to participate in NWP structures, events, and learning throughout the rest of the Teacher-Consultant's career. Teacher-Consultants move back and forth between NWP CPD and the teaching of

writing to their students, their own writing, and their contributions to the profession. This recursive cycle, made up of touchstone moments of reconnection with the NWP, invigorates all parts of Teacher-Consultants' careers. This study proposes the recursive nature of NWP CPD provides teachers the needed and continual re-visioning of their careers as teachers of writing as well as their own identities as writers to sustain the necessary passion, energy, and professional growth required for longevity in the field. Therefore, recursivity is at work in the conceptual framework of this study and is represented by arrows cycling in both directions on the model (see Appendix B and page 9).

Sociocultural Theory. The NWP itself is guided by a sociocultural model for learning. Grounded in the work of Vygotsky, Bruner, and Dewey, this theoretical framework views knowledge as "socially and culturally constructed" (Wilhelm, Dube, & Baker, 2001). In a classroom, this theory guides instructors to provide opportunities for learning to students, but would take care to interact with students as the "more expert other" (Wilhelm, Dube, & Baker, 2001). In a sociocultural and co-constructivist classroom model, both teacher and student have a responsibility for the learning taking place.

Translated to adult learners such as those involved in NWP CPD, the theory presents as collaborative (Reusser & Pauli, 2015). Although participants are teaching each other and learning together, all are considered experts. Each instructor in the NWP is regarded as an authority and all are open to learning from each other and pushing each other's knowledge and practice (See Appendix C for Logic Model of NWP CPD). In this sociocultural model, participants embedded within experience all learning from an

inquiry stance (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). In addition, this inquiry stance is not an individualistic perspective, but is constructivist in nature. The foundational constructivist belief is "the social world is constantly being constructed through group interactions, and thus social reality can be understood via the perspectives of social actors enmeshed in meaning-making activities" (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 6). Thus, sociocultural theory is embedded in constructivism. Given these are guiding principles of the NWP, this research study is framed by the same conceptual framework (See Appendix B and page 8).

Conceptually, I am suggesting the work of the NWP CPD functions within this sociocultural model long after the Invitational Summer Institute experience for those who remain connected with the network. The conceptual model demonstrates Teacher-Consultants have "touchstone moments" with the network, instances of reconnection through NWP CPD, that potentially sustain their energy to teach (See Appendix B and page 8). Touchstone moments are those instances that have impacted the Teacher-Consultants through their continued association with the NWP. These moments will be different for each participant based on what NWP CPD experiences they choose to pursue and how they perceive and make meaning of those experiences. For this research, participants will be asked to capture these touchstone moments with NWP CPD through a writing protocol adapted from Ira Progoff's (1992) intensive journaling technique called "stepping stones." This operationalized protocol will be described in more detail in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

This study seeks to investigate how these moments of reconnection work for TCs in their careers as potential touchstone moments revolving around the teaching of writing,

their own writing development, and/or as critical reunions with their community of experts, a community that champions excellent teaching as well as continued inquiry. In addition, these moments of reconnection with the NWP as described by study participants reveal *how* teachers develop in ways that help the research community gain more insight into teacher learning.

I believe NWP continued professional development utilizes invitations to Teacher-Consultants after their Invitational Summer Institutes for a variety of experiences, captured in this research as participants' touchstone moments, within this continued sociocultural model. In this way, the professional learning community (PLC) TCs involved in an Invitational Summer Institute expands to a larger PLC including those participants from other institute years at their local site and even professionals from the national network. Each TC is invited back to collaborate again within this sociocultural model, but chooses in what way(s) and with whom they will participate, resulting in self-differentiating professional development. This study aims to reveal through teacher stories how Teacher-Consultants chose their CPD experiences and how they make meaning of the function of those experiences in their careers.

Relational Cultural Theory. The forthcoming literature review details my search methods that led to a careful consideration of the resilience literature I repeatedly encountered during my reading. I did not use "resilience" as a preliminary search term because it did not occur to me to do so, but instead used the terms "career longevity" and "teacher retention" as I sought out articles on sustaining teachers' careers. However, what I found in the articles from my searches were studies often centered on resilience theory (Bobek, 2002; Gu & Day, 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004).

My first response to the word “resilience” was negative in that I believe it connotes struggle. I have taught for over 28 years and know teaching can be challenging, but I feel the focus on resilience in research could make the career sound like something to endure and develop coping mechanisms for instead of a dynamic and exciting career that professionals evolve over time. The latter is the goal of continued professional development. I believe the NWP develops teachers to be happier in their work, not *necessarily* resilient in terms of overcoming hardships.

Having said that, one specific resilience theory that resonated with my project is relational cultural theory or RCT (Gillian, C., Spencer, R.; Weinberg, M.; & Bertsch, T., 2003; Jordan, 2006). Jordan (2017) explains, “Relational–cultural theory posits that people grow through and toward relationships throughout the life span. Interpersonal connections built on mutual empathy contribute to zest, clarity, worth, creativity, and a desire for more connection” (p. 228). As I read about RCT, I was intrigued by its association with supportive relationships and began to think about how this theory may be at work in the NWP. Theoretically, RCT is nestled inside of sociocultural theory as it “suggests that resilience resides not in the individual but in the capacity for connection” (Le Cornu, 2009; see Appendix B and page 8). In these ways RCT, although a resilience theory, connotes a positive framing for career satisfaction or well-being in the field.

Conceptually, applying this theory to a network that centers on various PLCs as structures proves a productive lens for viewing the meaning-making stories of TCs’ continual involvement in NWP continued professional development. RCT, situated within sociocultural theory, is valuable in investigating Teacher-Consultants’ meaning

making of their touchstone moments, especially those moments involving connection with others in the NWP (See Appendix B and page 8).

Summary of Methodology

A qualitative design was best suited to answer the posed research questions as it sought to capture individuals' meaning-making experiences with NWP continued professional development (CPD). I utilized a general interpretive design with narrative representation, storytelling-as-research, in order to highlight teachers' voices. Capturing the stories of Teacher-Consultants provided insight into how these educators made meaning of their NWP touchstone moments. Utilizing tenets of Relational Cultural Theory framed by Sociocultural Theory as a lens for looking at the recursive nature of NWP CPD throughout educators' careers, the study sought to illuminate the *hows* of teacher development through CPD experiences as well as inform the field on ways to elevate professionalism and dedication to teaching.

Data collection methods are detailed in the methods section and included: stepping stone and snapshot writing protocols to collect participants' narrative writings of touchstone moments, writing revision groups as focus groups, and follow-up one-on-one interviews. Additional data points took account of my own extensive fieldnotes from the focus groups and analytic memoing throughout the entire process. All focus groups and interviews were video- and audio-recorded and transcribed.

The participants' touchstone moments and their revision of them through a recursive process is at the core of this research. The participants chose moments that resonated with them in the NWP and revised them based on feedback received from other participants in a focus group. Analyzing the data collected during the group process in the

focus groups illuminated the similar group processes used in the NWP. A goal of this methodology was to illuminate the intricacy of participants' relationships with the network and its relation to meaning-making in their careers. I am interested in how these touchstone moments with NWP CPD recursively work between the participants' teaching of writing, their own writing lives, their professionalism, and their return to Project CPD offerings.

Additionally, the idea of recursive CPD was reflected in the data analysis, as I returned to all data collection sources again and again to inform the study's coherence as both process and product. I continuously wrote to process all data sources. As Gebhardt explains while grappling with a comprehensive theory of the writing process: "…only by clarifying how initial plans and spontaneous composition work together in writing can theory of the writing process help teachers understand the complex and dynamic act of writing" (Gebhardt, 1982, p. 627). I am proposing teaching is much like Gebhardt's conception in that we may plan instruction or even careers, but it is the "spontaneous composition" of both where we find the energy to teach (Gebhardt, 1982, p. 627). Utilizing the recursive nature of writing process theory as part of the methodological analysis, to be detailed more extensively later in this dissertation, was fruitful in "understanding the complex and dynamic" act of not just writing, but of career teaching—an act I believe is nurtured by long-term association with the NWP (Gebhardt, 1982, p. 627).

Data analysis, to be detailed in the methods section of this text, included connective strategies to present narratives as holistically and contextually as possible, reading and re-reading of the data, extensive analytic memoing, narrative summations,

and concept mapping. In addition to these planned analysis techniques, I remained open to other analytic practices that proved helpful to me as the study unfolded. These included creating large posters for each participant detailing their use of metaphorical language, coding all data sources three times using different analytic questions (to be further explained in Chapter 3), multiple re-watching of focus groups and interview recordings, writing narrative summations of each participant's involvement with the research, creating graphics to explore how the data was interacting with the theories, and my writing of narrative snapshot stories of the focus group experiences (see Chapter 4).

Limitations and Delimitations

The goal of this research was to provide an in-depth look at a few Teacher-Consultants' long-term experiences with the NWP. The study aims for depth of these experiences rather than breadth of many teachers' experiences. Teachers' voices often appear in research studies in soundbites, bits of quotes to support larger theoretical frames. By presenting the participants' stories in narratives they wrote themselves, this study aims to capture teachers' stories, giving the participants' voices more space for elaboration. The reader will not be able to condense the research into a list of components for continued professional development design, an often-sought-after goal of educational research. Instead, the reader will come away from the study with a deeper understanding of how these teachers learned and grew through their association with various continued professional development opportunities through the NWP. In turn, the study will provide a window into cultural aspects of continued professional development that will help designers and providers of extended professional development for educators see new possibilities for teacher growth.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the following literature review, I will provide an overview of the article set and search and how the literature led to a refinement of the study. This is an important section to include in order to provide transparency of my literature review process to my reader. I will then provide an overview of the literature review itself and how the components fit together for the research study.

Article Search and Set

In order to address the research question, it was important to take a systematic approach to investigating the established literature (see Appendix D for literature review approach). I began by reading Machi and McEvoy's (2012) *The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success*. This text provided me guidelines for approaching searches as well as how to analyze articles in relation to my topic.

After reviewing the national standards for professional development as recommended by my advisors and as outlined by the Learning Forward organization ("Standards for Professional Learning," n.d.), I decided I needed a search to provide an overview of how the research community is studying teacher PD in general. I began by reading and taking extensive notes on a literature review (Parkhouse, Lu, & Massaro, 2019) provided by my advisors. This review afforded several other sources to pursue, what I call "breadcrumb" resources. I examined a few of these to get a sense of the format and content of the literature reviews.

Next, I conducted a Google Scholar search using the key terms "teacher professional development" and "literature review," which resulted in 24,700 results. I narrowed this overwhelming number to 1,160 results by limiting the search to the year in

which I was researching, 2019. I began reviewing some of these, but realized it was still an unworkable amount. Therefore, I further narrowed the search by using the terms "continual professional development," "literature review," "teacher" and the year in which I was researching, 2019. I am most interested in teachers' continuing professional development (CPD), what the NWP delivers instead of isolated PD, and realized this would be a more productive search term to use. This provided me with a more reasonable 40 literature reviews to scan for relevance.

I used the following criteria for printing articles for a closer skimming for potential notetaking: the PD was within the field of education, the article was not a dissertation as I wanted fully peer-reviewed articles, and the central content was not about online formats of PD as most NWP CPD is face-to-face. When only two of the 40 seemed to meet my criteria for closer skimming, I changed the search criteria to "continuing" instead of "continual," a term I was repeatedly encountering. This, along with enlarging date parameters to include the last five years, widened my search considerably. With 573 titles to review, I continued to limit what to pursue keeping my goal of surveying the field's approach to studying PD and looking at peer-reviewed research. Just reading the titles provided insights into the current foci on self-efficacy, agency, and identity issues related to teacher CPD.

Utilizing advice from Machy and McEvoy (2012), after abandoning titles that didn't relate at all, I scanned the remaining abstracts for relevance to my work utilizing the guiding questions of "what am I actually trying to study" and, perhaps more importantly for me at this stage of my process, "what am I not going to study" (p. 58). I was able to winnow down my literature reviews for a closer skimming process to five

articles. My skimming process involved utilizing university databases to do an analysis of the quality of the publication, taking into consideration how often the piece was cited, and reading the abstract, introduction, and conclusion of each article. This skimming process afforded a systematic way to evaluate which articles should be read in full.

For all articles read in their entirety, I highlighted quotes I found helpful on printed hard copies and compiled notes in a Word document reflecting the following elements: method, brief description/claim, theoretical and/or conceptual framework used, what stood out to me, relation to my study, and new keywords to consider in future searches (see Appendix E). This extensive notetaking helped me to analyze the articles fully while also distilling key information for the forthcoming literature review. I also highlighted the most relevant resources in the reference section of each article for later consideration as I continued with my dissertation journey. Although time consuming, this exercise streamlined future literature review. It was also helpful in the present as I could see the repetition of researchers' names and citations, providing assurance that I was beginning to focus my research.

At this point, I had carefully analyzed four large literature reviews and one study from this process as well as four more "breadcrumb" literature reviews. Next, I completed this entire searching, scanning, skimming and note-taking method with the additional search terms of "continuing professional development," "literature review," and "in-service teachers." I did so due to the other reviews often focusing on pre-service teachers. The NWP network and my proposed study focuses on in-service educators. This additional literature review search resulted in three further articles, one literature review and two studies to fully annotate.

After reviewing the PD standards and the large literature reviews, I was ready to look for specific studies regarding the NWP. To do so, I repeated the above process of utilizing key terms, scanning for relevance, skimming, and choosing articles for full reading and annotating. I completed several searches with NWP as the focus, using different terms to find connections to career longevity and/or a theory on resilience that had surfaced in my earlier search (see Table F1 in Appendix F for search results; see Table F2 in Appendix F for reviewed ""“breadcrumb” articles). One insight I gained through this NWP literature search was while there is much literature on the network, especially the ISI, there is little about the NWP’s connection to teacher retention or direct studies on career longevity, although many alluded to its transformative and sustaining qualities as well as how the NWP CPD advances teacher leadership. Another interesting finding was much of the research I found was not peer-reviewed and many were dissertations.

I was also interested in if the NWP was being studied using narrative methodologies. After many specific searches, I widened the search using the terms “National Writing Project” and “narrative inquiry” from the last five years. This returned 88 results, but many were not helpful in terms of form (not peer-reviewed) or topics. After skimming all 88 titles, only 5 were printed out for a closer inspection. Ultimately, none were relevant enough for notating either due to the topic and/or the format. At first, I was frustrated by the NWP searches, but then realized the dearth of research was providing an argument for my study’s need. Completing this systematic review assured I was getting a comprehensive understanding of what the field is studying about my topic

in both contextual elements (i.e., standards, PD in general) and in specifics (i.e., NWP, career sustainability).

I did, however, review several NWP-related articles I found through breadcrumb resource lists and annotated them. Although these were not directly related to the NWP's role in career sustainability, I did find information to support the direction of my project and I began to make connections about how the findings of these studies could support my research aims. These details will be discussed in the upcoming literature review.

After each cycle of review, I completed a core idea map on large poster paper to see how the ideas from each combination of search terms were related (Machy & McEvoy, 2012, p 53). This important synthesis piece provided opportunity for me to revisit my topic and research questions through the lens of current research (see Appendix G for examples). Hanging these large posters around my office space allowed me to continually consider the aspects of the work. I listed terms I saw repeatedly in the readings and kept a running list of questions the articles had generated. In addition to these concept maps, I kept what I called a dissertation journey journal by hand as I feel I better process my thoughts using handwriting rather than immediately typing them. Throughout the literature review process and especially after completing each core idea map, I would memo in this journal how I thought the ideas were connecting and freewrite about the readings' connections to my emerging thinking on my study. A typed example of some of these handwritten notes (for readability purposes) can be found in Appendix H.

To summarize, the previously described literature search resulted in a close reviewing of 30 articles found through online searches and through breadcrumb searches,

following references from other articles. The following literature review synthesizes these articles. These newly discovered articles along with my previous lengthy literature investigation of the NWP (also referenced in this paper and listed in the references) provided an important foundation for this dissertation.

Overview of the Literature Review

Before addressing the posed research question, it is important to understand contextual elements in the field. Therefore, I will begin by reviewing the national standards on PD. Next, I will examine how NWP CPD aligns or disconnects with these national standards. I will then review research, utilizing large-scale literature reviews, to provide an overview of how the research community is conceptualizing and studying effective PD. With this foundational information as a backdrop, I was better able to utilize specific studies I found through my narrowed search terms regarding teacher career longevity and PD's connection, along with research, some previously collected, regarding the NWP. My intent was to provide a firm foundation for my proposed research question, frameworks, and methods.

National Professional Development Standards

According to Learning Forward, a highly respected international association focused solely on educators' PD, "all educators have an obligation to improve their practice" ("Vision, Mission, Beliefs, Priorities," n.d.). The association's mission is to provide research, resources, and avenues for educators to do so. Learning Forward's standards "outline the characteristics of professional learning that lead to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results" ("Standards for Professional Learning," n.d.). The standards are categorized under the following seven

headings: learning communities, resources, learning designs, outcomes, leadership, data, and implementation. For each standard, Learning Forward defines the category's intent and breaks down the standard's components for clarity (see Table I1, columns 1 and 2, in Appendix I). All are supported by vetted research.

The NWP and the National Professional Development Standards

In the next section, I will provide an overview of the NWP. I will then highlight how the NWP's mission and work embodies all the standards for effective PD outlined by the Learning Forward framework (see Table I1, column 3, in Appendix I, for literature support).

NWP PD Overview. The NWP was started by James Gray in 1974 at the University of California, Berkeley. His intent was to create a model that honored teachers' professional knowledge (Gray, 2000). His design of the first ISI is still followed today by the nearly 200 local sites across the country gathered under the NWP umbrella. Every summer, K-University educators of all disciplines, attend intensive ISIs at sites housed at universities. While in attendance, participants read and reflect on writing research as well as develop and present a participatory demonstration lesson to the other attendees who reflect on both content and delivery, providing peer review. Participants also take part in peer revision groups where teachers comment on one another's choice writing with the purpose of revision. Many ISIs also include regular writing time, guest speakers, open discussion time, and community building activities ("National Writing Project," n.d.).

In these ways, Gray's ISI is considered one of the original professional learning communities (PLCs) in that most of the work done in the ISI is collaborative and inquiry

based (Kaplan, 2008). The motto of the NWP is "Teachers Teaching Teachers" and the ISI provides a structure for sharing what it means to be an effective writing and/or writing in the content areas teacher ("National Writing Project," n.d.). This philosophy of co-construction is evidenced by the NWP's assertion there is not any one "correct" way to teach writing. Teachers are invited to share ideas, lessons, and theories that have worked for their students. Since participants are from all disciplines, many conversations revolve around writing in the content areas and how to use writing to learn.

Numerous NWP participants are drawn to the ISI for its philosophical stance that writing teachers should be writers themselves (NWP & Nagin, 2006). Many of the participants utilize a process approach to writing and revision, the same one utilized in the writing groups component of the ISI, due to its authenticity. The NWP believes teachers will become better writing instructors if they experience writing, revision, and editing themselves as they will be able to explain to students the struggles and successes they have experienced through that recursive process (Lieberman & Wood, 2003). The NWP asserts teachers who are co-writers with students are better facilitators of learning how to write (NWP & Nagin, 2006; Bratcher & Stroble, 1994).

Upon completion of the ISI, the participants are given the title of "Teacher-Consultant" (TC) and are invited to partake in many local and national programs, both formal and informal, to continue their professional learning throughout the rest of their careers. One common opportunity is to present their vetted presentations at local and national conferences, for schools and systems, or for courses; TCs are typically paid for doing so. One goal of the NWP is to professionalize the field and paying teachers for their expertise is key to that aim. However, it is important to note that each Project site is

unique in its local CPD offerings to their members ("National Writing Project," n.d.). This study's aim was to discover how continued association with the NWP sustains educators' careers, an area of gap in the literature.

Clearly, the NWP is an organization that embodies the national standards for productive teacher PD (see Appendix I for additional literature support and Appendix J for detailed information on how each standard is exemplified by NWP). With this foundational information in mind, I sought out literature to gain an understanding of how researchers were approaching the study of teacher PD first in general, and then specifically in relation to longevity.

Teacher Professional Development

It is evident from the large quantity of literature the research community believes teacher PD is a critical element to educator and student success. However, as Kennedy (2016) states: "there is little consensus…about what happens in PD, how it fosters teacher learning, and how it is expected to alter teaching practice" (p. 1). Although the national standards provided by Learning Forward, all embodied in the practices of the NWP (see Appendix J), are excellent framing for the aims and structures needed for impactful PD, more research is needed on each standard to flush out exactly *how* to achieve these expectations. The following consideration of large-scale literature reviews reveal where the research community is placing its attention and therefore its energy in trying to address these aims.

The following are the current trends in the ways PD is being studied: PD models (Kennedy A., 2005), features of PD (both for pre-service and in-service educators) (Capps, Crawford, & Constas, 2012; Dunst, Bruder, & Hamby, 2015; Kennedy, 2016;

Parkhouse, Lu, & Massaro, 2019), evaluating PD's effectiveness (Capps, et al., 2012; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019), PD theories of action and "facilitation of enactment" (Kennedy, 2016), the role of teacher agency in PD and school reform (Imants & Van der Wal, 2019), and the role of motivation and teachers' ways of learning (Han & Yin, 2016; Louws, Meirink, van Veen, & van Driel, 2017; Roesken-Winter, 2015). I also read a review on how PD facilitators (PDFs) learn, which seems to be an emerging area in the recent research (Perry & Boylan, 2018).

PD Features and Models. According to a metasynthesis of reviews representing 550 in-service PD studies, Dunst et al. (2015) compiled core features of effective PD. The authors found agreement in many studies for effective qualities, including the need for sustained follow-up support (Dunst et al., 2015, p. 1737). This focus on models and common features was found in several studies as reflected in other reviews. For example, Capps et al. (2012) focused their literature review on inquiry-based teaching and learning in science PD to critique the features and found general alignment with recommended characteristics of effective PD. Kennedy's (2016) review looked at how PD is addressing the problems of practice practitioners encounter. She represented her findings graphically, not statistically, since PD structures varied, and found "program design features may be unreliable predictors of program success" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 27). Such touted PD practices as coaching and PLCs were found to vary in quality (Kennedy, 2016) and PD that was content-focused, often recognized as a critical component of successful PD, "tended to have less effect on student learning" if not paired with teachers' concerns about problems of practice (Kennedy, 2016, p.28). Parkhouse et al.'s (2019) literature review, although focused on multicultural education, considered 40 studies to also "better

understand the forms and features of such programs that contribute to effectiveness" (p. 416). Their review, like Kennedy's, struggled with PD programming variations when trying to identify factors and effectiveness. Parkhouse et al. (2019) concluded researching understanding teacher development and the contexts in which teachers learn would be a more productive frame than comparing PD structures.

It was evident from reading these reviews that PD models are clearly defined, but difficult to compare systematically because they are diverse in nature. Many were in alignment with the national standards I had investigated earlier in this literature review ("Standards for Professional Learning," n.d.). However, many articles commented on a deeper need for understanding teacher learning. The reviews provided the "what" of PD by describing program structures, but lacking was the "how" of teacher learning. As Parkhouse et al. (2019) state: "researchers and PD designers may also benefit from humility and reflectiveness regarding the degree to which we currently understand how teachers change their practice" (p. 449). In addition, they assert "theories of how teachers learn should also attend to the contexts that support professional growth" (Parkhouse, et al., 2019, p. 451). In agreement with these assertions, Kennedy (2016) states eloquently, "Education research is at a stage in which we have strong theories of *student* learning, but we do not have well-developed ideas about *teacher* learning, nor about how to help teachers incorporate new ideas into their ongoing systems of practice" (p. 29). These questions of how teachers learn, the theories that frame teacher learning, and the contexts which provide support for such learning, are understudied topics in the literature. A narrative study of teachers' CPD experiences and how they make meaning of them over a career span would add to the literature's need for this vital information about how CPD

aids teachers' learning. Studying NWP TCs' experiences will also provide insight into a culture of successful teacher learning.

Evaluating PD's Effectiveness. Other reviews addressed effectiveness in terms of outcomes. According to McChesney and Aldridge's (2019) literature review, practitioner-led PD in schools is not being systematically evaluated for impacts. They state: "…there has not been substantial improvement in either the scope (what is evaluated) or approaches (how evaluation is conducted) used in school-based evaluation practice since the turn of the century, despite the widespread calls for such improvement" (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019, p. 317). The authors credit this is in part due to there not being an evaluative tool designed to assess the wide variety of practitioner-led PD as well as "psychological and practical barriers" (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019, p. 315). Psychologically, they believe practitioners feel vulnerable resulting from the high-stakes accountability movement (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019, p. 315). Practically, "time, effort, and cost" are in the way of thorough evaluation (McChesney & Aldridge, 2019, p. 314). To address these barriers, they recommend more partnerships between university researchers and school-based practitioners. McChesney and Aldridge (2019) support their claims with a variety of literature, but did not provide any search details. In addition, they did not discuss teachers' experiences in PD, something I think is critical to true understanding of effectiveness. How did teachers perceive the practitioner-led PD? How did they evolve their practice as a result of it?

In Capps et al. (2012), general alignment with recommended PD features in reference to inquiry-based learning for science educators was found in their literature review. Interestingly, the authors state their review "reveals that no reported study has

connected participation in inquiry-based PD with all desired outcomes of teacher PD: enhanced teacher knowledge, change in beliefs and practice, and enhanced student achievement" (Capps et al., p. 291). The first two of these elements could be identified by listening to teachers' experiences. These authors seemed especially suspect of what they call "teacher self-report"; however, I believe to truly understand teachers' change in beliefs it is critical to ask them about how PD did or did not affect them. Listening to details provided in teachers' stories about their experiences could reveal change in practice and can therefore reveal impacts of CPD.

In close relation to this concept of understanding how teachers change their practice, I

read Keegan's (2019) study on utilizing action research (AR) and self-study as methods of CPD. Although not a literature review, I found it useful in identifying another way of inspecting CPD effectiveness. Keegan (2019), a physical education teacher, conducted a systematic AR self-study. She found AR was impactful because as she became more reflective, her students' participation increased, and she developed a "professional disposition" that led to a change in both practice and beliefs (Keegan, 2019, p. 126). However, she called for AR to be embedded in collaboration for it to fulfill its potential (Keegan, 2019, p. 128). Her study closely aligned in both theoretical framing (a sociocultural model) and in PD practices (AR, reflective writing, sharing expertise with other educators, etc.) found in the NWP (Keegan, 2019; "About NWP," n.d.). This study revealed another way of evaluating effectiveness of CPD, one that "must be constructive and progressive over the working life of the teacher" (Keegan, 2019, p. 127). My study aims to look at such contextual richness.

PD Theories of Action and Facilitation of Enactment. In Kennedy's (2016) literature review of 28 studies, she states that PD reviewers look at design features, but not the "underlying purpose or premises about teaching and teacher learning" (p. 1). She asserts a need to look at it from a problems of practice perspective as well as "underlying theories of action" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 2). This approach centers on pedagogy rather than a checklist method to the features PD contains (Kennedy, 2016, p. 2). Framed by problems of practice (i.e., relaying curriculum to students), Kennedy (2016) analyzed PD found in the literature in graphic representations. Her findings "suggest that programs addressing any of the four persistent problems of teaching can improve teachers' effectiveness, and, in fact, programs that focused exclusively on content knowledge tended to have less effect on student learning" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 27). She defines the problems as: translating curriculum to students so that they understand content, student behavior, motivating student participation, and making student thinking transparent (Kennedy, 2016, p. 10). This finding invokes the research community to shift its intense focus on features to studies focused on the ways in which teachers change practice, especially in regards to these core issues of teacher practice. Kennedy (2016) states: "Education research is at a stage in which we have strong theories of student learning, but we do not have well-developed ideas about teacher learning, nor about how to help teachers incorporate new ideas into their ongoing systems of practice" (p. 29). Kennedy (2016) recommends a closer investigation of teacher motivation along with paying "more attention to the people who provide PD" (p. 29). My study aims to look at TCs' learning as both teachers impacted by NWP CPD as well as their learning in becoming CPD

providers themselves. In these two ways, the research would be addressing the gaps Kennedy (2016) asserts need examination.

The Role of Teacher Agency in PD. Biestra, Priestly, and Robinson (2015) assert that "agency… is not something that people can *have*—as a property, capacity or competence—but is something that people *do*" (p. 626). In other words, teacher agency is defined as when teachers enact change in their work environments. Biestra et al. (2015) highlight the connections between teachers' beliefs and their accompanying self-efficacy (belief in themselves and their abilities) and teacher agency or action. They found their

> data suggest strongly that many teachers struggle to locate their work within deep consideration of the purposes of education. Teachers are driven by goals in their work, but such goals often seem to be short-term in nature, focusing on process rather than longer-term significance and impact. Where long-term effects are considered, they tend to be fairly narrowly conceived (Biestra, et al, 2015, pp. 636–637).

This finding alerts PD providers, especially those connected to long-term CPD of teachers, to the need for connecting beliefs and goals to teacher agency to enact change in schools.

Imants and Van der Wal (2019) were also interested in studying the role of teacher agency in PD. They created a model and then used it as a lens to execute a literature review of 36 articles with a shared focus of teacher agency. They found that although teacher agency is discussed in the literature it is not positioned in the context of PD/school reform and their model fills that gap (Imants & Van der Wal, 2019). This literature review highlighted the importance "to study teachers…as actors, not as factors"

in order to understand "sustained change" in education (Imants and Van der Wal, 2019, p. 12). Roesken-Winter, Hoyles, and Blomeke (2015) concur in their review that teacher self-efficacy is important at the school level and when trying to scale up for large CPD. Both studies align with the NWP's vision of networked reform that centers on teacher leadership and expertise with the goal of having a Project site within reach of all teachers ("About NWP," n.d.). As TCs are often described as teacher leaders in the field, a study that investigates how TCs develop both self-efficacy and agency would be instructive to CPD providers and policy makers alike.

Teacher Motivation and Ways of Learning. Han and Yin's (2016) review of motivation studies revealed five areas of interest including: "influencing factors of teacher motivation; teacher motivation and teaching effectiveness; teacher motivation and student motivation; teacher motivation across different disciplines; and the instruments for assessing teacher motivation" (p. 1). Teacher motivation is key to understanding why teachers engage or do not engage in CPD as well as why they stay or leave the profession. The authors assert the wide-ranging approaches to researching teacher motivation have left the field with "no agreement on generally applicable motivation theories" (p. 12). They agree with others there is an overreliance on quantitative measures when studying motivation and assert a richer interpretation is needed (Han & Yin, 2016, p. 13). My research presents narrative representation as a response to unveil teachers' motivation for continuing their long-term association with the NWP network.

I found Louws et al.'s (2017) study of teachers' self-directed learning helpful in thinking about teachers' perspectives of CPD. Framed by adult learning theories as well as self-determination theory (SDT), the researchers utilized multiple regression analysis

to investigate teachers' self-directed learning in connection to their career stage. The authors found teachers differ in "what, how, and why" they want to learn at different stages in their careers and believe a "differentiated approach" to CPD is a possible solution to keeping teachers engaged (Louws et al., 2017, p. 181). The authors claim this work is valuable in making CPD more effective as teachers "show a high level of ownership over their own learning" even though they often do not have a voice in CPD programming (Louws et al., 2017, p. 172). The NWP, in contrast, provides its members with choices for CPD, inviting self-directed learning to meet diversified needs. For example, NWP TCs are invited to a variety of CPD experiences such as (but not limited to) continuing in a writing group, attending local and national writing project conferences, presenting their vetted presentations locally and nationally, or leading the next ISI for their local site. TCs can pick and choose the CPD experiences that fit their needs and skill sets to continue their own development while often contributing to the development of others.

Also of interest was Perry and Boylan's (2018) general interpretive study of a pilot program for PD facilitators (PDFs) centered on action research. The PDFs in this study wanted to more closely study their practice as PD providers. The researchers claim there are a "small number of studies about those who lead professional development, and even fewer about these practitioners' own professional learning" (Perry & Boylan, 2017, p. 254). The PDFs in this study were involved in video analysis of each other's and their own PD workshops. They exchanged feedback on their work and the researchers utilized an interconnected model of teacher professional growth (created by Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002) to get the facilitators to think about their practice. This same model

was used for data analysis. The "study illuminated the complex professional learning needs of PDFs as they perceived them" and found PD developers need to "collaboratively reflect on, analyze, understand and improve their practice" (Perry & Boylan, 2018, p. 269). This study was particularly interesting to me as it made me think about the ways the NWP provides CPD to an audience of TCs while developing TCs to be PDFs.

Summary. After reviewing the state of teacher CPD in the literature, it is clear there is a need to know more about the processes by which teachers learn, not just the features included in CPD structures. For example, Kennedy (2016) makes a valid argument that PLCs are widely accepted, but their effectiveness can vary widely because of the many ways they are designed (p. 28). In truth, all the currently-touted PD features (i.e., coaching, PLCs, lesson study, etc.) can vary widely based on resources and those in charge of designing and providing such programs. I agree with Kennedy's (2016) assertion that "we need (a)… more nuanced understanding of what teachers do" (p. 30). To get a "nuanced understanding," to comprehend how teachers learn and enact practice over time, will take research methods that ask teachers to tell stories of their CPD. Asking teachers about their extended experiences with a successful network like the NWP and how they make meaning of those experiences will help to fill this need.

Teacher Professional Development and Career Longevity

With the national PD standards and their connections to the NWP network's approach to teacher development as a backdrop along with the synthesis of how the field is studying teacher CPD in general, I began to explore more specific studies. Using the search terms of "teacher professional development" and "career longevity," I found two emerging and repetitive themes in the articles: the concept of resilience with its

accompanying theories (i.e., RCT) and the role of the PLC as a structure with potential to support career longevity.

Resilience. A review of current resilience literature was one of the first articles I found in this search (Mansfield C., Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016). The goal of Mansfield et al. (2016) was to create a resiliency framework to be used to combat teacher attrition. After evaluating the last 15 years of literature on the topic, they created a framework that includes the following five themes: building resilience, relationships, wellbeing, motivation, and emotions (Mansfield et al., 2016, p. 84). The researchers assert the framework, consolidating 51 resilience factors found in their review, should be used to create a pre-service educator curriculum. Mansfield et al. (2016) state although resilience is often discussed in the literature as an important quality needed in teachers, it along with wellbeing are not present in education reforms (p. 78). Of special relevance to my research on the NWP was the author's review of strategies they found promoted resilience including ongoing PD, reflection practices, the use of PLCs to connect, inquiry-based professional learning, and leadership opportunities (Mansfield, et al., 2016, p. 81). These strategies can all be found in NWP structures and could be studied to find any connections between these elements and TCs' longevity.

Additional studies that resulted from these search terms also centered on resilience theories (Mansfield et al., 2012; Raider-Roth, Stieha, & Hensley, 2012) and/or the connected theories of relational cultural theory (RCT) (Doney, 2013) and relational resilience theory (Le Cornu, 2009). Doney describes resilience theories as those that "speak to the strengths that people and systems demonstrate that enable them to rise above adversity" (VanBreda as quoted in Doney, 2013, p. 646). The underlying

assumption relayed in all the studies is that teaching is a challenging field and one that requires resilient teachers.

According to Doney (2013), resilience is not an "innate personality trait, but rather a process" (p. 653). This process (Doney, 2013) involves the "interaction between stressors and protective factors" (p. 645) and was a finding from the researcher's interpretive cross-case analysis of four science teachers over a two-year period. Doney (2013) asserts "the resilience process can indeed foster teacher retention" (p. 660). The process outlined in the article involves both the use of "individual skills" and the necessity of "creating support systems," a concept built on RCT's claim that individual resilience strengths are the "result of human connections" (Doney, 2013, p. 648). In other words, teachers grow resilient when working and learning together. Doney (2013) finds individual skills along with support systems are critical to understanding how and why some teachers stay and others leave teaching and believes the development of both in pre-service education could be one way to handle the attrition issue. Studying the NWP from a resilience framework using RCT could be of benefit in understanding how the network sustains in-service teachers' careers.

Le Cornu (2009) examined the role of pre-service teachers during their practicum work in building resiliency using learning communities by reviewing a variety of studies. With a special focus on pre-service teacher education, Le Cornu (2009) uses Jordan's model of relational resilience, a concept nested in RCT, to investigate how the associated concepts of mutuality, empowerment, and courage development (p. 719) are fostered in PLCs. Her key finding is the data along with the literature support the idea that the use of learning communities in pre-service PD builds the resilience capacity needed in the field

to combat attrition (Le Cornu, 2009, p. 722). Although Le Cornu (2009) and Doney (2013) both focused on pre-service and early career teachers (respectively), their framing of their work in RCT could be of benefit in my work on the NWP as all work the network does is grounded in a social constructivist view of professional learning.

The continued focus on building resilience at the early stages of teaching was highlighted in Mansfield et al.'s (2012) study. The researchers coded survey data from 200 graduating and early career teachers on how they defined resilient teachers (Mansfield et al., 2012). They created a four-dimensional framework for resiliency and claimed a need for resilience instruction in pre-service education (Mansfield, et al., 2012). The framework encompasses the 23 aspects of resiliency they found and were able to put into profession-related, emotional, social, and motivational dimensions (Mansfield, et al., 2012). This framework could be fruitful during my data analysis of interview transcripts.

Smethem's (2007) four-year study was an analysis of qualitative data of novice teachers' experiences using initial surveys, journal reflections, and semi-structured interviews (p. 465). Smethem (2007) used a backdrop of retention studies along with the analysis of these many data sources to create a conceptual framework outlining a "typography" of teacher type with differing commitments to the field (p. 465). The study's aim was to discover what was impacting teachers' reasons to leave. Smethem (2007) calls on policymakers to "recognize that supportive induction is essential, that professional satisfaction belongs to the 'moral purpose' of teaching, and the intensification of teachers' work may contribute to teacher shortages" (p. 465). Most related to my proposed study is Smethem's (2007) insistence there needs to be a place in

teacher preparation "for construction of an individual, meaningful, resilient, professional identity underpinned by strong beliefs and values" (p. 478). Although she is referring to early career PD, I believe the NWP creates such an opportunity for its TCs to think about the meaning of being a teacher leader in the field throughout their association with the NWP. This study aims to present TCs' voices as they make meaning of their long-term experiences with the NWP, an association I believe sustains their careers.

At this point in my literature review, I began to wonder why researchers were looking to novice and/or pre-service educators for their conceptual frameworks on resiliency. Even the studies' reviews of literature that revealed insights into career longevity (Le Cornu, 2009, Mansfield, et al., 2012; Mansfield, et al., 2016, Smethem, 2007) quickly turned their attention to how to put the information to use at the pre-service/early career stage. I became more interested in how resilience theories related to *sustaining* careers at all stages. With the literature's focus on PLCs as a potentially powerful structure, I began to consider how the NWP's focus on collaborative structures could be a possible missing puzzle piece for why the NWP is successful at retaining teachers in the field. Instead of teaching resiliency as a distinct set of characteristics to learn early in a career as so many of these articles suggested, maybe PD providers need to be more concerned with how to support teachers' resiliency and nourish their will to teach. This confirmed my intent to hear TCs' stories to understand more fully the meaning of the NWP in their careers.

Raider-Roth et al.'s (2012) action inquiry did investigate veteran teachers in a one-week PD institute of a PLC engaged in book discussions revolving around Jewish texts. Their aim was to investigate moments of disconnection ("resistance") and the

opportunities in such moments for reconnection as an "acts of resilience" (Raider-Roth, et al., 2012, p. 493). The authors assert the interaction between resistance and resilience could be consciously planned for in PD settings by alerting teacher educators to instances that "can offer key moments of learning and growth" (p. 501). The researchers recommend teacher educators use an inquiry stance to design PD and learn to use moments of disconnection to propel teacher learning (Raider-Roth, 2012, p. 501). This study investigated in-service teachers' resilience experiences in PLCs and I could see connections to my proposed study about the use of such moments as both participants in the many PLC structures of the NWP and as PDFs in the network's many CPD offerings (i.e., writing group participation, presenting, attending conferences, leading ISIs, etc.) vary from site to site.

Hadar and Brody (2018) also studied a PLC structure, but their study focused on its use with the teacher educators themselves. Using a general interpretive design with grounded theory as an analysis approach, they implemented a variety of data collection sources to see how the PLC "in-house" model worked for teacher educators' PD. They found the PLC increased personal and professional learning as well as increased participants' satisfaction, resilience, sense of belonging and professional commitment, promoted innovation, and gave a sense of collective responsibility. This study was intriguing to me in several ways. For one, the researchers used reflective writing as a part of their data collection, something I intended to do in my study. In addition, many of the findings resonate with how I see the NWP PLCs working. Finally, the focus on an under-represented group in the literature (Murray, 2016, as quoted in Hadar & Brody, 2018), teacher educators, is what many long-term NWP TCs become.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). This set of seven articles (one literature review and six studies) resulting from the search terms "Teacher Professional Development" and "Career Longevity," either centered on or mentioned the importance of social interactions for teacher PD (Doney, 2013; Hadar & Brody, 2018; Le Cornu, 2009; Mansfield, et al., 2012; Mansfield, et al., 2016; Raider-Roth, et al., 2012; Smethem, 2007). Whether the structure being studied was a PLC (Hadar & Brody, 2018; Le Cornu, 2009; Raider-Roth, et al., 2012) or the social nature of professional learning was highlighted in utilizing or creating theoretical frameworks (Doney 2012; Mansfield, et al., 2012; Mansfield, et al., 2016; Smethem, 2007), the researchers all concurred learning communities were an impactful approach to teacher learning and many found they were integral in promoting resilience.

These articles make the argument that PLCs are a critical component in teacher CPD. This clearly supports the work of the NWP whose CPD programs all focus around collaborative structures ("NWP Teacher Consultant Badge Framework," n.d.). However, most of the studies focused on PLCs for novice teachers or pre-service teacher-educators. My study fills a need for more investigation of in-service educators and the role socially-mediated CPD plays in sustaining careers and in many cases, preparing PDFs.

Relational Cultural Theory (RCT). These articles made me curious about RCT and how it works within PLCs. Jordan (2017), a founder of RCT, provided a historical and descriptive look at the psychological model that grew out of a feminist standpoint. She explains RCT builds on relationship strengths and the ideas of connections, mutuality, and empathy (Jordan, 2017). She states "RCT is a theory about our basic interconnectedness…We are wired to connect. We grow through and toward connection

throughout our lives" (Jordan, 2017, p. 231). When considering the NWP, I repeatedly think about the connections being made between teachers.

In addition, Jordan's (2017) words about courage in community resonated with what I know about the NWP from my own association and through the extensive research I have read:

> Courage… can be seen in a relational–cultural framework as a relational concept: we *en-courage* one another. We listen one another into courage, into voice. Courage, confidence, and a sense of strength grow in connection…isolation erodes courage. Isolation interrupts growth. Isolation disempowers us and immobilizes us…In contrast, connection confers power and enables action (p. 230-231).

In this way, RCT could be an interesting lens to look at the NWP and its power to build resiliency and/or career longevity in its TCs. Teaching can be a lonely endeavor; connecting can bring the courage to teach. The associated RCT concepts of "fluid expertise" where all involved "hold certain aspects of knowledge and understanding" (p. 231) and "mutual empathy" where "both people grow and both people contribute to the growth of the other" (p. 235) also resonated as core values of the NWP network. Within the multiple communities of the NWP, there is a persistent encouragement to keep teaching and to keep learning.

A search for NWP and RCT resulted in only four returns and none of the articles were helpful. I widened the search to "teacher resilience" and "RCT" for the last five years and skimmed the eleven resulting articles. Two were worth further reading: Gu (2014) and Webb (2018). Gu's (2014) three-year study of 300 teachers in different phases

of their careers combined phenomenological semi-structured interviews with quantitative analyses of teacher effectiveness profiles.

Gu (2014) aimed to investigate "in greater depth the nature of resilience in teachers as a relational concept and the ways in which it may be related to the learning and achievement of pupils" (p. 502). Gu (2014) found "teachers' resilience building processes are …influenced, positively or negatively, by the quality of the relationships in which their work and lives are embedded" (p. 513). Those relationships include: teacher-teacher relations, teacher-principal relations, and teacher-student relations. Gu (2014) claims the resilience definition "as the capacity to 'bounce back' in adverse circumstances" does not capture the ways teachers must be resilient every day of their careers in a "complex, continuous, and fluctuating process" (p. 521). This kind of continuous resilience is nurtured by the "culmination and continuation of collective and collaborative endeavors driven by a common understanding of moral purpose" (Gu, 2014, p. 521). This description of resilience aligns with NWP CPD's centering on PLCs and the shared mission of improving teachers' professionalism while increasing students' ability to write well.

Webb (2018) utilized case study of three teachers utilizing RCT to provide a more "nuanced look" at the ways teachers make decisions for why they stay in or leave the field. She found, like Gu, that relationships matter a great deal when looking at resilience in teachers. Webb (2018) states "impacts of relationships, both growth-fostering and growth-hindering, were evident in the experiences recounted by participants" (p 14). These articles lead me to believe RCT could be a productive theory for investigating the *hows* of the NWP CPD.

NWP PD and Career Longevity

The NWP seminal program, the ISI, has been studied for its transformative properties (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Kaplan, 2008; Locke, Whitehead, & Cawkwell, 2011; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Whitney, 2008). The NWP has also been studied as a program that creates teacher leaders who give back extensively to the field (Friedrich, et al., 2008; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Whitney, Zuidema, & Fredicksen, 2014). In addition, the NWP has been investigated for transferring methods learned in the ISI to classroom practices (Friedrich & Whitney, 2013; Gallagher, Woodworth, McCaffrey, Park, & Wang, 2014; Gallagher, Arslan, & Woodworth, 2016; Lieberman & Wood, 2003; Locke & Kato, 2014). Finally, the NWP has been studied as developing teachers who themselves participate as writers (Friedrich & Whitney, 2013; Lieberman & Wood, 2001; Locke & Kato, 2014; Locke et al., 2011; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Street & Stang, 2009; Whitney, 2009; Whitney, Zuidema, & Fredricksen, 2014). What has not been fully explored are the "hows" of the *continual* impact the NWP has on its members long after the ISI has ended. Although it is clear from studies the NWP ISI helps to develop teacher-leaders who stay in the field of education when so many others leave, it is not explicitly clear *how* continued association, these educators' long-term CPD, with NWP programming contributes to a teacher's career. Investigating this topic would be beneficial to PD providers and policy makers alike as American schools face the issue of teacher turnover.

As is evidenced from the searches I completed, finding direct connection between the NWP and the concept of career longevity was not fruitful. However, the research I did find alluded to the continuity of the NWP PD impacting practice for a long time in that it changed the participants' approaches to thinking about their practice (Friedrich &

Whitney, 2013; Heenan, Houghton, Huntwork, Meyer, & St. John, 2006; McCarthey & Kang, 2017; Lieberman & Wood, 2002) as well as motivated teacher leadership in the field (Wood & Lieberman, 2000). The literature review led me to thinking more about sustainability of a career and the processes that do so than the concept of longevity. Although related, it became clear to me the research community could benefit from descriptions of finer distinctions in how CPD nurtures careers. The following literature contributes to my study as I think about how to frame this research to extend understanding of participants' continued experiences with the NWP.

The NWP Way. McCarthey and Kang (2017) utilized case study to investigate two kindergarten teachers' responses to writing PD and how it impacted instruction**.** Utilizing a career stages approach as their framework, where one teacher was novice and the other seasoned, the researchers recorded differences in PD implementation in their instruction. A main weakness in this study was the teachers underwent different programs, one NWP-designed and one not, which I felt created difficulty in making the comparisons presented. They found there is a "need for more sustained relationships and more opportunities for quality long-term PD" (McCarthey & Kang, 2017, p. 414). The more experienced teacher, who had a history with the NWP, was able to adjust her instruction to meet the developmental needs of the students. The novice teacher followed her curriculum in a more rigid manner, applying a strictly skills-based approach to writing. Her PD was scripted. The authors recommended a need for more sustained CPD at all career stages and gave support for the NWP way (not scripted and utilizes teacher expertise and experience) of conducting CPD (McCarthey & Kang, 2017). Although I

agree with their recommendation from an experience standpoint, I am not sure the study was fully able to make the claims it did.

However, the additional articles I read regarding the NWP did describe the NWP as powerful CPD (Heenan, et al., 2006; Friedrich & Whitney, 2013; Lieberman & Wood, 2002; Wood & Lieberman, 2000). In Heenan et al.'s (2006) three-year qualitative study of the New Teacher Initiative (NTI) program implemented by the NWP at 18 sites, the evaluators found key design features from the umbrella NWP infused into the program for early career teachers. The success of the NTI program was found in the use of the overarching NWP "beliefs and values" and its PD features represent the "best practices for teacher support," practices such as utilizing writing, and respecting what knowledge new teachers bring to the field (Heenan, et al., 2006, p. 20). Once again, I found the study to be interesting, but its focus on induction left my questions about maintaining CPD across a career span still unanswered.

Lieberman and Wood (2002) conducted a two-year qualitative study to investigate two NWP sites, one urban and one rural. This article focused on two teachers and through observations and interviews, the researchers were interested in how the NWP "enacts its unique approach to PD in quite different geographical, historical, and cultural contexts" (Lieberman & Wood, 2002, p. 318). Their aim was to analyze the teachers' ISI experiences for core activities and principles and then to study how the teachers took them back into the "reality" of classrooms. They found the network develops teachers as change agents and the principles of the NWP provide a way for teachers to adjust to the ever-changing dynamics and complexity of schools. Although the idea of NWP principles resonated with me and aligns well with my frameworks, the study's focus on the ISI and

immediate implementation of NWP tenets again left me with a gap of seeing how NWP CPD extends over the course of a career and how/if it sustains a career. In addition, the research relied heavily on the participants' quotes, but was not a narrative representation as I am proposing as necessary to fully capture teachers' perspectives on making meaning of NWP experiences in their careers.

Wood and Lieberman (2000) utilized a general interpretive design and multiple collection methods to investigate the "principles of writing instruction to frame and foster teachers' professional development" in the NWP (p. 255). This two-year study was a close examination of six teachers' experiences at two different NWP sites. Their key finding was the NWP "in taking principles of good writing and translating them to principles of good teaching, offers a powerful model for professional development" (Wood & Lieberman, 2000, p. 271), stressing the power of writing and the social power of the PLC. I experientially agreed with their findings, but there were few details in how they analyzed the data they had collected. What they presented was a well-described overview of how the network is so successful and promotes teacher leadership through alignment of the writing conceptions of taking a teacher-author stance, and enacting the principles of authorship, authority, and authorization in PD. Although the article infers this framework and its stance towards both writing and PD impacts a career, it doesn't explicitly connect these concepts to teacher retention, happiness, or career satisfaction. I believed this article to be helpful as a starting place to build upon as my study also looked at the recursive structures of the writing process theory as it relates to a career. The recursive nature of NWP CPD involvement as having the potential to sustain the will to teach was my investigative focus. Narrative representations of the teachers' touchstone

moments along with rigorous data analysis provided insight into how teachers make meaning of the connections highlighted in this article.

Perhaps most closely aligned with my work was Friedrich and Whitney's (2013) general interpretive study investigating the question: "How do teachers describe the influence of NWP on their teaching" (p. 1). They coded 110 interviews and discovered NWP "orientations" for writing teachers from data collected for a larger mixed-methods study on the NWP. Friedrich and Whitney (2013) claim the NWP has a "legacy" built on "a set of orientations that guide teachers in making decisions about their work and learning about and from that work" (p. 1). The theoretical framework they used for this research was built on the orientations framework of science teaching found in Friedriechsen, Van Driel, and Abell's 2011 study in their search for "beliefs that influence practice" (Friedrich & Whitney, 2013, p. 27). The authors assert an orientations framework is what sets NWP CPD apart from other more disjointed programs and is one explanation for the enduring quality of the network (Friedrich & Whitney, 2013, p 27-28). What stood out to me in this study was the valuing of teachers' voices that was not as highlighted as much in other studies I had read thus far. Although not a narrative study, extensive teacher quotes were utilized to support the ideas presented. The authors focused on how these orientations help teachers learn to frame their practices so they can be adaptable in various teaching contexts. They assert that thinking about CPD in this way could provide "a possible approach for long-term influence of conceptually based interventions" (Friedrich & Whitney, 2013, p. 2). This allusion to *possible* help for longevity is intriguing to me. How do these NWP orientations (purposes for writing, supporting writers through the NWP, and teachers as writers) translate into the larger

question of how the NWP sustains teachers' careers? Listening to teachers' full stories and narrating how TCs learn to develop these orientations through a back and forth association with the NWP, a continual journey from classroom to Project and to classroom again, will provide insight into how the NWP develops mindsets, habits, and stances to sustain them in an ever-changing and increasingly complex educational landscape. How can NWP CPD make a teacher happier to sustain longevity in the field?

Chapter 3: Methods

It was important to align my methodology and conceptual framework, given my focus on recursivity. Like my conceptual framework, my general interpretive design with narrative representation was supported by a sociocultural frame and by Relational Cultural Theory (Jordan, 2017; Jordan, 2018). I looked at the cultural aspects of the participants' data to address the *hows* of continued professional development in the NWP and how the participants make sense of NWP experiences since their ISIs. The recursive nature of the conceptual framework (see Appendix B), is mirrored in the analysis as well. I consistently took fieldnotes and utilized memoing throughout the collection and analytic processes, returning again and again to both my analysis and the documents created during the study. In addition, the participants wrote about their touchstone moments with the NWP, but also revised them, a recursive process impacted by both a focus group writing exercise as well as an interview experience. I suggest the result of this recursivity is a re-visioning not only of their writings, their snapshots about NWP CPD, but also of their thinking about their NWP engagement and its connections to their careers. This hermeneutic process of meaning-making is about "seeking deep understanding" via the participants' perspectives (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 23). As the participants in this study spoke and wrote, they revealed their meaning-making of their NWP CPD experiences for the study and for themselves.

My own recursive process impacted the methodology of this study. In order to complete it, I reviewed my entire body of doctoral work thus far. I considered the following: my seminar paper, my mini-prospectus, all memos and concept maps created throughout my comprehensive exam process, the comprehensive exam itself, and notes

from meetings with faculty members I have spoken to in the past year around my study's ideas. I also revisited a pilot study I did on one NWP ISI for an independent study in the summer of 2015 (its focus on four TCs' transformational experiences) as well as reviewed my assessment paper on the writing group component of the ISI I completed in my evaluation course in the winter of 2015. The reviewing of all foundational work informed the research design of this study. This previous work provided context for the content of the dissertation that focuses more on the *hows* of NWP CPD than the structures used in NWP CPD, a pivot that relates directly to this previous work and the literature review. I was also able to think through logic models and interviewing technique, both strengthening this doctoral work.

In addition, I spent valuable time reflecting on my own experiences with the NWP. During my own Invitational Summer Institute, I participated in Ira Progoff's stepping stone exercise and associated writing, the exercises I have adapted for the purposes of this research, to be detailed more later in this section (Progoff, 1992). I remembered I became so engrossed in the Progoff journaling that I attended a weekend workshop, sponsored by the NWP, to learn more about the approaches. I regularly use these journaling techniques in my own writing as well as in my teaching of both teens in alternative settings and graduate-level pre- and in-service teachers. The Progoff exercises are designed to provide "an open-ended means of gaining a perspective on where you are in the movement of your life" (Progoff, 1992, p. ix). I operationalized these powerful exercises for this study to help participants process the meaning of NWP CPD utilizing techniques they were already familiar with from their association with their Project's local site.

Since I modified the stepping stones and associated writings for the study to encompass the participants' touchstone moments with NWP CPD instead of their usual use in revealing touchstone moments of their overall lives, I felt the need to complete the altered form before implementing it with my participants. As I completed my own stepping stone list of Project moments and chose a few to write about, I saw my own meaning-making surface. This exercise illuminated my own experiences with the Project and solidified the use of the adapted Progoff strategies would be beneficial in collecting data. I also engaged in revision of my snapshot stories (to be detailed later in this chapter), as I would also be asking my participants to do so. I revised those writings with the help of my doctoral writing group to address my own subjectivity and reflect on my experiences. One of my polished snapshots serves as the preface for this dissertation in order to frame the study by sharing a bit of my own experience with the NWP. This reflexivity in order to revise and reflect is at the heart of this research project. Completing the Progoff journaling, in both its original and customized forms, evolved the work and provided me insight into the procedures I would be utilizing in the study.

Epistemology

My own epistemological stance impacts my methodology. It relies on social constructivism, which is nested within a sociocultural theoretical framework. Creswell (2013) explains those with a social constructivist frame are:

> …individuals (who) seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. They develop subjective meanings of their experiences…These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrow the meanings into a few categories or ideas (p. 24).

Social constructivism, along with writing process theory, value the individual's voice and realize each person's meanings are "negotiated socially and historically" (Creswell, 2013, p. 25). Most NWP CPD focuses on iterations of PLCs where learning is mediated through environmental interactions. Therefore, the NWP is guided by the theoretical orientation of social constructivism within a sociocultural model for learning; all is collaborative.

This frame also aligns with my strong foundational belief in the power of context. Contextual complexity hinges on the idea that "what people perceive and believe is shaped by their assumptions and prior experiences as well as by the reality that they interact with" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 43). Conceptually, this study utilizes the recursive nature of the writing process, widely used in NWP CPD, as a lens for investigating the recursive nature of the participants' perceptions and stories, collected through writing their touchstone moments with the NWP in the focus groups, and interviews. Participants were asked to construct narratives of their NWP CPD to illuminate the intricacy of their relationship with the network. In this study, individual experiences are highlighted. However, it is acknowledged those experiences swim in a sea of connection.

Storytelling-as-Research

I have always been fascinated by stories and storytelling. I agree with Lewis and Hildebrandt's (2019) claim that "stories and storytelling are central to human experience and understanding. Narrative understanding is an innate human capacity; we think, live, and dream in story form, making it one of the principle forms of human meaning-making" (p. 2). I agree that all we present to the world through our speech and in writing are the stories we create about our lives. In that way, it is through this storytelling we make sense of our world and experiences. This research aims to give teachers,

specifically NWP TCs, the space and time to share their stories of CPD, an area often inadequately represented in disjointed quotes in research literature.

Lewis and Hildebrandt's (2019) foundational article on storytelling-as-research resonated with my own study's goals. They state persuasively:

> …if one wants to understand or gain deeper insight into something, it is people's everyday stories - their storytelling about work, practice, or experiences - that form a treasure trove of data that can augment understandings of complex human actions and interactions. The stories people tell do not just contain understanding or insight; stories are in and of themselves insight and understanding (pp. 3–4).

Therefore, it is not just the product of story that communicates, but the process of storytelling itself. In the telling, I believe my research participants come to recognize the meanings and significance of their touchstone moments with the NWP.

Lewis explains that in our daily lives, "we take in stories, our own and others and tell them back to our self and to others in a recursive process that augments our understanding" (Lewis, 2011, pp. 505-506). This cyclical storytelling is the way we make meaning of our days and in the collecting and sharing of stories, our lives. Much can be gained through the power of storytelling. For example, Iseke's study of Indigenous storytelling revealed the practice of storytelling as one "that sustains communities, validates experiences of Indigenous peoples, and nurtures relationships and sharing of knowledge" (Iseke, 2013, p. 559). Such research projects as Iseke's (2013) present storytelling-as-research as ways into learning not only about the kinds of stories people tell, but the whys behind telling them. The participants in Iseke's (2013) study used storytelling as "pedagogical tools for learning about life" and also as "witnessing and

remembering" (p. 559). These were also reasons behind my own participants' sharing of stories about NWP CPD and readers can learn from those stories. Additional studies also point to the power of meaning-making in storytelling-as-research, highlighting how much we can learn about culture (William-White, 2011) and as a way to explore our interactions with a particular element in our lives (Hill, 2019; van Boeschoten, 2011). Hendry's article entitled "The Future of Narrative" pushes my thinking about narrative even more and asks the reader to consider narrative not as a method, but as an "act of faith," one where researchers are "trusting in the stories and the storyteller" (Hendry, 2007, p. 494). In short, we must listen to the stories of participants for what they are: the truth in story as is told by the storyteller about their own experiences. In order to learn from storytelling-as-research, we must trust our narrators and we must listen.

As I read more about storytelling-as-research, its alignment with my own epistemology as well as conceptual framework became clear. For example, this quote maps nicely onto the recursivity that runs through all of the study:

> Storytelling-as-research embraces the messiness and recursive process of stories and
>
> storytelling. There is an inherent circularity in story that is a precursor to the notion of the hermeneutic circle; through storytelling humans travel around that circle passing over the same point, but it is never at the same altitude, it is more like a spiral of our insight and understanding (Lewis & Hildebrandt, 2019, p. 4).

This research provides many moments for participants to return to meaning-making stories in order to re-vision and clarify their understanding of their CPD experiences. The

narrative representation of those stories in the dissertation is an opportunity for others to read and learn from the teachers' voices.

Research Questions and Purpose

The purpose of this research study was to investigate Teacher-Consultants (TCs)' experiences with NWP continued professional development. The goal was to provide rich data analysis and presentation in order to more fully understand the role of NWP CPD in teachers' career satisfaction. In addition, this study explored the *hows* of teacher learning in the NWP and what recursive processes and interactions are significant touchstone moments for the TCs. Therefore, the research question and sub-questions for this study were as follows: How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of their experiences with the National Writing Project since their foundational Invitational Summer Institute experience (their continued professional development)?

- How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of relationship building in National Writing Project continued professional development (CPD) experiences?
- How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of recursivity of National Writing Project continued professional development (i.e., in their teaching of writing, their own writing, professionalism, personal lives, etc.)?

The study helps to fill a gap in the literature about teachers' long-term CPD experiences and teacher learning. It also demonstrates the utility of storytelling-as research as both a form of inquiry and as a methodological approach.

Research Design

Interpretive research is a paradigm that assumes social reality is not singular or objective, but shaped by human experience and social contexts (Hesse-Biber, 2017, pp. 12–13). An interpretive design with its foundations in phenomenology is best suited for research that aims to inquire about how people interpret their experiences, construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 12). This study's design, with its theoretical basis firmly lodged in the belief that human knowledge is socially situated and fostered through human interaction (social constructivism and sociocultural theories), allows for the process of interpretation. Therefore, methods were designed to utilize "interpretive techniques" that "privilege lived experience and retain the worlds of participants' narratives with the goal of getting at the process of a given issue or problem under study" (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 12). In this study, that aim is to discover the meaning making experiences of NWP TCs with their continued association with the NWP in order to reveal the hows of teacher development through those experiences. This nuanced look at how the participants make meaning is revealed through their storytelling.

Qualitative research with its focus on the ways people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world they live in is the best fit for my research questions (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 4). My study presents the meaning-making stories of the participants, which are unique and richly detailed. As Hesse-Biber (2017) explains: "qualitative researchers extract the co-created meanings they gather from their participants' data in order to get at multiple subjective accounts" (p. 4). In this way, qualitative research lies in the interpretive realm. It follows that qualitative methods

within a general interpretive design, as described in more specific detail below, are best aligned with my research questions, goals, conceptual framework, and validity techniques (see Appendix K for a graphic representation of my research design).

For this research, I utilize a general interpretive design and analyze and present data through narrative representation. Specifically, two narrative approaches of data representation are presented in the study. First, I include each participant's full snapshot story of a touchstone moment with NWP CPD. This storytelling-as-research describes their experiences in detail and includes participants' own analysis in the telling. Second, snapshot stories of the focus group experiences are presented to demonstrate the focus groups' engagement with the recursive meaning-making process and the associated discussion that took place in their meetings. As will be detailed in the upcoming section, stepping stones and snapshot protocols for collecting narratives of touchstone moments, focus groups utilizing writing revision groups, and follow-up interviews with participants, provide the multiple needed data points when working with a small sample size of six participants. In addition, I memoed extensively throughout the research process and also analyzed memos as data sources (see Appendix L for a timeline for the study).

Participants and Research Sites

I have chosen to pursue research questions centered on the meaning-making processes of my participants, which clearly led to a qualitative research design. Due to my intent to capture my participants' perspectives through thick descriptive data collection methods, their storytelling, I limited the number of participants in the study. My intent was to recruit six participants with the hope of retaining at least three

participants through the entire data collection period. All six recruited participants remained in the full study. I purposely kept the participant pool small in order to fully represent their experiences with the NWP. As Hesse-Biber (2017) states, "The logic of qualitative research is concerned with in-depth understanding" that naturally aligns with a small sample size (p. 54). My research design, data analysis methods, and narrative representation of findings puts a strong emphasis on the participants' voices and a small sample size allows for extensive development and explication.

I purposely recruited six participants from an East Coast Writing Project local site. The site, housed at a large public university, has been in existence since early in the national organization's history. All participants were chosen from the same site in order to ensure they had access to the same range of CPD experiences.

The criteria for participating in the study were that the TCs participated in the ISI at least ten years ago and have maintained participation with the NWP and/or their local site as well as have stayed in the field of education in some way (i.e., continue to teach, have moved into other education roles such as administration, are tutoring, etc.). I was more interested in finding participants who had consistently been involved in NWP CPD than with those who had sporadically done a variety of CPD. In other words, I was looking for those participants who had sustained involvement with CPD experiences they returned to again and again to investigate the whys of that persistent connection with the NWP. These criteria are critical to the study in that I seek to analyze continued participation with the NWP and how the TCs make meaning of their participation's role in their careers. Having at least a decade pass since the participants' ISI experiences and requiring they also have remained active with the NWP, both confirmed through the

participants' response to the invitation email detailing requirements, demonstrates these TCs were motivated to return to the Project for CPD, the phenomenon I am interested in studying more in depth.

In order to locate these participants, I asked the director of the site to provide me with email access to the Teacher-Consultants who had participated in ISIs at least 10 years ago. Beginning with the email list from 10 years ago (2010), I sent an email invitation to the distribution lists for each summer, working my way backwards from 2010 until I received 6 willing participants who met the required criteria (see above). I included a detailed description of the nature of the research study to explain both the time requirements and the nature of the work. Participants who were interested were invited to send a short email back to me signaling their interest, confirmation they met all requirements, and also a list of the CPD experiences they have continued to be involved with since their ISI. I reviewed all responses and chose participants based on the above criteria as well as the content of the return emails.

The first six responses back were all people who met all the criteria. I received these responses within a 24-hour period of my request. The people who responded were TCs who have had a wide range of experiences with NWP CPD, but also had consistently participated deeply in some areas. NWP CPD is diverse as there are many opportunities TCs can choose from to maintain involvement. For example, TCs can choose to lead student writing institutes, continue to work in writing groups established in their ISI, and/or present at local and national conferences, among many other CPD opportunities (see Appendix M for a sample list of NWP CPD opportunities from this particular site). I wanted to make sure there were a variety of experiences in the study to get a full,

although not complete, picture of NWP CPD and these emailed responses provided that necessary information. I was surprised by not only the depth of the involvement of these respondents, what I was in search of, but also by the variety of involvement they each had had with the Project over the years. I responded to all the inquiries and began setting up the focus groups, each with three participants. I compensated these participants for their participation with a small monetary gift card.

Data Collection

The following outlines the data collection methods for the study. As a qualitative researcher, I aim to "collect in-depth information, trading breadth for depth" (Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 63). In order to do so, I utilized two data collection methods, focus groups and follow-up interviews. Given the small sample size, utilizing three structured protocols within the focus groups (stepping stone, snapshot writing, and writing group feedback session protocols) contributed to the validity of the work and provided avenues for rich data. All of the data collection methods were audio- and video-recorded for later analysis.

Focus Groups. I hosted the focus group experience twice, via WebEx videoconferencing, as approved by the IRB. I had envisioned doing this focus group experience once and in person with all six participants, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic had to shift to an online data collection experience. I chose to complete two focus groups with three participants each to make writing and sharing more manageable, given the distanced environment. Since I had four male participants and two female participants, I decided to have one female per group and scheduled the other male participants based on their availability. The WebEx system created a transcript of each

focus group. In order to understand the participants' experiences, three protocols, detailed below, were utilized.

First, I led the participants through a modified stepping stone protocol, originally designed by American psychotherapist Ira Progoff (1992) as part of his intensive journaling workshops. Since all the study participants were familiar with this protocol, originally designed to help writers list touchstone moments in their lives, I reminded them of the stepping stones as used in the ISI (see Appendix N for details on original protocol use). I then explained how I was adjusting this protocol to have them capture their touchstone moments of connection with the NWP since their ISI so that I could study their participation with continued professional development in the NWP. These moments could be large or small, negative or positive, as long as the participants considered them important in some way. I asked them to list their 10 stepping stones of their association with the NWP and/or their local site. The first stepping stone was "I participated in the ISI" and then they considered nine more impactful experiences of connection with the Project since completing the ISI.

Following the collection of their stepping stones list of touchstone moments, the next step in the focus groups was for the participants to write, using a snapshot writing protocol, the beginning of one or two narratives chosen from the list as the most impactful, with the NWP local site or national organization. Progoff (1975) explains the stepping stone moment one chooses to write more about carries "meaningfulness for the transitions of our life" and reminds journalers "to choose …one in which the most formative events were taking place" (p. 93). I reminded the study participants they should also use these words as a guide for choosing the stepping stone(s) to explore more deeply.

All participants were familiar with the snapshot writing protocol, but I reviewed it with them before their 20-minute writing time by sharing how Barry Lane, a writing teacher and author, defines them. Lane (1993) describes snapshot writing as "having a magic camera" to "point at the world and create snapshots that contain smells and sounds as well as colors and lights" (p. 35). I explained to the participants that their snapshot writing of their stepping stone story or stories is about "zooming in" and writing with the "power of physical detail" (Lane, 1993, p. 35). I provided the participants twenty minutes to write the beginning of one or two snapshots, chosen from their stepping stone list. The purpose of this choice was to provide an opportunity for participants to abandon their first snapshot if the writing was not flowing well and to also give them choice as they would be sharing one snapshot with the others in the focus group for feedback. I assured all the snapshot writing was rough draft writing and did not have to be completed in the 20-minute time frame and they would have a chance after the focus group to complete and revise one or more snapshots.

The intent of the stepping stone brainstorm list and snapshot narrative writing was to elicit touchstone moments, detailed instances of connection with the NWP since the ISI, and to provide both a form and time for the participants to reflect on those experiences. The focus on sensory details and reflection helped the TCs use an already familiar protocol in a new context, allowing for meaningmaking through their writing. Finally, utilizing writing as data aligns with the NWP techniques as a great deal of the learning of its continued professional development is through writing. The participants' writing in this project is, in fact, a form of continued professional development.

Upon the completion of the snapshot writing protocol, I guided the participants through the third and final protocol of the focus group, a writing group feedback session. All participants were extremely familiar with this protocol as it is a cornerstone of much NWP CPD. I led the feedback session and offered the following three question stems, adapted from the work of Graves (1994), to frame the writing group work: 1. What question or questions do you have about the piece? 2. What possibilities do you see for this piece? 3. What is your favorite line or part and why? These questions are broad enough that all could give and receive feedback while being helpful enough for participants to receive constructive feedback so that they could complete their narratives in more depth. Participants were also encouraged to ask for specific feedback that varies from these questions. Some participants took notes during the session for their upcoming at-home composing and revision. In addition to all of the writing completed for the study and the interview transcripts, the transcripts of the feedback sessions also provided valuable data.

The purpose of this special kind of focus group was to provide a familiar, collaborative structure for the participants to discuss not only their snapshot writings, but also their experiences in the NWP. The focus group afforded another avenue to capture the TCs' experiences and what is meaningful to them. As Hesse-Biber (2017) explains, the participants

> …can prompt a response from others, and the information produced is more likely to be framed by the categories and understandings of the interviewees rather than those of the interviewer. Participants can help each other figure out what the questions really mean to them (pp. 153–154).

This allowed me as the researcher another invaluable opportunity to explore the participants' attitudes and experiences as well as the collaborative culture of the NWP.

Follow-up Interviews. After the focus group sessions, each participant revised the narratives, ensuring they included what they considered a beginning, middle and end to their snapshot story, based on their focus group feedback session. I invited each participant to send me their stepping stone list, draft from the focus group session, and any revised drafts. I read all carefully and repeatedly, and then interviewed each participant using their writings as a foundation for follow-up conversations (see Appendix O for the revised interview protocol). As Seidman (2013) states,

> The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to test hypotheses, and not to 'evaluate' as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (p. 9).

Therefore, the interviews provided another opportunity for the TC participants to make meaning of their NWP experiences as well as provide me, as the researcher, an opportunity for a fuller understanding of those experiences.

The interview protocol was revised after the focus groups sessions to reflect a new interest in vulnerability that I encountered in those sessions. The interview protocol was helpful, but used as a loose guide as I wanted to have a conversational tone in the interviews. I felt having this conversational tone would allow the participants to stay in the storytelling mode we had nurtured in the focus groups. It was important to me to have an inductive interview protocol as I wanted the participants to retain ownership of their stories. I aim to "seek…participants' point of view of their experience," not to mold it

(Seidman, 2013, p. 17). Having said that, I set aside time for analytic memoing immediately after each interview to explicate my own thoughts about the content and nature of the interviews.

After the interviews, participants were given the opportunity for one final revision of their snapshot stories as they are spotlighted in the dissertation. All participants chose not to revise any further, but they were involved in confidentiality checks after the interviews where, with me, they changed names as well as locations to de-identify any others they had referenced in their pieces.

Data Analysis

An important aim of this research is to give teachers voice about their continued professional development experiences. Therefore, it was important for the data to be analyzed using what Maxwell (2013) describes as connecting strategies. He explains:

> …connecting analysis attempts to understand the data (usually, but not necessarily, an interview transcript or other textual material) in context, using various methods to identify the relationships among the different elements of the text…It is thus often seen as holistic in that it is concerned with the relationships among the different parts of the transcript or field notes… (p. 112).

It was important to me to present the stories of the participants in a holistic manner, as will be detailed in the data representation section of this chapter. Using the following analytic strategies provided me the tools to see the connectivity of the data, rather than splintering the experiences.

As a qualitative researcher, data analysis is integrated throughout each stage of the research. Detailed below are the data analysis techniques I continually used

throughout the duration of the project. Additionally, I was sure to remain open to new analysis techniques as the data unfolded.

Reading and Rereading. In alignment with my conceptual framework (see Appendix B), I utilized the concept of recursivity to read and re-read all collected transcripts of focus groups and follow-up interviews as well as the stepping stone lists, snapshot drafts, and revised snapshot stories. Doing so, allowed me to think deeply about the participants' words and stay close to the data. I also consider listening to interview and focus group recordings multiple times as a way of "rereading" in order to think about the theories at work in the words, but also as a way to pick up on nuances such as inflection of speech. The shift from in-person, only audiorecorded focus group and interview sessions to video- and audio-recorded sessions via an online format due to the pandemic had the benefit of my being able to review the video recordings for memoing and other analytic purposes before I deleted them. I replayed the session recordings numerous times during data analysis for multiple purposes including to correct written transcripts for later analysis, to capture memos regarding inflection and other nonverbal signals, to write snapshots of the two focus group sessions as part of the data chapter's narrative representation (see Chapter 4), and to recursively return to the sessions for additional analysis. I feel this unanticipated shift was beneficial allowing me to add another level of recursivity to the process of data analysis. On the other hand, I feel an in-person meeting may have provided more natural conversation and interaction that cannot be as easily managed in an online format. Having said that, due to the pandemic, all of the participants had been teaching utilizing online formats and had become comfortable with interactions using distance technologies.

Analytic Memoing. Perhaps the most critical of my analytic strategies has been memoing throughout the entire research process. I memoed very early in this dissertation journey, beginning throughout my literature review. I do all memoing by hand as I tend to process information by hand better than through immediate typing (see Appendix H for an example of a memo created during the literature review; for readability purposes it has been typed).

It was important to me to schedule time directly after each focus group as well as after each interview to memo in order to capture thoughts immediately while fresh in my mind. I continually looked at all data for "relationships that *connect* statements and events within the context of a coherent whole" (Maxwell, 2013, p.113). Also important to this connecting was reading theory throughout the data analysis and memoing about the connections between data and theory I was seeing. By engaging in all of these recursive reading and writing cycles, I was seeking coherence and for stories that get to the *hows* of teacher development. In turn, these memos were used for analysis themselves. As my participants' stories unfolded so did the story of my own research journey.

Narrative Summarization. I used narrative summarization to synthesize my thoughts as I collected and analyzed data. After I collected the participants' stepping stone lists, first drafts from the focus groups, and their revisions after the focus groups, I read all the writings and began creating my own narrative summations of the main points of each participant's NWP CPD "story." Early on, I thought I would engage in plotting these narrative journeys in my own short narratives, making sure to consider story elements such as beginning, middle, and end, character, and conflict. The intent was to see the overall arc of the participants' CPD experiences. However, after reading more

about storytelling-as-research and seeing the deep, analytic bent of my participants' own snapshot stories that were not linear in nature, I felt my own analytic purpose shift. Instead of my *own* narrative representations, I became more centered on my *participants'* narrative representations. In the end, the narrative summations were an analysis technique for me, not a representational technique (see Appendix P for the narrative summations). They were a way to help me think through each participant's involvement with NWP CPD. The narrative summations were a way for me to capture each participant's experiences across the focus group, the writing, and the interviews in order for me to then look across all participants' experiences and words. The final goal was to then put that all in conversation with theory in the findings and conclusions of this dissertation.

Data Coding. For all data sources I printed hard copies. I then went through all the transcripts three times. The first time, I wrote down in the right margin anything that struck me as interesting, engaging, or curious. I wanted to first read the documents as holistically and as openly as possible. I was very familiar with their contents as I had re-watched and re-listened to all WebEx recordings to correct the transcripts and to memo. After this first holistic reading, I then read again, looking for metaphorical language. When I talked with my weekly writing group, three other women doctoral students, we discussed how it seemed my participants were using a lot of descriptive language in their snapshot writings. I wondered if this could be a way of meaning-making and began to review all of the data sources for metaphorical and other descriptive speech. Finally, I read all data a third time, this time looking through the lens of the theory. On the left margin I notated where in the documents I found Relational Cultural Theory and elements of recursivity at work in the participants' words.

Concept Mapping and Data Posters. After collecting in-vivo words and phrases from all the participants' stories that captured their meaning making, I employed Novak's (1990) mapping technique to arrange and rearrange connections and associations using linking words to investigate the complexity of the data. This was a technique I had used before in data analysis that had proved helpful to me. I created these maps on large posters to hang in my office space to keep close to the data and analysis throughout the work. In the past, I created one concept map for each person in a study and then create one or more additional concept maps that integrate all the participants' phrases. I felt this mapping and linking would allow me to see the meaning making and experiences more broadly. Merriam's (1998) assertion that "our analysis and interpretation—our study's findings—will reflect the constructs, concepts, language, models, and theories that structured the study in the first place" (p. 48) would help guide me to reevaluate and reorganize conceptual framing for the study as needed.

However, after making one poster in this way, I discovered that most of the in-vivo language revolved around metaphors the participant was using and connecting the metaphors with linking verbs was awkward at best, and revealed little to me when I reviewed the nature of my research questions centered on meaning-making. I shifted to creating one large poster for each participant that listed the metaphor use found in three data categories: the focus group, any writing the participant submitted, and the interview. With six large posters hanging on the walls of my office space, I was literally surrounded by the words of my participants. It was in this way I lived with the data for several weeks, breathing in metaphors. I noticed all of the participants had used metaphorical speech to describe and make meaning of their NWP continued professional development

experiences across all of the data sources. I also saw repetition across the participants as some were using similar if not identical metaphors to describe their experiences. This led me to collapsing some of the metaphors into larger categories so I could more easily see if and how they were reflective of the theories I was utilizing as a lens (see Appendix Q for master metaphor list with in-vivo quotes). I did this categorization by using multiple-colored markers to find similar and original metaphors across the posters. For example, if a participant used the metaphor the "NWP CPD as magic," I would search through the additional five posters and mark any instances of this metaphor with the same color. These color-coded metaphors became the core of meaning-making analysis and led to some of the findings and conclusions in Chapters 4 and 5.

Collaborative Re-visioning of Stepping Stone Stories. True to the recursive nature of story-telling-as research, the participants had many opportunities to re-vision their meaning making, a form of participant analysis. From brainstorming a list of stepping stones and draft snapshot writing in the focus group, they received feedback from the others in the group to dig deeper into their writing and meaning. They then had opportunity to take the feedback and more completely and carefully compose a second draft before meeting with me for a follow-up interview. Finally, they had one additional time to write a final draft of their stepping stone stories after discussing their experiences more fully in the interview. This collaborative re-visioning provided multiple opportunities for the participants to engage with authentic audiences for their storytelling.

Data Representation

This project contains narrative representations of data. The participants' revised snapshot stories are presented in their entirety in Chapter 4, the data representation

chapter, as to fully capture their meaning making and experiences. I am in agreement with Maynes, et al. (2008) that this representation reflects "an epistemological strategy that sees individuals both as unique and as connected to social and cultural worlds and relationships that affect their life choices and life stories" (p. 10). The snapshot stories spotlighted in Chapter 4 are individuals' tales of connection with NWP continued professional development, but they are also tales of connection to the "social and cultural worlds and relationships" within the NWP.

Interestingly, one participant, Edward, decided not to revise the snapshot story he began in the focus group and wrote an entirely different story he felt encapsulated his experience better. This new story did grow out of the focus group discussion and reflection he continued after the group. Another participant, Malcolm, did revise his focus group snapshot story, but also included a second snapshot to be included as he felt it was an important story to tell. This second story, also included in Chapter 4, also grew out of the discussion held in the focus group session.

At first, I believed I would intersperse my own data analysis of these stories, but I decided it was more in alignment with storytelling-as-research methodology to have the stories standalone. I did see value in framing how these snapshot stories began in the focus group and wrote snapshots of the focus group interactions, a data representation frame also included in Chapter 4.

The narrative representation in the dissertation, both my own snapshot writing of the focus groups as well as the entire revised participant snapshot stories, are naturally infused with analysis. The result is a Chapter 4 that highlights stories as connective analysis, and therefore the meaning-making, of the Teacher-Consultants in the study. By

looking carefully at the meaning-making of these participants, the reader will gain more understanding and visibility of the *hows* of teacher development.

Researcher Subjectivity

I acknowledge the "researcher *is* the instrument of the research" in qualitative research methodology (Maxwell, 2013, p. 44). Although I must recognize my own long history as an educator and teacher educator as well as my role as NWP Teacher-Consultant and former co-director of a local Project site, I must also embrace this experiential knowledge as a strength. I acknowledge that I come to this research having experienced the NWP from a myriad of viewpoints: as a fellow in the ISI, as a co-director of ISIs and of an entire NWP site for over a decade, as a presenter, as a writing group member, as a CPD developer and course facilitator, and many other roles. As such, I have a great familiarity with the NWP's approaches and protocols that provide me with an insider view of the organization. I agree with Maxwell (2013) when he states: "separating your research from other aspects of your life cuts you off from a major source of insights, hypotheses, and validity checks" (p. 45). In this way, I believe my insider viewpoint gave me many advantages. I was able to authentically listen to my participants and to bring a mindfulness to capturing their experiences. I was also able to describe and break down the NWP CPD experiences for the reader of this work having been intimately involved with so many of those CPD experiences myself. I unequivocally believe by having experienced the culture of the NWP, I was well-positioned to analyze and represent the phenomena at work. My experiences with the NWP, like my participants, matters and those experiences cannot be separated out from who I am as an educator or as a researcher.

In order to acknowledge, account for, and positively use my positionality, I wrote continuous memos regarding biases as they presented themselves. In addition, I wrote and revised my own NWP stepping stone narratives as part of this project. Not only did writing these narratives confirm meaning making would occur through the use of this adapted protocol, I also found these writings useful to my analysis as well. I presented one of my own snapshot writings as the introduction to this work, both to frame the dissertation and to acknowledge, up front, the viewpoint I have. I do not believe there is true distance from what we research and reject the researcher as a person who can set aside subjectivity. Instead, I choose to embrace my history with the NWP, as well as my long career as a teacher and teacher educator, as strengths I bring to the work. I intimately know what it is to be a teacher who designs and provides continued professional development and I also know what it is like to be on the receiving side of such continued professional development. These experiences have proven to provide invaluable contextual richness to my analysis.

As Maynes et al. (2008) explain, "within positivist strains of social science, life stories are reduced to the status of the anecdotal, adding color or personal interest but unreliable as a basis for generalization" (p. 5). This work is not positivist and rejects this assertion. I agree with the authors when they argue

> …it is *precisely their subjective character* that has made personal narratives increasingly interesting to social scientists and historians aiming to open up space for new understandings of the relationship between the individual and the social (Maynes, et al., 2008, p. 6).

The study participants share in their words their "insider" view of NWP continued professional development and in doing so we are able to see the relationships "between the individual and the social," between the individual lives of teachers and their very social work of teaching. I, too, bring those personal and social relationships to this work and see them as relevant, enriching, and leading to deeper analysis.

Validity

In order to evaluate the validity of my results, I have taken several precautions. The recursive nature of this proposed research involves member checking with my participants, constant memoing and a variety of data collection methods, and regular feedback sessions with both my dissertation writing group and committee members.

My participants' voices and stories are spotlighted in this research. The participants were invited to brainstorm, compose, receive feedback, revise, discuss the narratives through an interview, and revise and edit again. This continual feedback loop and multiple opportunities to revise, provided multiple moments for validity checks.

In addition, I shared the dissertation with all participants and invited their feedback as I revised. This mirrors the recursive writing process they are involved in while completing this project and is an important source of member-checking for me.

Constant analytic memoing and the multiple sources for data collection are also protective factors. As I have few participants, it is important that I have multiple data points to assure the validity of my findings. The multiple re-readings and various coding strategies I enlisted provide validity checks. In addition, my extensive appendices provide transparency into my data collection, analysis, and my thought process throughout the study.

Finally, I utilized my weekly dissertation writing group meeting as an additional opportunity for feedback on my writing and analysis. My writing group consisted of three other doctoral students who are all in various stages of the research process. Their careful reading and honest feedback have been crucial to the re-visioning of my ideas. In addition, my committee members were an indispensable resource to gain insight and direction while completing this study. Their mentorship is a key element to my current and future success as a qualitative researcher.

Summary

Maxwell (2013) states: "Our understanding of this world is inevitably our construction, rather than a purely objective perception of reality, and no such construction can claim absolute truth" (p. 43). I believe this epistemological view gives support to the need for individuals' stories of meaning-making. Narrative representation, in this study designed with storytelling-as-research, provides these meaning-rich tales of how my participants have constructed careers alongside the NWP and what association means to them in becoming "lifers" in the field.

This chapter has linked my epistemological stance to my methodology, giving an overview of storytelling-as-research and aligning it to my research questions, purpose, design, and choice of participants and research site. I also detailed the data collection methods used in this study, focus groups and follow-up interviews, along with the multiple forms of data analysis I utilized to discover my study findings. I also described the data representation presented in Chapter 4 and defended its use. Finally, the chapter addressed my researcher subjectivity as well as the validity of the study.

The next chapter presents the data including focus group snapshot frames for the participants' revised snapshot stories of the NWP CPD, printed in their entirety as is in alignment with storytelling-as-research. Chapter 4 also summarizes the follow-up interview data and the findings of the study.

Chapter 4: Data Stories and Discoveries

What follows in this chapter are my snapshot writings of the two focus groups to serve as introductions to the participants and detail their interactions. After each of these introductions, I present the participants' snapshot stories in their entirety; they began these in the focus groups and revised afterwards on their own utilizing feedback from their focus group colleagues. The participant writing was member-checked and revised for confidentiality. However, other than standardizing ellipses and double-spacing for consistency, no other changes were made to the snapshots. Any emphasis, including italics or capitalization, was made by the participants. After these snapshots, I include a section on the follow-up interviews I conducted and the themes that emerged as well as those clarified in those one-on-one sessions. The data representations shared in this chapter illustrate how the participants describe and make meaning of their NWP experiences, thus contributing to answering the following research questions:

> How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of their experiences with the National Writing Project since their foundational Invitational Summer Institute experience (their continued professional development)?
>
> - How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of relationship building in National Writing Project Continued Professional Development (CPD) experiences?
> - How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of recursivity of National Writing Project Continued Professional

Development (i.e., in their teaching of writing, their own writing, professionalism, personal lives, etc.)?

Finally, at the end of this chapter, I will share three overarching findings regarding metaphorical meaning making about the participants' NWP CPD experiences, as well as the roles vulnerability and recursive cycles play in those experiences.

Focus Group 1 Snapshot: Michele, Steven, and Malcolm

"Into the Fold"

On the morning of the first focus group, I waited in my virtual room, excited and nervous to begin the study. One by one, I allowed my three participants "into" the virtual room, and their faces popped up on the screen. They quickly and warmly greeted each other. They knew each other even though they had attended different ISIs due to their continued involvement in various Project activities at their shared local site.

Instead of the library or university room I had once imagined, I found myself looking into my participants' homes as I gave the overview of the research and led them through the stepping stones writing protocol, snapshot writing drafts, and the mini-writing feedback session. Michele, like me, occasionally lifted her coffee mug to her lips. The light streaming in from a window behind Steven framed his intent expression as he wrote. Malcolm's office seemed to me to be in a treehouse; he appeared as a dark silhouette on the screen due to the sunlight and summer greenery behind him. What *did* match my imagined non-COVID meeting was the peaceful feel of teachers writing together, heads tilted, and lost in thought.

Michele, who teaches high school English courses including creative writing, volunteered first to read her snapshot stories. She prefaced her sharing by saying that it

was difficult writing the stepping stone list of touchstone moments with the Writing Project and that she was "shocked by the number of memories" she had. Then, when she had to choose what to write her elaborations on, she said:

> I struggled between writing about something that affected my teaching or writing about how it affected my professional career. I know those are intertwined, but I was like, do I do a classroom snapshot or something with students or do something with my colleagues and friends that I've come to know and care about over these years?

In the end, she chose to start two snapshot stories, one about the development of a national professional association that had its start at her local Writing Project site. The second piece detailed attending a Writing Project board meeting where she ended up being, as she put it, "cornered" into organizing the site's yearly conference, something she continued to lead for a decade. She asked the writing group to help her choose which one they wanted to know more about and said that hearing their feedback would help her decide which to complete for the research project.

In conversation, it was clear that Steven and Malcolm enjoyed both pieces, but the second piece about the board meeting resonated more with them. Steven said his snapshot was related thematically to Michele's in that she writes about being a part of the board with people she admires and that he also wrote about how "it's humbling to be in awe of these people and then to join them. It's just such a remarkable moment." Malcolm agreed, but pushed Michele further to investigate in her revision the question: "why was sitting around that [board] table so damn important to you?" This conversation about Michele's involvement with the board led Malcolm to sharing his own thoughts about

how the Project, for him, had steered him to a group of people who "had this thing, we wrote and we want to teach writing actively. We want our students to be effective writers." For Malcolm, the Writing Project provided a community of professionals he sometimes had difficulty finding in his school building.

It was clear to Malcolm that the Writing Project had influenced Michele deeply and this led him to tell another story about a woman who had verbalized how the Writing Project "changed her life," a comment he had heard many times and was skeptical of until she articulated it so well in front of her county's leadership team. Malcolm wrote a different stepping stone moment in the focus group, but would later send a second snapshot story (included later in this chapter) about this woman's experience and its impact on him. It was evident later the focus group conversation influenced this choice to send two revised writings for the study.

Steven, who teaches high school English for gifted learners, shared next. His reading about giving a joint Writing Project presentation at a national conference had both Michele and Malcolm laughing at times. Michele commented on the need for collaborative work and Steven followed up by saying that the people he was presenting with at the conference "brought me into the fold." He went on to tell his focus group:

> That's what the Writing Project does. It's these rock star teachers bring other people into the fold, take them under their wing, and allow them some space…it kinda' hit me as an epiphany that the work we can do with each other as TCs [Teacher-Consultants] is much greater than alone.

In response to Steven saying this, Malcolm admitted he once thought he "had this thing [teaching] all figured out" but he had moved to a "much more collaborative approach

today." He highlighted for Steven the focus on invitations in his writing saying, "I can't make you do anything, but I can invite you in. I can invite you to this and invite you to share with me." Steven went on to revise his piece with invitation at the heart of his writing.

The idea of invitation was also present in Malcolm's writing. In a deep voice he read his snapshot moment from his experience teaching a Writing Project in-service course, regularly offered by his local site. In his piece, he wrote about how the invitational nature of the course was important as it was not mandated by the county, but offered to those who wanted to improve writing instruction in their classrooms. Although he has taught the course numerous times, this snapshot focused in on one moment. He wrote about a woman in his class vulnerably sharing writing and its impact on her personal life. She reentered a relationship due to the writing she completed in his in-service course and then regretted it. The moment was a difficult one for Malcolm, making him feel like a bit of a failure, but he shared with our focus group what that situation taught him about teaching. He went on to share aloud a companion story (not written) where he put into action what he had learned. For him, the Writing Project allowed experimentation and growth for the teachers in his in-service courses, but also for himself as their facilitator. Michele suggested that he add the companion piece to the snapshot in his revision, which he later did. She highlighted how important working with adults is in the Project, stating, "We're taking what we learned back to our students, obviously, but then we also have the opportunity to work with adults as teachers of writing, but also as writers, which is what your piece points to." I noted that all three of them had written pieces about interaction with adults, not the students they worked with during the day.

Steven also focused his feedback comments to Malcolm, an elementary educator, about this idea of working with adults through the Project and its importance. He commented on how Malcolm described the difficulty of getting to the course on time due to its long commute. Still, it mattered to Malcolm so he did it, week after week. Steven could relate saying,

> If we are called to two different places, you know where we are going to be… [(the Project work]. We're willing to brave the rush hour traffic. We're willing to take leave to do it or whatever we need to do. And I think it speaks to how important it is.

Michele nodded vigorously and shared:

> You know, a lot of the last four months has not felt right or good [alluding to the virus and stay at home orders], but this [the focus group] …just kind of energizes me. I feel like I've been lost and thinking about starting the school year virtually and how that's going to look. It just reminds me that I have all these resources and people in my corner.

As a researcher, I no longer worried about not being in the same room. My participants had reflected on their stepping stones, had written about pivotal moments with the Writing Project, and had shared with one another their thoughts on writing and the Project itself. They were ready to revise and appeared committed to the study.

"Thanks for inviting us," Steven said, and the screen squares disappeared one by one.

Focus Group 1 Revised Snapshots

What follows are Michele's, Steven's, and Malcolm's revised snapshot stories. All of their stories reflect some of the interaction that was part of their focus group writing feedback session. Their stories present different aspects and programs that are part of the menu of available NWP Continued Professional Development opportunities (see Appendix M for sample CPD opportunities). Michele's revised snapshot focuses on her involvement with the board of directors at her local site and running an annual conference for that site. Steven's revised snapshot centers on his interactions and experiences with a Teacher-Consultant from his site and a former NWP director at a national conference. Lastly, Malcolm submitted two revised snapshots highlighting his work as a facilitator of a credit course connected to his local site and as a staff member of an ISI. Their snapshots reflect their respective analysis and meaning-making of how their CPD experiences impacted them and those around them. For reader reference, if a first name is utilized it is a pseudonym and if a first and last name are presented, the person is a known author, writing practitioner, and/or theorist and is the true name. Place names are also changed to protect confidentiality.

Michele's Revised Snapshot Story—Being Volunteered.

I looked around the table at whom I considered my Writing Project site's icons, and I couldn't believe I was sitting among them. After being rejected (at first) from my own ISI (2004), but then being asked to be on staff the following summer, I was still navigating my way around the complexities of joining this unique group of educators; an invitation to the writing—to the work—to the table—was what I had been searching for in my early teaching career. Waiting for the director to begin my first board meeting, I

opened my notebook, ready for thoughts and inspiration—and that came—but what evolved that evening and for many Friday evenings afterward was the professional transformation I craved: a place to belong, a place to lead.

What I quickly learned is that the Writing Project didn't wait for us to volunteer—they chose us, and welcomed us, and well, maybe cornered us. Cornered me. As pizza and Pepsi and the agenda were passed around the table and roles for the year were appointed, I saw my name listed under the annual conference. Sure, I had attended those March meetings for years—the experience was part of the reason I had applied for the ISI in the first place—but what did this mean exactly? And then yes, the director confirmed: Michele, you are in charge. Of a conference. At a university. With hundreds of attendees. And demonstration lessons by TCs. And a recognizable Keynote speaker on writing. My seat at the table suddenly felt a bit tighter, yet the smiles and nods from the others in the room told me I wasn't alone. Those icons were also my supporters.

So, perhaps I *had* been cornered into this leadership experience—but this experience would positively impact my career, year after year. As a teacher, I had obviously worked with and learned from my students, but I knew it was also my responsibility to work with and learn from my peers—to grow in my craft. The NWP's foundation in teachers teaching teachers supported this work, and the conference allowed us to showcase these beliefs through research and best practices. That first Friday night, I realized that as a part of this esteemed group of leaders, I, too, had a contribution to make, a responsibility to promote and champion all that the Project did for teachers, and in turn, for their students.

What followed: over a decade of purposeful and joyful (and okay, stressful) planning and executing. I had the opportunity to meet and interact with TCs from all over my state and learn from them in their sessions: I filled in comic bubbles and "read" the book *Zoom* by Istvan Banyai with Teacher-Consultant Jessica and I considered semester-long writing portfolios after spending time with another TC, Zoe. Gina reminded me of the importance of wonder and inquiry as she used crime scene investigation as a lead-in to the elements of essay writing. I also relished the opportunity to interact with our Keynote speakers: I discussed scaffolding writing workshops over dinner with Kelly Gallagher, and while driving Jim Burke to the airport, he and I shared some of our most memorable experiences with breakthroughs in student writing. During Mark Overmeyer's workshop, after he shared stories and strategies and hilarious writing samples about Grandma's stinky feet, I wrote about driving (and popping three tires in a two-week period when I was 16) and being driven in my own life.

Maybe my project site hadn't cornered me after all—it had driven me. It had invited me. Each year, after each conference, I discovered there was more work to be done and more writing to be written. This is our renewal. This is our commitment. Once we become TCs, and do the work together, that invitation is extended to all of us each time we write, we teach, we learn, we lead. Although I can't really recall the last time I sat around that table in Warner Hall on a Friday night, I am often reminded of the reach of the Project and its people and how much it has changed my life.

Steven's Revised Snapshot Story—Team Effort.

The lecture hall—and it's a sizable one—is packed. There isn't an empty seat to be seen. People are standing in the back of the room; people are standing out in the

hallway, looking in through the door. I'm presenting at the NCTE conference with Dave (another TC from my site) and Martin, former director of a midwestern Writing Project. I've presented at well-attended sessions before, and I've presented to a handful of people in an ironically—embarrassingly, by juxtaposition—large room, but I've never been part of a presentation that so dangerously flouted the fire code for maximum occupancy.

I look to my left. Dave, who now has the mic, is dropping lyrical fire on the crowd—it's somewhere between a Pentecostal religious rival meeting and a rap concert (So, are we then like The Beastie Boys? Run DMC? The Fat Boys? So many classic rap trios.) at this point. He is killing it.

We are presenting under the National Writing Project strand, and our presentation is about asking better questions. I'm amazed by Dave's ability to take a subject that I had been teaching for years—one that I thought I knew everything about—and put a new spin on it. I had handled the mechanical part of the presentation—recognizing and revising flawed questions—but Dave was now getting to the concept of asking meaningful questions.

He was urging the crowd to move past tired questions to which we already knew the answer. Instead of "What was the cause of the Civil War?" (*It was slavery,* he whispers.), we might ask "Why do we continue to ask about the causes of the Civil War?" (though he pushed the crowd to move beyond that as well—*it's racism,* he answered).

Martin had set the stage by showing the audience a children's book entitled *Why*, where a two-year-old girl thwarts a supervillain's design on the planet by repeatedly asking him "Why?" Children are naturally inquisitive, Martin charged, and we crush that

inquisitiveness. We give them breathtaking poems to read (He read one.) and ask, “Is line 17 a simile or a metaphor?” (Answer: Who cares?).

A series of lessons, at this point, is dawning on me, though many of them are not related to questioning. To return to the rap metaphor, it’s possible that, let’s say, Michael Diamond could have had a successful solo career, but when combined with Adam Yauch and Adam Horowitz, he becomes part of the Beastie Boys, who change the face of rap music forever (Other groups offer similar lessons: the Wu-Tang Clan, A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul, The Furious Five, The Funky Four Plus One More, etc.). So too with the Writing Project. It brings together talented teachers who, working together, accomplish more than they could alone.

The inclusivity of the Writing Project is seen here, too. Dave recruited me—invited me—to be part of the team. Martin, throughout the conference, was continually inviting people he had met to join us for drinks later, and he introduced me to his vast network of his site’s TC’s. Dave and Martin were beyond me in many ways, but they had invited me to join them; in this way, my own pedagogy was improved. It has always been like this—I was invited to present at my local site’s annual conference, then to present to a local school district, then to be part of the Advisory Board, etc. The Writing Project is invitational, and by that I do not mean it is “invite only” but rather “inviting.”

The Writing Project is also a foil to the cookie-cutter junk, often developed by corporations, that passes for professional development. My heart leaps when I am among people who reject questions that could have come from standardized tests (“Is line 17 a simile or a metaphor?”) or textbooks (“What was the cause of the Civil War?”), seeking, instead—as per the title of our presentation—“What Really Matters?” What makes

Writing Project people different from the average teacher? For one, they are writers. They are, of course, readers, but they have moved beyond the passive consumption of text (reading) into the active production of it (writing). They are troublemakers—"Any good writer," asserts David Miller, "any writer who wants to be a good writer, is trying to cause trouble. He is trying to be troubling. He is asking questions that people don't want asked." They are dangerous because they are not interested in money—they are driven, perhaps, by a passion or compulsion to learn and share; the same compulsion that drives them to write.

Much of the presentation is a dreamy blur, but it ends with applause. The three of us go out to a bar later, which is just as crowded as the lecture hall had been. We push toward the bar, and some patrons seated there recognize us from the presentation—they hail us with effusive praise. It was the closest I had even been to being an academic rock (rap) star.

Malcolm's Revised Snapshot Stories.

Revised Snapshot Story 1—Lessons Taught and Lessons Learned.

In 2005, three years after I began my journey as a Teacher-Consultant, my local writing project branched out and created a satellite in-service course three counties and 57 miles away during rush hour traffic. It was a course that nobody wanted to commute to, so it was offered to me. I enthusiastically said, "Yes!" forgetting that I had the crummiest car in the Project. It would be touch and go whether or not I made it to class on a weekly basis.

I had to get on the road by 3:00pm or traffic would become so bad on the interstate, that I wouldn't make the 4:30 start time. Luckily, I was running a k-5th gifted

education center in my district and I wrapped up working with students at 2:45. I don't know if anyone wondered why I was nowhere to be found on Wednesday afternoons that spring when our contract time didn't end until 3:30. I assumed they thought I was at another school (I actually worked with four different schools at my center). I never thought to tell anyone or ask for personal time, which in hindsight makes good sense, but I was young and brash, so I left with the knowledge that whatever good I might do in sharing the Writing Project with these teachers far outweighed answering emails and bus duty once a week. Besides, it wasn't like my district was compensating me for the late nights and long weekends planning lessons for my k-5th students.

I was in my element so to speak as a contract course teacher. Whereas, many of my fellow teachers in elementary school were running to the bathroom with fear diarrhea before Back-to-School Nights, I love working with adults; almost as much as I do working with 10-year-olds.

Everything about this course was going beautifully. We even had the local language arts supervisor in class with us and she was always the first to share her writing. Numerous times she said to the class, "Every teacher should have to take this class."

I would then assume a professorial posture, stroke what little beard I had, clean my glasses and say, "If this class was required, then it wouldn't be nearly as good—this class is good because we volunteered to be here—we want to improve our writing and the writing of our students…now then 4.7 more writing minutes and then we'll invite some sharing."

Part of this course was inviting seven guest presenters to come in and share something that worked really well with respect to writing based upon the participants'

needs. One of my guests was TC Vincent, who had been trained in Ira Progoff's Intensive Journaling techniques. He had us write the twelve most significant events (stepping stones) that had made up our lives and then elaborate on one. Sharing was purely optional. Sarah, an effective yet quiet middle school English teacher, whose New York accent transported all of us to another place stood. Sarah gripped the tabletop with one hand and lifted her composition book towards her eyes with the other. She cleared her throat and began. What she shared was both powerful and poetic about her breakup with her fiancé. We felt the pain of it…we all sat still for a few big seconds. Then someone, it wasn't me, began clapping, then I heard my own hands louder than anyone's. We started by passing the box of tissues around. Several of us were crying big ugly tears. Did we cry for this relationship? Did we cry for our friend and colleague? Maybe we cried for ourselves and our own heartaches? No matter the reason the moment was cathartic. Only after the room grew quiet again and Sarah sat down, did she show emotion. "That was good…I mean I feel great right now. Thank you."

Another teacher called out, "Now that's what you call closure!" I didn't have the words psychologically safe place in my repertoire but I did know that we were a community of teachers who wrote and were becoming better teachers of writing in the process. I also remember thinking to myself, *this is as good as it gets*.

The next week I decided to teach a Progoff technique called Dialogue with a Person. We brainstormed people whom we'd like to have a conversation with. Then we selected one and wrote their significant moments (it helps if you know this person…and it really helps if you have unfinished business with this person, but I neglected to say this second part). Then we step into the shoes of this person and have a two-way conversation

between this person and ourselves. After writing a while, I noticed Sarah looking faraway and my instinct was to go to her. When I got to her table, she looked at me and simply said, “You know, he wasn’t as big a jerk (she used a much coarser word) as I made him out to be last week.” Sure enough, there in her journal was her ex-fiancé’s stepping-stones and a conversation that I suspected had already taken place well before the breakup. I didn’t know enough to talk about the intersection of memory and imagination or romancing the truth, so we adjourned for the week.

At our next class, Sarah stood up again and said, “I just want to tell you all that my fiancé and I are back together. I have last week’s Dialogue with a Person Lesson to thank for this.” There was a smattering of applause but nothing like the two weeks earlier. This would have been a great way to end our class if it had been week 15, but sadly it was only our seventh week together. So, I could not sneak out of town like some snake oil salesman before she discovered what she just bought.

Sarah was not in class the following week. I had a bad feeling, which was confirmed the following week when she returned. Her accent seemed to have gotten heavier, which was an odd thing for me to think when she stood for the third and final time in our class and said, “Screw you and that old man you brought in here who started this thing. I had closure do you hear me. I was over him! And now this…we broke up again. This time for good!”

“I’m sorry,” I said weakly. Do no harm, I thought to myself. The Hippocratic Oath works well in education too. Sorry.

I carried this failure around with me for a couple of years even though this is a pretty minor entry on my long list of pedagogical transgressions, until this lesson had

precisely the opposite effect. A few years after Sarah, I had grown considerably, largely due to my ongoing relationship with my local Writing Project. I had become successful in not just writer's workshop but in using writing to learn to make math, science, and social studies personal and meaningful. I designed several presentations, taught a few more in-service courses, collaborated with other Teacher-Consultants on programs for young writers and so much more. The brash, know-it-all who had it all figured out had mellowed with time, students I couldn't reach, and my own heartache.

When I first came to my local Writing Project's Summer Institute, I did so reluctantly. I mean I was already writing and teaching writing. By the second day of the institute everything I thought I knew about writing, indeed teaching was turned upside down and the only way to make sense of this was to write and find my way in the confusion. Now years later, the Writing Project had given me a place to belong with like-minded peers, an expanding body of knowledge, and the theory to articulate why I taught the way that I did. So, I was primed and ready when our guest Progoff instructor was a no show at the Summer Institute I was co-directing, and I said, "Don't worry, I got this."

Nothing can replace the energy of a first-year teacher but oh how much better we become with experience…especially if we have the support and love of The National Writing Project with us. This time I made sure to explain that the Dialogue with a Person works best when you need to have a conversation with the person…when there is unfinished business…that for some reason this person left too soon…that you do not have what pop culture, lesson plans and psychology call closure.

This time the teacher who stood to share was an effective yet quiet second grade teacher named Marta. She read a dialogue between her and her ophthalmologist, who

misdiagnosed a virus residing in her eye causing her to lose it and need a transplant. The pain, the slow demise of her sight, the death of the very organ itself gave all of us anguish. Yet by the end after the doctor owns his mistake…when he finally says how sorry he is; then Marta says, "I forgive you." And all of us who ever heard that forgiveness is for yourself…that forgiveness allows you to move forward and sheds this weight from your own neck finally believes it.

Marta and I would run into each other at various Writing Project events and local conferences and each time we'd see each other she would say, "Thank you for giving me Dialogue with a Person…you just don't know, I was so mad for so long and that day writing, it was like all that anger just lifted off and floated away."

In these moments I would think, "Thank you Writing Project. Thank you for helping me find my voice and giving me the avenue to lighten the load of a fellow teacher. Thank you for supporting me in contributing to our profession. Thank you for empowering me to be a more effective teacher for all my many students and thank you for forgiving me all the rest.

Revised Malcolm's Snapshot Story 2—Life-Changing.

Since 2002, I have heard numerous Teacher-Consultants with my local Writing Project site say some variation of, "The Project changed my life." I always thought this was hyperbole at best, a little cultish at worst; and that these people needed to get out more. Still, I kept these thoughts to myself. I was now in charge of continuity events, sitting on my Project's Board of Directors, and delivering my presentation a couple of times a semester. For many of my newly minted TC colleagues, they simply returned to their classrooms for what many would call the best year of their teaching lives—now that

we were all armed with 25 new writing lessons, arrived at through our collaborative work in the Invitational Summer Institute. This I think is enough but it wasn't to be the case with me.

Even though I chuckled at the whole *project changed my life* testimonial, I was comfortable saying that the Summer Institute, where 25 teachers shared a 75-minute presentation on writing was the most significant professional development that I had ever participated in. In addition to the presentations; we read professionally, worked on our personal writing, met in writing groups and had mandatory happy hours. We became friends and this network of teachers—Kindergarten through University became my like-minded peers. Finding commonality with my team and co-workers at a large elementary school had proven elusive. I was on an island with no one to debrief with, no one to collaborate with who had a similar philosophy of education, and constantly being told by well-meaning veterans, "That's not how we do things around here…that will never work," regardless of my idea or suggestion.

Despite this cultural challenge, my first and second years as a teacher were magical in that either everything went my way with my students or I was too naïve to notice if they didn't. To be sure I was inefficient and only really good at recess and read alouds but I loved this job and couldn't understand why half our teachers leave the profession in their first three years. Then I experienced year three. Everything that seemed to work the previous year fell flat. Students bickered with each as though they were siblings in the backseat of a crowded car on a long trip. I became less patient and I found myself questioning if this was really what I was supposed to do with my life since I

wasn't doing it very well anymore. It was after this difficult year that I attended my local Writing Project's Invitational Summer Institute.

I can't say that I would have left teaching but something had to give. My fourth-year teaching was among my most memorable and in many ways almost 18 years later I am still trying to recapture it. If I am being analytical about it, then the Writing Project gave me the know-how to design lessons with deep vertical thinking, which invited analysis and creativity through the medium of writing in its many iterations. I was no longer relying on what worked with a previous group of students. I was now responsive and tailoring this school year to these specific students and they more than met me in kind. The magic had returned…it was just more theory based and reflective.

That year I also pursued The National Board Certification Process. All the writing that I had been doing since The Summer Institute made writing four, 12-page Portfolio Entries easy. I had just written four new short stories and one had garnered me a handwritten rejection letter from Ploughshares, which is better than a generic acceptance from a lesser magazine. I had also just written and published three articles and two poems in my state's Journal of the Writing Project. One article got picked up by *The Journal of the National Writing Project*. So, the NBCT Process was something that the Writing Project more than empowered me to do. However, even I couldn't have articulated the extent of it then. We met in small groups to discuss our Portfolio drafts and give feedback to one another. I had been meeting in a writing group of Teacher-Consultants almost every month since the Summer Institute. The more times you confer about writing the better you get at it. Every member of my NBCT cohort eventually brought their writing to me for feedback. It was almost a part-time job for a few months, reading and

responding to these drafts prior to submission. This might have been overwhelming had ¾ of my entries not been connected to the Writing Project. It wasn't just the ability to write the entries. One entry was on Professional Accomplishments. All of mine had been some job or program directly connected to the Writing Project. Two of the other entries were on writers' workshop and conferring; and integrating writing and talking into social studies. Only a math entry proved challenging and that was only because we didn't have a secondary math teacher at the Summer Institute.

I succeeded in this process and have renewed my certification as well. The second time around, writing about contributions to our profession, I was struck with an exhaustive list of what I have been able to share with our teaching profession that was directly connected with the Writing Project: I had presented at local, regional and state conferences on writing over 100 times. I had been the keynote speaker at four large writing conferences. I had worked and co-directed four more Summer Institutes for teachers and three for young writers. I designed Professional Development through the Writing Project for several neighboring school districts just outside a major metropolitan city. I realized very early on in my career that I loved teaching and wouldn't love being an administrator nearly as much. I was looking for a way that I could continue to grow professionally, personally, and even financially without leaving the classroom. It is laughable to speak of the financial gains of teaching a course at a local university as an adjunct or the fee that one charges while rattling down the highway to give a presentation to teachers on Aesthetic Poetry, Writing in Order to Read Deeply, or Embracing Chaos with Essaying. However, what I did get…what I didn't even know that I needed to this

degree, was a way to contribute to the knowledge base of my profession. The Writing Project gave me this and it invites all Teacher-Consultants to do the same.

Whenever, I approached the Writing Project with an idea or suggestion I was always met with support and how can we help you, so unlike my mentor teachers at my elementary school so many years ago. Things change and things evolve. I still teach 5th graders fulltime but I am spending more and more time teaching in *The Masters of Teaching Writing Program* at a University. It is perhaps no coincidence that the Program Director whom I work with, is also a Teacher-Consultant; whom I have collaborated with on many professional development programs in the past but also workshops for young student writers, and seminars for teachers who write.

I have been lucky enough to sit around a table workshopping my poetry with other Teacher-Consultants and the Poet Eric Pankey. I have been able to read my fiction and get feedback from none other than novelist Bob Bausch. There have been so many times throughout my life when the Writing Project maxims of the best teachers of teachers are other teachers and in order to teach writing well you need to write come running to the forefront of whatever I am working on. Both Pankey and Bausch are excellent teachers. Sadly, Bausch passed away a little while ago, but the contributions he made to the lives and the writing of thousands of his students live on. He taught the thing he loved. Both its struggles and its joys.

Three years ago, after 15 years of evidently having my fortunes aligned with those of the Writing Project, I was co-directing a Summer Institute for Teachers. On the second to last day, we invited the Superintendent, Supervisor of Language Arts, and other central office colleagues to join us for lunch and the sharing of what this experience

meant to the participants and how the district was going to get their money's worth. Nancy, a secondary teacher surprised me by standing to speak when I opened the floor to commentary. Nancy had given a mediocre presentation. Nancy had been overtly reticent in giving herself up to the presentations and activities that her colleagues were sharing with us. I would have surmised that she wasn't buying into all that we were giving away. However, my observations are faulty and I would have been wrong.

Nancy began by saying that she had twenty-years' experience and had moved around grade levels because she felt like she was working too hard to connect to her students and teaching shouldn't be that hard if you're going to do it for forty years. She spoke of all the late nights and long weekends, where she missed hanging out with friends because she was too busy grading papers, responding to student writing, and planning lessons. She shared how many times she felt like quitting and how too much of her life had been devoted to teaching that she simply couldn't. She articulated all the hours that resulted in lackluster results and little learning for her students.

Then, she seemed to stand taller, shine brighter and say, "I used to assign writing. It was boring. I was boring. My students were bored…but not anymore. Because of this opportunity I now have 20 excellent writing lessons that I didn't have before, that I can use tomorrow. I feel renewed. No, I feel reborn. I feel like I can teach writing for the first time and I remember that I love teaching and this is what I'm supposed to do with my life. I heard some of our guest presenters come in and talk about how the Writing Project changed their lives and I was skeptical. But I work on school stuff from six in the morning until late in the evening. I'm here in the summer because my principal thought it would be a good idea. She was right. I needed this. On my worst days I had no life

because of school and on my best days, school was my life. When so much of your life is given to this thing you love…when you can do this thing, that is so much a part of your life, so much better than you did before, then I think *Life Changing*? Yeah, the Writing Project changed my life."

And for the first time, I remember thinking, "Me too Nancy…me too."

Focus Group 2 Snapshot: Edward, Elizabeth, and Roger

"My tribe, my people, my professional family"

On the morning of the second focus group, conducted five days after the first, I waited in my virtual room, excited and a bit more confident. My first group engaged enthusiastically and two already submitted their revised snapshot writings. I felt more relaxed knowing my protocols scaffolded a productive focus group in both writing and feedback. My first three participants all committed to the rest of the study. So, coffee steaming by my computer screen, I eagerly awaited my second focus group participants.

One by one, I allowed my three participants "into" the virtual room, and their faces popped up on the screen. They quickly and warmly greeted each other. Like my first group, I discovered they knew each other even though they had attended different ISIs. This was due to their continued involvement in various Project activities at their shared local site. One of the participants, Roger, had moved out of state several years ago, but had been the first to respond to my research request. He likely would not have participated in the study if we had been in person due to being at such a distance, but the virtual nature now allowed him access. This was one unforeseen benefit of moving to virtual data collection—a possibility of having someone who had moved away from the local site being able to engage in the study.

As I described the confidentiality guidelines, I found myself looking into my participants' homes as I had with my first group. This time it didn't feel as startling to me, but more intimate. Although I still wished we could be together in a room, I felt like they were inviting me into their homes. In truth, they were. Edward, a former lawyer turned secondary English teacher, had set up his computer in his modern kitchen and his backdrop was all glass cabinets and stainless steel. He leaned into his camera, occasionally rubbing his furrowed brow with his fingers. His serious expression along with his consistent nodding along as I described the study gave me a keen sense of the level of his engagement. Although attending through the Internet, he felt present with me. Elizabeth, too, nodded along, her glasses propped on top of her head and her friendly smile encouraging me. Horses ran behind her on a landscape-oriented wall painting, surrounded by pale blue walls as if the sky surrounded them all. Roger's backdrop, so appropriate for a career-long English teacher, was a wall of books and a bright yellow library ladder was propped against the white shelves behind him. I must admit to having a moment of envy as I looked at what closely resembled my dream office. He, too, leaned towards the screen, taking notes as I spoke. As they began to write their stepping stones and I hurriedly took fieldnotes in the silence, I felt what I had in my first focus group, the peaceful vibe of teachers writing together, heads tilted, and lost in thought. Roger's gray baseball cap brim sometimes obscured his face as his pen danced across his paper. Edward's fingers found his forehead again as he tended to his writing. Elizabeth, typing her words, stared out at me from her screen, but was obviously intent on her thoughts on her own computer screen.

Although separated by space, the videoconferencing cameras were on and we were all writers writing, together.

Elizabeth, now a school librarian who has had a long career that includes teaching both elementary and middle school, volunteered to share her snapshot writing first. Elizabeth is currently actively involved in a Project site, one she helped to establish after her "home" site had organizational issues. I was aware of the many wonderful experiences she had and continues to have with the Project therefore, I was surprised she chose to write and share about the loss of her home Project in her snapshot entitled "The Last Board Meeting." Halfway through reading her second paragraph aloud, she cleared her throat, paused and in a sing-song comic voice said, "Sorry, I didn't expect to be emotional! That pesky writing thing!" Edward laughed, a laugh of understanding. She regained her composure, but only for a sentence or two, becoming tearful as she read: "This was after all, my tribe, my people, my professional family. Through the Project I had uncovered who I wanted to be as a teacher, and then found the people who could help me become."

After a few silent moments of letting her writing sink in as it had clearly touched her audience, Elizabeth blew her nose, and asked one of the offered prompts to get the feedback session going. With a bit of an ironic tone, she asked, "What possibilities do you see for this writing?" Edward laughed and said it would be "a great piece to put in Kim Sloan's dissertation," but quickly honed in on the writing and praised the specificity of details Elizabeth had used to engage the reader in the setting of the piece, the building where so much of the local site's work had taken place. He remarked the images she wrote were ones he could absolutely relate to, ones he had been a part of himself. He then

tried to take a step back and look at it as a reader, not as a TC, who could hear the writing for its craft. He attended to the suspense of the piece suggesting that maybe the "crappiness" of the building she so artfully described where Writing Project work occurred "made the beauty of what happened in that room… so special."

Roger agreed with Edward about the suspense and said he had begun his own piece with going to that building, too. He said he didn't know what had transpired at the Project site that Elizabeth was describing [organizational issues] and that "we don't really need the politics" because what she had "communicated was that there was a loss" and "that was the important part." Edward agreed stating that this is "a story that people in the Project need to keep reading." This alluded to the Project being something that should be nurtured and not lost. Roger addressed Elizabeth's emotion saying he could relate when in the piece she wrote that she "couldn't find words" to express how she was feeling in the moment at the board meeting. He commented that he prefers to write because if he "starts talking, especially when I'm passionate about something, you know, it's just the emotion." His personal connection to the piece resonated with a grateful Elizabeth, who thanked both men for their feedback with a smile and a jotting down of some of their comments.

Roger was next to share, commenting that he'd go "so he wouldn't have to follow Edward." Edward quipped back, "But you have to follow Elizabeth!" The respect for each other as writers was clear throughout this focus group and this was just one of the interchanges that illustrates how the participants valued the power of writing. At this point, Roger revealed that Edward had been on staff when he attended the ISI, a piece of information I did not know. He said, "I want to apologize before reading, but I know I'm

not supposed to so I will just read the crap." Elizabeth and Edward both laughed, recognizing this as a phrase passed down through their local site's ISIs. Roger began his piece by stating he was "broken" the summer he attended the ISI; his marriage ending and he was questioning his career as a teacher after only two years in the classroom. Edward and Elizabeth leaned into screens and nodded as Roger read the words: "that Summer Institute in 2002 saved my personal and professional life."

After he finished reading, he pushed the brim of his dark rimmed glasses up his nose, folded arm over arm on his desk, and looked out at his colleagues who had both started to give feedback at the same time, their excitement about the piece palpable. Elizabeth deferred to Edward who commented on "feeling a sense of affinity" to the idea of the Project being home that Roger had alluded to and how he "contrasted [that] to the displacement" he was feeling in other areas of his life in the writing. Elizabeth chimed in stating she loved how he had captured the feeling of entering the ISI on the first day stating "…the nervousness, anticipation, excitement, dread, all together… and of course, we know what happens when you're transformed over the course of the ISI." This matter-of-fact statement of transformation would be one I would hear again in the follow up interviews, as if this was a standard program component to be transformed by the Project. Elizabeth asked Roger to reread his first few lines again as they were "brilliant." Roger thanked her, sat up a little taller at his desk as he reread the lines, and a side discussion ensued about honesty in writing.

Edward relayed that his own stepping stones were actually more about "how the Project, being a part of the Project, sort of saved me from other personal kinds of crises." As I listened to this focus group, their writings and their conversation, I was struck by the

blending, the intertwining, of the participants' personal lives with their continued professional development experiences. I jotted down notes as they conversed; my researcher brain collecting new ideas to pursue even as I was taken in by their stories. I wrote down in my heavy black dissertation journal: "What is it about the Project that fixes people?" and "How is this culture developed?" In the memo I would write immediately after this focus group I scrawled, "This Writing Project is less about the components of good Professional Development (although it has those components), and far more about the culture being developed. But how is it being developed?"

Perhaps part of the answer is found in some of Edward's words. In reaction to Roger's personal piece, he stated:

> You know, teaching is seen as some routinized, homogenized thing that leads one away from the notion that you are a professional person undertaking a journey that is yes, an individual one, but it's so informed by the art of other teachers and where your life goes wrong and goes sideways sometimes, that devotion to professional ethos is what saves you, it's what drags you through a divorce…and so something about what you wrote, Roger, spoke so very loudly to that notion.

Roger agreed stating that as he thought back on the Project, it is the "collection of little things" not an "aha moment" that add up, including a revelation that a poem Edward had given him eighteen years ago, with a handwritten note on it, was still by his teaching desk as inspiration for his work as a teacher and a writer. This was an idea that Roger had "stolen" when he was on staff at future ISIs, passing the poem on to others with his own handwritten note to the newly-minted TCs, what he called "a cool generational thing."

Edward was visibly touched by Roger's keeping of the poem. After a moment, he responded to Roger:

> The Project doesn't have some sort of credo you have to buy into. You just have to believe two things. That is that a writer teaches writing and a teacher teaches teachers and that's it. You don't have to believe any other thing…and it's amazing that with those two kinds of weird, broad principles it draws so many people to this place that can, you know, sustain you through a broken kind of time in your life.

And with that sum up, it was time for Edward to share his piece. In a deep, expressive voice, he read a piece about his self-chosen mentor in the Project, and about one of the ISI's end of summer parties held at her house. This ISI was one where he had served as a staff member, along with his mentor who was also a co-worker with him at his high school and the one who had introduced him into the Project. He shared about how being on staff was different than being in the ISI as a participant as he "felt the weight each day that July of being the best teacher version of myself that I could be" along with wanting to be "the sort of teacher she [his mentor] thought I was in theory. I wanted to make her proud of me. I wanted to feel proud of myself."

Roger was the first to jump in with feedback as he knew the mentor Edward had "described so well," a woman who Roger himself said, "I wanted her to be my mom, my best friend…she was just so cool and smart and you just wanted to know her and you captured her and her place perfectly." Roger had written his feedback down, sharing partly about the power of the details of the writing and partly about his personal connections to the themes. Elizabeth said, "I liked so many things, I had to make a list!"

As she listed the details she loved, Edward smiled and nodded. Elizabeth then divulged that she, too, had found being on the staff of the ISI different than being a participant. She said,

> What you said about the scope being different I love because when you go through your ISI, it's about you. But when you are on staff, it's about everybody else. So, you can never recreate the magic, but you can help create it for other people.

Edward agreed, but said the piece was not finished because where he wanted to take it was about family and about how his mentor became his family through the Project and that the "Project made this not just be about my job. This Project was now about my life. They became intertwined." Roger responded to this highlighting the fact that the relationships in the Project were super "intense" and equated the intensity of the relationships made in the Project to being on a sports team as they are both experiences where "you sweat it, you go through sacrifice and so you have this irrational fandom for it."

As my participants clicked out of our virtual space, I found myself feeling a bit of "fandom" for focus groups. Much like my first focus group which centered on being brought "into the fold" of the Project, this group also centered on its people and the connections, some professional and some personal, that the Project had afforded them. My second group relished how the professional and personal intertwined in the Project, but also felt a sense of loss at times when the Project itself struggled to meet its members' needs. Still, there was no denying the strong emotions these participants had about their

Project experiences, experiences I was deeply grateful they were willing to share with me.

Focus Group 2 Revised Snapshots

What follows are Elizabeth's, Roger's, and Edward's revised snapshot stories. All of their stories display some of the interaction that was part of their focus group writing feedback session. Edward chose not to revise the piece he shared in the focus group, instead choosing another stepping stone experience he felt was more representative of his experience with the Project. Still, echoes of the feedback and discussion in the focus group can be heard in the new piece he submitted. Their stories, like the first focus group's participants, also reflect different aspects and programs that are part of the menu of available NWP CPD opportunities (see Appendix M for sample CPD opportunities). Elizabeth writes of her involvement with the board of directors and her loss of connection with her home Project site. Roger snapshots the ISI experience itself and its lasting impact on him as a teacher and as a person. Lastly, Edward wrote about his variety of interactions with the Project and the effects of that involvement on his life. Embedded in all of their writing is their own analysis and meaning-making of how these CPD experiences impacted them and those around them.

Elizabeth's Story—The Last Board Meeting.

The walk was the same as it had always been; find a space in the impossibly tight parking garage, try to remember which floor had the exit, cross all the concrete and enter the familiar but bland brick building. My heart was fluttering and my stomach had a hole deep inside (clearly foreshadowing but I was sadly unaware). Up the stairs, which held

that combination of sweat and stale, cold air so indicative of college buildings. Why couldn't air freshener be part of the cleaning routine? I wondered.

Rounding the corner to our meeting room, the tension was palpable. Usually, we greeted one another with hugs and laughter, grabbed a piece of pizza, and sought a good seat. This time we were quieter, wary. Rumblings of what was to come had reached us at our satellite Project site but in the beginning that day, I still had hope.

Our beloved Project leader had stepped down three years before, and the hunt for his replacement (not really possible as he had founded this National Writing Project site, nurtured it into its place as one of the premier NWP sites in the United States, and led thousands of teachers into the realm of NWP Fellows with his intelligent and gentle nurturing) had been intense and deliberative. To say our new director, Richard, was his equal would be a lie. Still, we carried on. The heart of the project was the Teacher Consultants, anyway, and we were all still doing the work.

This was, in ways small and profound, my tribe, my people, my professional family. Through the Project I had uncovered who I wanted to be as a teacher, and then found the people who could help me become. My friends in this room challenged me, poked me until I made a move I needed to make, and cheer-led any and all successes I had. Because teachers teaching teachers is the only PD that matters. I learned that through and with the Project. Sixteen years later, that belief is the heart of my teaching still. The Project gave me words for what I felt but could not articulate. So, the stakes for all of us were high that day. We knew Richard was resigning (not bad news for many of us) but the big question was, "What's next?"

Richard began the meeting by announcing what we already knew, he was stepping down. He then blah, blah, blahed in a fabulous imitation of a used car salesman, telling us how great the Project was, we would carry on, blah, blah, blah. He didn't mean a word of it and we all knew it.

Then he introduced his replacement, who was not someone we knew, respected, or valued. With a room full of some of the most talented people I would ever know, why this stranger? All of us were stunned. Some were struck speechless, many angry, and most with breaking hearts visible on their faces. Turns out, we were right.

But that day ended with me as angry as I have ever been. I also cried, which made me equal measures angrier still and totally shamed. Where were my words when I needed them so very much? I look back and wonder if there is anything any one of us could have said that day that would have averted the debacle of the coming years for the Site? I wonder if we should have fought harder at the time to make things right, to force the University to see what it was relinquishing with this attitude that anyone could run the Project. That's not true. It takes passion, and leadership, and listening. It takes real teachers, who believe in the power of writing to make our lives better, who believe in their students and their power to change the world, who believe that teachers teaching teachers is the only PD that ever works or ever will.

That was my last board meeting at my home Project site. All these years later, I still feel this loss.

Roger's Story—Saving a Career and More.

That was a time in my life when I was broken. I had just finished my second year of teaching and my first marriage. Technically, we were separated, but I moved out of the house that summer, and the Writing Project's Summer Institute became my home.

I spent a lot of time in the car that summer—living with my college roommate and his wife in two hours south on the weekends, and crashing at another buddy's townhouse during the week. I lived in his spare bedroom where his collection of baseball caps covered the walls and I wrote confessional poetry about divorce.

I felt at home back on the university's campus. I knew the winding path from the parking lot past the pond, through the woods, and on to Weaver. I had graduated from the same university in '93 and returned in 2000 to begin my Master's program and get my teaching license. I had first heard of the Writing Project from a grad school professor and my initial motive was mercenary. I could get six credits AND get paid for it? Sign me up.

Entering the chill of Weaver 301 with its stale air, painted cinder block, and cold linoleum, I had the first day of school jitters. I had every intention of being cool, staying quiet, and getting my credits.

I don't remember what changed. It might have been the morning snacks, but mostly I think it was the people. Somewhere during that first day, I looked around and decided that no one knew me or who I was. I could be anyone I wanted, better yet I could just be myself. I was ashamed and embarrassed about my impending divorce, but what was I going to do—spend a month hiding that and concealing everything about me.

Hearing the faculty have the courage to share their own personal struggles with family, teaching, and life modeled for me what I wanted to be as a teacher and person. I always kept everything inside, but here I could let it out.

Somehow, I presented on the first day. I think it was because my presentation was about brainstorming topics—honestly, they were activities I had stolen from my grad school professor and adapted a little bit. As usual, I waited until the last minute to finish my handout and had it copied at the Kinko's at University Mall minutes before I had to present. I was the second demo lesson of that day and I had a terrified, adrenaline buzz in my head along with a tension headache.

I remember faintly Jill, who would later be in my writing group, presenting first. I felt relief that her presentation was good—but nothing revolutionary. It wasn't anything that I wasn't capable of; I wasn't way off base with mine. My confidence in my teaching abilities was low; I had floundered through a disastrous first year in the classroom. I considered quitting every day. The second year had improved a great deal, but I had doubts that I would make it through the five years I had promised myself to give it before quitting.

I was stunned by the simplicity of the Summer Institute. We watched master teachers at work who showed us what they did in the classroom. But the true power of it was when we did the activities or lessons that teachers used in their classrooms. It made the old writing advice "show, don't tell" apply to teaching. Once I had tried their activity and it helped me learn or improve my writing, I knew it would work for my students too.

I'll never forget the book cart. A couple of times each week, our faculty gave us time to read and take notes from the rolling library. We didn't have to write a paper; we

didn't have to turn in journal entries or keep a reading log. We just read, took notes, and shared in a discussion afterwards. It was the first professional development I had ever attended where I was treated like a professional, trusted to be curious and seek out information that would help me improve my craft.

I loved the writing groups, savoring every minute of hearing other people's thoughts, offering them feedback, and sharing my own poems, stories, and essays. Through giving feedback, I crystallized what I believed about what makes good writing and tried to apply that to my own group. I wrote poems, for crying out loud, after hearing one of our faculty members read Billy Collins and Thomas Lux at our Friday seminars.

And yes, we drank some beer at the Friday seminars, which were hosted at the home of a different writing group member's home each week. At first, people seemed unsure about why these were required. Weren't they just parties? Well, yes, a fly on the wall would say these were parties. But they were also a time for discussion, reflection, bonding, and synthesis. The weeks were so intense that you weren't really sure what happened or what it all meant until Friday evening. And then you went home exhausted but thrilled to start all over again on Monday.

Also simple but amazing were the read-arounds. About halfway through the summer, we circled the desks and we read a piece to the whole group. This was not a time for criticism but celebration. At the end of each piece, we jotted down a quick note or thought on a scrap of paper and passed them around the circle to the writer. I saved those notes in a pocket in my messenger bag. I often forget they are even there but find them and read them again for a morale boost during a difficult semester.

I didn't realize it then, but I learned a lot about assessment that first summer. At the planning dinner before the institute, I remember a lot of nervous teachers wanting to know what they needed to do to get an A for the "course." We soon realized that the grade didn't matter. One special guest speaker taught us that he used to write "zorch" on students' papers. When they asked him what that meant, he said, "It means zorch." He helped us to see that, like writing, the process is more important than the product. Yes, we would keep a reflection journal; yes, we would write a position paper at the end; yes, we would turn in our handout for our demonstration lesson. But there would not be quizzes, no tests, no points. At the Friday critique sessions, I was absolutely floored that we as students would be expected to share our thoughts on our peers' lessons and not just listen to the feedback from faculty to those simple questions: 1) What went well?; and, 2) What would you do differently? Even more revolutionary, the presenter answered these questions first, making it clear that self-reflection was critical.

The more I reflect, the more I'm not sure that I didn't learn everything I know about teaching from the Writing Project's summer Institute and its participants. I've forgotten the provenance of such gems as "Don't apologize, just read the crap!" or "Does that make sense?" (actually, that one is easy to trace back to our director). I spent that first magical summer falling in love with the Writing Project and returned four or five other times (so many I can't remember) serving as faculty and watching each new group of Teacher Consultants declare "This has to be the best Summer Institute ever, right?" And they were all right. Each one was the best summer ever, for them.

That Fall, after my first Summer Institute, I jumped at the opportunity to participate in a workshop with poet Eric Pankey. I wrote sappy love poetry about the

woman I had just started dating over the summer. One of those poems turned into my proposal to her. Eight years later, the opening slide to my presentation as a faculty member of the 2010 Summer Institute was a picture of my twin daughters. The picture didn't have anything to do with the topic I was presenting, but showed another thing I had learned from the Writing Project: know your audience.

Now, it is almost 20 years since my first experience with the Writing Project, and it is crystal clear to me that without that Summer Institute and my subsequent experiences, I would not be a teacher today and have my doubts that I would be a husband and father. It helped me open up as a teacher and person in a way I had not thought possible. Simply put, the Writing Project helped save my professional and personal life. I wish I could return the favor.

Edward's Story—A Professional Lifeline.

I'm done, Alex told me. *I can't take any more. I'm too young to be this tired, and I've got to get out now while I can still make a transition to some other work. Maybe I'll even be able to save some money. Buy a house. Afford a vacation.* I smiled, shrugged, and nodded my head. I felt sad, but I understood, too.

Though it's not possible to make such claims with a high degree of certainty, were it not for the Writing Project my teaching career would have lasted three, maybe four years.

Instead, next year will be my twenty-fourth.

Last month I said good-bye to yet another young English teacher in my Department. Alex has worked at my secondary school with me for only a few years and though I've never been inside her classroom, I have a sense from the things she says at

meetings and over lunch that she has the soul of a good teacher. She reminds me a lot of myself after two or three years. Struggling, but dedicated. It stunned me a little to learn she was leaving. *Why?* I asked her when she told me.

Really, though, I already knew.

I don't get enough say in the curriculum I teach—it's pre-determined by my PLC team, but really by my administrator. Administrators don't support teachers over parents, who complain if their son or daughter isn't reading the same book and getting the same quizzes at the same time as little Johnny in the class across the hall. There's no creativity in the job anymore—I'm asked to teach a lot of pre-programmed stuff, almost all of it designed to boost the school's test scores, which I don't want to teach but end up following because if I don't, I'll get hassled. I'm just tired all the time. Tired of fighting. Tired of being tired.

None of what she says is new. It's worse these days, yes. But it's not new. I can recall feeling all of that, to some extent, when I was her age, just two years teaching under my belt. I can still remember driving home exhausted—not from the good work of teaching, but from fighting with my administration to have the freedom to be creative. Tired from feeling isolated and alone in my classroom, waging some bizarre battle against other adults in the building I was supposed to be working *with*, not against. Desperate to find new ways of reaching the kids I was tasked with teaching and feeling more and more frustrated that I could not, knowing only that the textbook my assistant principal kept pointing me to was not the answer. I thought I had good ideas but I was struggling to find ways to make them real for my students.

That's around the time when I was nominated to attend the ISI of my local Writing Project.

And to say my eyes were opened up that summer would be the understatement of my professional life. I can recall the month between the end of my ISI and the start of school in early September, August of the year 2000, feeling so excited to get back in my classroom and do the things I'd learned from my fellow TCs that July. I remember not feeling alone when I got back to school, but part of an incredibly large, smart, thoughtful, and professional whole. I had the theory of teaching under my belt—all of what I'd learned that summer from reading articles, having discussions, listening to other teachers' presentations—and now could defend my practice from anyone and everyone who came to criticize it. More importantly, I had confidence in my own lesson plans. I knew WHY I was doing what I was doing with my students. No longer was it just a matter of intuition—it was theory-based practice. I had Britton and Emig and Graves and Murray and Reif and Calkins and Rosenwasser and literally scores of other teacher-leaders at my back. And when something went wrong, or a lesson flopped, or I felt frustrated, I had a brand, new group of peers and friends—my fellow TCs—to call upon for help.

The TCs I met that summer became more than a professional lifeline to me. They became my close friends. Not only because we'd shared an intensive summer experience together, but because I'd found other people like myself who had dared to make teaching transform from a job you do to a profession you nurture. These were *my people*, and I held them as tightly to myself as I was able.

I got as close to the center of the Project as I could because when I did, it made me a better teacher and gave me the feeling that I was helping other teachers who were

struggling as I had. I published professional articles in my local Project's Journal. I served on staff for the 2002 ISI. I helped develop a series of master classes for TC writers led by professional authors, including Henry Taylor and Eric Pankey. I designed and headed up a special Student Summer Institute for children in underprivileged circumstances so they could learn on a college campus for a few weeks in the summer. I taught in-service courses for years, giving a little taste of the Project to hundreds of teachers, young and old, all wanting to combat the feelings that Alex described to me.

But the sad ending to this story, and to the story of Alex, my now former colleague, is that what saved me in the year 2000 is not here to save her. I could not say to her: "Wait. There's one thing I need you to try before you decide to leave." I couldn't suggest to Alex the ISI because it is, in effect, dead. What was once the premier Project site in the whole country is now moribund, a shell of itself. It has been mismanaged and misled over the last decade, and is not any longer a place where young, isolated teachers can turn. I feel, in part, responsible for this. When my daughter was born with spina bifida, I made a choice to limit my work with our Project site to concentrate on her health and to helping her through the many surgeries and challenges she faced early in her life. Each year I did a little less and became a bit more distanced from this amazing force. And now it exists in name only.

I still meet in a writing group each month with three other TCs. We share our writing and give one another kind, thoughtful critique of our latest drafts. We are getting better, and one of us, Sarah, is on the precipice of a book deal for the novel she's been workshopping over the last four years. There's not a day that goes by—not one—in my

classroom that I don't use some strategy or lesson I learned in the Writing Project. And my TC friends are still some of the people I count closest to me in my life.

I'm only a handful of years away from retirement. I want to try my hand at writing full time—something I would never have allowed myself to entertain had I not gone through the Writing Project and learned that only a writer can teach writing—so I better start writing. I went to a meeting last winter that was run by the current director. She said she might reconstitute the board to get ideas from us old TCs. And while I'm not hopeful, I've volunteered to be a part of whatever they cobble together. I owe it to the Project, which has given me two decades of professional joy and, I hope, has touched several thousand young lives through my teaching. I just wish that I could have nominated Alex for the ISI, because as I watch her leave teaching a little part of me grows less optimistic about the future of this profession I love so much.

Follow-up Interviews

After participants revised their snapshot stories, I met with each of them to discuss their writing, their stepping stone list experiences, and the focus group event (see Appendix R for summaries of each of the interviews). The interviews provided insight into the participants' meaning-making in regards to their participation in both the NWP and in the study. The interviews also allowed for follow-up on themes I saw emerging in the already collected data as related to the research questions, notably the role of vulnerability in their experiences as well as their use of metaphorical language as a way of meaning-making (see Appendix O for a revised interview protocol). The interviews confirmed these themes as well as highlighted the recursive cycles I believed were at work in NWP CPD.

Discoveries: Overarching Findings

In this section, I share how the Teacher-Consultants (TCs) in this study describe and make meaning of their NWP continued professional development experiences. Three overarching findings surfaced across all data sources: 1) participants' use of descriptive language including extensive metaphor use to detail their NWP CPD experiences, 2) the role of vulnerability in those experiences, and 3) the role of recursive cycles between NWP and various areas of work and life. The following sections present these findings as supported by data.

Speaking, Writing, and Teaching in Metaphors: A Way of Making Meaning

Participants used metaphorical language in both speech and writing to describe and make meaning of their continued professional development experiences in the NWP. In addition, there were several repeated metaphors across participants' descriptions. Participants used the following metaphors in describing NWP CPD: home/family, transformation, team, magic, nurturance, discovery, journey, art, gift, and force. (For a full listing of in-vivo language supporting these metaphors as well as how I grouped them, see Appendix Q). However, not all participants used all of these categories, although there were multiple examples in each category. Notably, all six did describe the NWP in terms of home/family and in terms of transformation. In addition, there were multiple instances of participants using other descriptive language (not metaphors) involving the concepts of "saving/savior" and "invitation." Upon further review of the data, I found the participants' metaphorical and other descriptive speech fell into three larger categories: NWP CPD as group responsibility, NWP CPD as search, and NWP CPD as change. Each of these larger categories are presented in turn.

Group Responsibility Metaphors. Under the overarching category of group responsibility, participants identified NWP CPD using comparisons to home/family, to team effort, and to nurturance. As relating to the category of home/family, Elizabeth, Edward, Steven and Michele all referred to their NWP peers in familial terms. For example, Elizabeth referred to her NWP colleagues as "my tribe, my people, my professional family." Edward referenced the Teacher-Consultants as "my people" and called the loss of connection to his Project site as making him "incredibly sad that I've lost a home." Steven's repeated refrain was others in the Project "brought me into the fold" and stated the NWP was a way to "find your people." This was echoed in Michele's speech as she called Project Teacher-Consultants "people in my corner." Malcolm repeatedly referred to the "safe haven" of the NWP. Clearly, Project members had become far more to these participants than work colleagues. Deep relationships had formed and been nurtured through years of NWP continued professional development.

Roger also wrote and spoke of the NWP as his "home." He was able to give some context as to how these relationships were nurtured over years of continued connection. There were the many continued professional development experiences that brought Teacher-Consultants, himself included, back together such as conferences, writing groups, and continuity events, but the Project family lived on in smaller, daily ways, too. In an unsolicited email after the focus group, Roger sent me a picture of the notes he has kept from his Teacher-Consultant "family." These notes were ones he had received in NWP sessions as encouraging feedback on his writing. He keeps these notes in his work bag and reads them when he needs reassurance as a teacher and a writer—notes he has kept for 20 years. He also sent a picture of a typed poem with a signed inspirational note

at the bottom from a Teacher-Consultant who was on staff the summer of his institute, framed by his desk. He explained he had given the same poem with a personalized note to others finishing the summer institute when he had served as a staff member in subsequent years. He described these treasured notes and the poem as a "generational thing" you pass down, a sort of family tradition of continued inspiration from those who came before you.

Team effort metaphors abounded as well, highlighting the collaborative nature of the Project. Roger, a self-proclaimed "jock," said the Project is "like a sports team" where "you sweat, you sacrifice." He went on to describe the summer institute as a place where one makes "super intense connections the way you do on a sports team." This sports team metaphor played out in the language of others in the study as both Elizabeth and Roger described Teacher-Consultants in the Project as their "cheerleaders." Interestingly, Elizabeth credited this cheerleading as instrumental to her own growth as an educator. She explains,

> I wouldn't have done any of it [meaning her stepping stones] without L and M and J [first letters of TCs' names], none of it…People give you a nudge, sometimes when you don't even know you need a nudge. It's cheerleading. Well, you think if these accomplished people think I can, maybe I can, right? And I'm just gonna' go with what they believe until I believe it myself.

It was in the cheerleading of others she found confidence, her self-efficacy, develop. She found belief in herself through community, collaboration, and connection.

Other team metaphors were present in the data as well. Steven's snapshot writing (see earlier in this chapter), centered around Teacher-Consultants working together to

present, what he described as a gathering of "rock star teachers" sharing at an NWP conference. Steven marvels he was "about to become a drummer in an… academic rock band." While humbled by being asked to be part of this group, he recognizes the NWP "brings together talented teachers who, working together, accomplish more than they could alone." In this way, the band metaphor leads us as readers as well as Steven to a greater understanding of the collective responsibility of the Teacher-Consultants to each other and to the teaching profession.

The participants also acknowledged there were "icons" in the Project, those stand-out people that helped lead team efforts serving, in metaphorical terms, as "unofficial mayors of (a) conference," or perhaps "academic tour guide(s)." These icons produced awe in the study participants, but it was clear the collaborative spirit of the Project was always at the center of the work. Roger summed up this admiration for the Project and its Teacher-Consultants by extending the sports team metaphor, stating "You have an irrational fandom for it."

In addition to the above team effort comparisons, there were also metaphors of nurturance and sustenance in participants' speech and writing. Edward used the term "nurturance" and linked it to both the NWP's ability to be a "professional lifeline" in regards to teaching, but also as being supportive during personal times of crisis, as a "place that can sustain you through a broken time in your life." Michele as well as the teacher in one of Malcolm's snapshot stories described the NWP as "renewal." The teacher in Malcolm's story went as far as to claim: "I feel reborn" after her experience with the NWP.

Both Elizabeth and Edward shared nurturance stories by using descriptions centered on food and water. Elizabeth said, "It (the NWP) feeds me…it feeds me in a really deep way." This was in direct opposition to the many times her school colleagues drained her with their complaints about teaching. Edward explained a similar experience as he detailed his work in facilitating a course for his local NWP site for teachers. He described the teachers who came to the voluntary course as follows:

> Those people (teachers) would come in like people crawling through a desert, never had a drop of water and you were there and all you had was one canteen, and they were just thanking you up and down.

Edward explained the canteen was the NWP model and those teachers needed it to go back into their schools, now nurtured and better able to return to the work of teaching.

Change Metaphors. Under this overarching category of change, participants identified NWP CPD using comparisons to transformation, to magic, and to various forces. As relating to transformations, participants wrote and spoke of changes related to their Project involvement. These "transformations" were varied in scope. They expressed transformative growth in their teaching, their professional commitments, their careers, and at times, their personal lives. For example, Michele described a "professional transformation" in her first-year teaching after the summer institute as follows: "…that was an absolute transformative school year for me. Nothing looked the same in my classroom. Before that, and after that – it was so powerful." Teaching was forever changed for Michele, but participating in the research project made her realize "the reach of the Project and its people and how much it has changed my life." Her repeated

statements about friendships as well as her professional growth inside and outside of the classroom highlighted how the "reach" of the Project touched many aspects of her life.

This life-changing and transformative narrative is common in the literature about the NWP (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Kaplan, 2008; Locke, et al., 2011; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Whitney, 2008), but what is often not detailed is *how* the Project propels teachers to use such dramatic language. Malcolm, a self-proclaimed skeptic, is frequently uncomfortable by the often-repeated claim of "transformation" and how the Project is "life-changing," as is detailed in his second snapshot writing. Yet the teacher in his story is so articulate in explaining the impact of the NWP on her, he has to agree it has been "life-changing" for him as well. He told his focus group he thought if they were to each put their stepping stone moments in chronological order and write about them all, the writings would demonstrate each of their "evolutions" through the Project.

This aligned with Steven's comments in the interview regarding his own "life-changing moments," explaining how each continued professional development activity was like a "chain reaction," leading him to more involvement, more growth, and ultimately empowering him to pursue educational publications. At the time of our interview, an article he had published in an educational journal had caught the attention of Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development's (ASCD) book acquisition team and they had requested a table of contents for a potential book on the topic. Steven explains how he views the possible publication as connected to the Project:

> And that never would have happened. I don't think if I hadn't taken the ISI, I would have taken (the Project in-service) course, and if I had never taken that

course, I just don't think I would have been turned on to the possibilities of writing.

In reviewing the participants' data sources in relation to metaphor usage, their language demonstrates *how* the Project transformed them professionally and personally. Delineating some of the ways this happened for the participants helps to fill a gap in the previous research, demystifying the "transformational" narrative.

The participants used additional change language including references to the "magic" of the Project as well as categorizing it as different kinds of "forces" (i.e., "amazing force," "driving force," liberating force"). A careful look at the data reveals relationship behind all of these seemingly mystical descriptions. As Malcolm explains, the NWP is "a supportive organization that stands with you and beside you, I think, helping you, pushing you, nudging you forward to be a little more courageous." In other words, the force, the magic, and ultimately personal and professional growth, even transformation, is found in group connections and collaborative confidence.

Search Metaphors. Under this overarching category of search, participants identified NWP CPD using comparisons to discovery and as journey. Edward highlighted the best moments in teaching and in the Project were those moments of discovery, where he provided a frame, but the students (whether they be high schoolers or educators he was teaching in a contract course or an ISI for the Project), were set on their own inquiry journey. This journey was one where he "couldn't foresee what they were going to come up with while they were doing it." Edward went on to explain participating in a summer institute is like taking "scales off of your eyes." This powerful discovery for Edward related to teaching, to the wider profession, and to writing.

Roger also described the NWP in terms of "discovery." His NWP experiences had led to deeply professional and personal discoveries, including addressing some of his personal biases when interacting with diverse populations in various writing groups. These powerful past development experiences along with his professional growth led him to seek out a new Project site when he moved to another state. After finding none in his new area, he sought out Project continued professional development on his own, turning to his TC friends on Facebook and Twitter to follow what they were doing and reading professional books written by those who were "Project people." He held up several books to the screen to show me in the interview saying that one he started reading and thought, "wow, this guy really knows his stuff" and then was not surprised to read in the bio that he was a Teacher Consultant from a California Writing Project site. "You see, I'm looking for Writing Project people in books or wherever I can find them." He relayed a story about trying to make suggestions that teachers should teach teachers in his new state, sending letters to school board members and the superintendent "and almost got fired, because I didn't have tenure…before I knew they weren't interested in suggestions." He then successfully went through the National Board process in part because he didn't have a Project and was looking for ways to grow. Having the title of NBCT and tenure, he is just now again feeling like maybe he can make an argument for valuable professional development. He recently started an anti-racist book club with some colleagues and has made some headway about teachers being the ones who should be leading professional development with the Language Arts curriculum central office director. He detailed what he feels is different in the Project that needs to be the cornerstone of learning for students and for teachers: the power of discovery. He said, "I

don't think you really learn anything unless you discover it yourself." For Roger, the NWP created conditions for discovery and the mandated professional development of his county was a different model, one that "didn't stick" because it was "sit and get" without discovery. He further explained the focus on discovery and inquiry he learned in the NWP is what he tries to recreate for his students in his classroom.

Edward, Michele, and Malcolm all described the NWP and teaching in terms of taking a journey. Edward highlighted the NWP acknowledges a teacher is "a professional person undertaking a journey," something he saw as in direct conflict with how his school and school system viewed teachers. That sense of being treated like a professional by the Project and *not* a professional in his school was a repeated theme in Edward's words. Being treated like a professional on a career journey deeply matters to Edward. He explains that after his summer institute he was "filled with a new confidence about what I was doing as a teacher." He was a career switcher and still uncertain of his transition to teaching, but the Project buoyed him; he felt "very empowered" by his institute and like "I was authentic as a teacher of writing because I was finally actually writing." Armed with a combination of theory and practice, he "felt more serious as a teacher and as a professional." The institute was just the beginning of Edward's journey with the NWP as he returned again and again to its continued professional development as both a participant and as a facilitator.

Malcolm extended this journey metaphor explaining the importance of Teacher-Consultants in the Project; the work they had done to pave the way for others was empowering as well. He described Teacher-Consultants as those who have "charted this territory," meaning the teaching and use of writing across grade levels and subject areas,

and the power in the fact one can use that "charted territory" as "a roadmap for your own career." In the NWP, your teaching journey is full of discoveries, but you never have to make those discoveries alone.

The Role of Vulnerability in NWP Continued Professional Development

An analysis of the data suggests the significant role of vulnerability in participants' continued professional development through the NWP. For example, Elizabeth cried in her focus group when reading her work aloud. She paused to compose herself and joked by saying to the group, "That pesky writing thing!" Roger and Edward laughed knowingly. Roger then shared his rough draft writing centered on the vulnerable topic of going through a divorce the year he attended the summer institute, what he described as a place that "became my home" in a time of displacement. These instances of sharing writing about vulnerable moments were repeated again by Edward, Michele, Steven, and Malcolm as well. In fact, all six participants acknowledged the role of vulnerability in the Project.

Michele believed vulnerability in the NWP usually centered on writing and the sharing of writing. She recalled a time in her own summer institute when a teacher shared an incredibly personal, traumatic event from her life in the large group and remembered the woman as typically introverted. The colleague had a difficult time reading the entire piece, but made it through by crying and even leaning on fellow writing group members. Retelling this moment made Michele reflect on how this occurs. She related there was a piece she was reluctant to write herself in the institute, but she kept coming back to it and was encouraged by her group members. When one person shared a piece of powerful and sometimes, personal, writing it encouraged others to do the same. For Michele, sharing in

the comfort of her small writing group paved the way for sharing in the full group at the ISI, a feat she found even more vulnerable. Michele went on to say vulnerability matters because "that vulnerability transfers, I think, to the classroom, too, because you want your students to be the same way, to take a chance to take a risk." What was "worked up to" in the Project institute, the writing and sharing of authentic pieces, until everyone was "doing that very, very easily" was something she strove for with her high school students. In the Project's ISI, she credited the encouragement of the group, the bravery of the early sharers, a safe community, the small group size (25 or less) as well as outside Project social gatherings (some mandatory!) for the vulnerability. She said, ultimately, "there's gotta' be something that brings you over to the other side which is the courage that it takes to share."

Malcolm qualified the term vulnerability a bit, stating the Project is "real, it's authentic, and vulnerability is part of that." He mused the Project creates a "safe space" where "teachers' voices are heard so they are more willing to take a chance." His own snapshot stories revealed both the teachers he taught in summer institutes and credit courses and his own vulnerabilities through writing and teaching. Edward, however, was more direct discussing vulnerability in the Project, stating the NWP is a "place of no bullshit." He relayed that one must be "vulnerable and honest" to get and give writing feedback and you are simply "not doing your work" if you aren't engaging in that process. He highlighted vulnerability stems from "the authenticity of the writing" and that sharing writing develops the group in an NWP institute or course. He said, the "NWP taught me I have no time to be inauthentic."

Steven credited the writing groups as the way the Project developed and encouraged vulnerability, a vulnerability necessary for the "risk-taking" he wanted to take and wanted to encourage his students to take in order to develop and grow. He said,

> …to put it on paper is an act of vulnerability. So, I think that's kind of inherent in the writing process, and in sharing writing and publishing writing, putting yourself out there in black and white. And I think that's being a writer.

The writing groups then are necessary and Steven explained it's the "practice of the Writing Project to be supportive."

Roger described hearing the stories of others as critical to helping him be more vulnerable in sharing, too. He explains,

> I think all those connections…over the years with all the different people…helps, I think, open things up…you get such a diverse array of backgrounds and experiences and personal stories. You see all sorts of stuff that you wouldn't been exposed to…I think that helps with feeling open to express yourself because…. People would share those personal stories of discrimination and, you know, and I'm not sure why they trusted us to hear them and not judge them, but they did. So, and I'm thankful for that.

Throughout the interviews all six participants discussed the power of writing. The vulnerability in the Project clearly centered on writing and sharing writing. It had to do with having a safe space and community, writing truth and connecting to others in a meaningful way. Elizabeth explains,

> I think one of the things we learn is you gotta' write about the stuff that matters. And that's really hard sometimes...That's the only writing that people can relate

> to even if they've never experienced what you have, they can tell the emotion of it and the depth of feeling you have. Which I think is just magical, you know, that words can create feelings in other people, it still blows my mind.

Interestingly, all six participants said they did not experience vulnerability in other continued professional development in their schools, systems, or in credit courses. In fact, several participants laughed at the suggestion that vulnerability could be present in other continued professional development. Roger was one who laughed when I asked if he was vulnerable in other continued professional development other than the Writing Project. He thought about it for a moment and said he "was vulnerable in a different way, trying to speak up when I disagreed with something, but it didn't make change." The participants clearly saw vulnerability in NWP continued professional development, usually in relation to writing, but did not see it in action in the same way in other CPD experiences.

The capacity for and the nurturing of vulnerability in NWP continued professional development, is a key finding of this study because it is unique. The participants did not experience moments of vulnerability in other CPD experiences and yet described it as a key element of their NWP CPD experiences. Participants described group support for vulnerability in writing, teaching and sharing. To be vulnerable in the NWP is to be authentic and that authenticity enables true growth.

The Role of Recursive Cycles in NWP Continued Professional Development

As is evidenced by my second research sub-question, how do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of recursivity of National Writing Project continued professional development (i.e., in their teaching of writing,

their own writing, professionalism, personal lives, etc.), I clearly started this research study with an interest in the continued involvement of my participants. I purposely chose educators who went through an Invitational Summer Institute at least ten years ago and continued association with the Project at a local and/or national level in order to see how recursivity, the back and forth-ness, between their NWP continued professional development and other elements of their lives, held meaning for them. I was curious about the role(s) NWP continued professional development played for them, especially in relation to sustaining their careers.

The six participants all attended the Invitational Summer Institute, their entry into the Project, in the early 2000s and each engaged in a variety of NWP continued professional development experiences. Their experiences varied, but included: staying involved with writing revision groups after the institute, attending continuity events including conferences and writing retreats, publishing, presenting at local, regional, and national conferences, presenting for schools/school systems, serving on various Project boards, taking on leadership roles such as conference organizing, co-directorship of established and new sites, facilitating contract courses/workshops and co-directing summer institutes, and leading student programs for the Project. This is not an exhaustive list of the involvement these Teacher-Consultants took part in since their own foundational summer institutes, and I was curious about their desire to return to the Project again and again over years to both provide and receive professional development.

The study participants described recursive cycles between NWP continued professional development and their practice in the classroom. Malcolm said even though he was busy with teaching and many might wonder why he would choose to add on more

to an already demanding career, for him, “It’s all worked together…all this stuff rejuvenates me and pays dividends in the classroom with fifth graders and vice versa” (referring to his university teaching and Project work). The back and forth between the Project and his classroom improved his practice in both arenas.

The participants also described a recursive relationship between NWP continued professional development and the profession at large as the NWP often led to opportunities where they could contribute to the educational field. Whether presenting at the local or National level, teaching graduate level classes, or publishing in academic journals, NWP continued professional development was a place to return to where you were treated as a professional and encouraged to do work for the field at large.

The participants also described recursive cycles between NWP continued professional development and their own writing. For example, many of them participate in long-standing writing revision groups with other Teacher-Consultants, something they began in their summer institutes. Meeting regularly with these Teacher-Consultants, the participants continued to write, give, and receive feedback and some had been published. The NWP also provided many opportunities to develop their writing through workshops, retreats, and even in just participating in each other’s NWP presentations as they are always hands-on and involve active writing. Another complexity of this recursivity is the participants were able to experience writing, its joys and its challenges, from the inside out, providing mutual empathy when teaching writing to their students.

Finally, the study participants even described recursive cycles between NWP continued professional development and their lives. After all, the teachers they had engaged with through the years in continued professional development were now no

longer colleagues, they were described as friends, mentors, and even family. For example, Roger and Edward both detailed ways the Project had helped them through personal times of trial. Edward describes it as an "intertwining" of the personal and professional. Roger explains the deep impact of the Project on not only his career, but on his life stating:

> Now it is almost 20 years since my first experience with the Writing Project, and it is crystal clear to me that without that Summer Institute and my subsequent experiences, I would not be a teacher today and have my doubts I would be a husband and father. It helped me open up as a teacher and person in a way I had not thought possible. Simply, put, the NWP helped save my professional and personal life.

This bold statement is illustrative of how the recursive cycles of participating in continued professional development long-term created a back-and-forth pattern between the Project and profession and between the Project and personal life, enriching both. Malcolm summed it up by saying the Project "is there for whatever you need."

Early in this research journey, I stumbled across an intriguing statistic that "98 percent of writing project teachers remain in education throughout their careers" (Friedrich, Swain, LeMahieu, Fessahaie, & Mieles, 2008; Friedrich & Whitney, 2013; LeMahieu, 2008). I was fascinated by the difference in the overall long career span of NWP Teacher-Consultants versus the statistics about teachers leaving the field early in their careers (Sparks, 2018; Sutcher et al., 2016; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). This research, in part, serves to investigate the ways the NWP sustains teachers' careers and what we may learn about a successful continued professional development organization.

As I analyzed the data, I often asked the analytic question how is NWP continued professional development different from the continued professional development taking place at the participants' schools and systems? Although I did not include a direct interview question about this comparison, all of the participants naturally contrasted the NWP continued professional development to other kinds they had been involved with throughout their careers. The differences were striking.

Participants highlighted the amount of learning that occurred in their Invitational Summer Institutes and other NWP continued professional development versus what was learned in other professional development for teachers. Steven commented he "learned probably as much that summer as I did in four years of undergraduate work" citing "life changing moments," usually connected to writing. After the ISI, he signed up for a contract course with the Project and he remembered thinking, "everything they do (the Project) . . .is like wow, and I can measure it against other PD, and it's better than everything." Malcolm also compared the value of the NWP to his other experiences stating: "I learned more those five intensive weeks (in the ISI) than everything else combined. I mean, it's not even close quite honestly, and that to me is laughable." He was comparing the ISI to his Master's plus 30 credits, his certification in gifted education, and his "thousands of mandated and voluntary school-based or district-based professional development" and found that the ISI still "permeates everything I do today…I do believe it's the best professional development any teacher could do regardless of what they teach." I was taken by these comments and began to scan the data once again to see if the participants could present some context for these differences.

Steven contrasted people in the Project as "my people" to colleagues in his building as those he would "not necessarily…want to sit down and work with." The NWP colleagues were "like-minded" as they are "interested in the things that you're interested in and care deeply about, namely writing instruction." Armed with a common mission, Steven felt welcomed by this group who wanted to hear his ideas. Steven was clear in contrasting this openness to inquiry to the school where he works at. In addition to administrative pushback for some of his teaching ideas, he also feels a bit of a distance from his colleagues as well. He works with what he calls a "very bright faculty who are very good at what they do," but stated they are not the people he is going to find "professional collegial satisfaction" with and instead he was "gonna' have to get it elsewhere." The elsewhere for Steven was his connection to the NWP as well as reaching out to the publishing world. The Project to Steven was all about community and community building. That community is a supportive one that nurtures his teaching, his professionalism, and his writing—all things he could not easily find in his district or his school building.

Malcolm's words echoed Steven's. He, too, spoke about relationality and the shared mission found in the Project. Malcolm related he was quite confident as a young teacher and one who found himself "at odds with the school that I was working at—with the teams, the teachers." He was quick to say those teachers all "loved kids," but they just had "very different philosophies, and very different beliefs." After his third year in the classroom, he found himself in the Invitational Summer Institute where he, like Steven, found "commonality" with the others in the ISI. Malcolm was quick to qualify this commonality saying the people in the ISI "didn't' exactly think like me all the time or

vice versa, but at least we had some things in common." The most important things in common were the two tenets of the Project—that teachers are the best teachers of teachers and that in order to be a successful teacher of writing one must write. These principles are both anchored in concepts of relationships as the Teacher-Consultants in the Project are learning from each other about teaching, writing, and the teaching of writing.

Elizabeth also explained the value and the difference she found in the relationships in the Project versus those at her school. "It (the NWP) …attracts the kind of people that feed me, they don't deplete me, they feed me and I really need that." This nurturing quality of the NWP is what brings her back again and again, to a place where she finds "other people who care about what we are doing and care about kids." This was in direct contrast to what she finds at school, a place where teachers often complain and she said, "that can chip away (at you)." In this way, the Project sustains her. She recursively returns to Project events, whether she attends or leads, to refill, to replenish and to return to the work that waits. She is fed and can now nurture the students at school.

Several of the participants even used the word "isolation" to describe school settings and to contrast them to the Project. Michele explained why she continues to engage with the NWP in this way: "…it's professional, the things I can get out of it, but it's definitely also the people…the like-mindedness…it's the opposite of the school isolation, it's all about working together." She elaborated on this relational mindset: "you feel supported, no matter what…you know somebody's got your back and when push comes to shove, we absolutely will help each other out to do anything in the name of the Project, but also in the name of friendship and ties to each other." Throughout

Roger's interview he referred to learning from other teachers in the Project and the growth it provided him as a teacher and as a person. He also highlighted the "isolation" in schools where you "never get to see what they're (colleagues) doing" which was in contrast to the sharing in the Project network.

Edward's snapshot story, too, is a tale of discord between the school system he teaches for and the Writing Project. Edward describes the continued professional development found at the school level as one where "they see you as a vessel. I think they think that if they fill you up with the stuff, it will trickle down (to the students)." He views this type of "trickle down" continued professional development as a "denial of teaching as an artform…and a denial of the teacher as human being… of each teacher with her own passion and her own interests in her own favorite books and her own approaches to how to inspire a kid…" The inference here is that the Project is all of those things—a place where teaching is seen as an art and teachers are seen as professionals. His final revised writing tells the tale of how the Project saved and sustains his career and how it saddens him that the current site is, in his view, now not strong enough to support his colleague in the same way. Sadly, the profession loses another promising teacher. Would it have lost Edward if it hadn't been for a strong local Writing Project site? He believes that to be the case.

Although Elizabeth's stepping stones highlighted many wonderful and positive moments—including the establishment of a successful Project site she currently co-directs—she chose to write about a troubling stepping stone moment on her list. She wrote about what she considers the "loss" of her "home" site where she attended her Invitational Summer Institute and had returned to for years. She regarded it a loss when

the director announced he would be leaving and the new director was appointed by him and the university. This was difficult for Elizabeth in many ways. One, she believed the board (made up of Teacher-Consultants) should have been part of the decision about who would lead the Project, as they had been part of the current director's hiring just a few short years before. She also felt a sadness in the choice, as she did not see the appointed person as someone ready to lead. Finally, she considered the teachers in the room as the real leadership of the Project and there were many in the room willing and ready to take up the Project's directorship who would be better prepared to do so. In the interview, she explained she chose to write about this stepping stone over others because she needed to "put a pin in it." She said,

> I think it was traumatic. I had a home there and what do you do when somebody, you know, when your house burns down well, you move somewhere else but you know, you still had your house burn down.

Even though Elizabeth went on to help establish a new and successful NWP site in another area, her new "house," she still saw this as a major loss. It mattered to her deeply and she wrote about it to process her emotions, emotions that came out in tears as she read her draft in the focus group.

Edward, too, talked about disconnection from the Project. He described feeling like he had never taken time to "grieve the loss" of the Project until being involved in this research study. He lost the Project, he felt, when he stepped away from it for a period to care for personal crises such as a divorce and a daughter who had had a "surgery a year" for the first seven or eight years of her life. The way he described Project loss had a couple of layers. On one hand, he knew he had to lessen his Project involvement to take

care of his daughter and it couldn't be avoided and was the right thing to do. On the other hand, he felt a deep sense of responsibility for what he saw as his Project site's struggles over the last few years and described his own stepping away as "I abandoned it." However, he also commented he was willing to reengage as the site is currently trying to reconstitute an advisory board.

Luckily for Elizabeth, her involvement with the new NWP site provided her the connection she needs and Edward still sees so much of the Project in his work. He described his continuing writing group "like a vestigial tail" and sees the influence of the Project in his daily teaching. Both had found ways, even amidst the loss, to find a way to recursively return to elements of the Project.

Summary

In this chapter, I have presented the revised snapshot stories written by the six participants in this study. Their stories reveal touchstone moments with NWP continued professional development. I wrote snapshot stories of the focus group interactions in order to give context to how data was collected via the protocols used in the sessions and to portray how relationality impacted the discussions and writing. By doing so, I also aimed to illustrate the depth of the conversations and interactions between participants held in the focus groups. I then gave a brief overview of the follow-up interviews. Finally, I spotlighted three overarching findings of the study supported by the data: the use of descriptive and metaphorical language in meaning making, the role of vulnerability in NWP CPD, and the role of recursive cycles in NWP CPD. Together, the findings presented in the chapter provide the basis for answering the guiding research questions to be presented and discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

As I sit down to begin writing my final chapter, I look around my dining room-turned- office, what I have named my "dissertation station," and take five slow deep breaths. I have notes, files, posters, books, articles, and reams of data surrounding me. I have read and reflected, reflected and read, memoed and discussed all with my writing group. I have been mentored by my committee and supported by my family. Still, I pace, I snack, I reheat my coffee for the thirtieth time in the microwave this morning, avoiding the page. It feels big. Yet I am compelled, as my participants remind me often in their words, to process my thoughts through writing and through sharing. Writing for an invisible audience out there, you, is my way of connecting to others and growing.

It does not escape me that the dissertation process reflects theory I have used as a lens for the data, Relational Cultural Theory. RCT asserts humans "grow through and toward relationship," (Jordan, 2018, p. 28). This final chapter reflects my own growth as a researcher and seeks to connect theory to practice. It also intends to build a relationship between its readers and the participants and between the findings and the professionals engaged with them. It aims, in essence, for growth.

In this final chapter, I will address the research question and sub-questions that anchored this study. They are as follows:

> How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of their experiences with the National Writing Project since their foundational Invitational Summer Institute experience (their continued professional development)?

- How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of relationship building in National Writing Project continued professional development (CPD) experiences?
- How do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of recursivity of National Writing Project continued professional development (i.e., in their teaching of writing, their own writing, professionalism, personal lives, etc.)?

In the following sections, I offer conclusions from the study. First, I relate how the tenets of RCT work together to create what I have named the NWP culture of connection. Second, I address the overarching research question and first sub-question by exploring the reasons why participants' use metaphors to express meaning and how the metaphorical language reflects the RCT tenets. Third, I address the second sub-question by explaining how RCT's "five good things" are connected to the recursive cycles supported by data in chapter four and how both provide productive lenses for investigating the nuanced ways teachers learn, grow, and sustain their careers through NWP continued professional development as well as what happens when recursivity is denied. Fourth, I explicate how vulnerability in NWP CPD as necessary for the culture of connection. Finally, I provide suggestions for what a teacher needs regarding continued professional development based on the study's findings as well as recommendations for future research.

Relational Cultural Theory and the NWP Culture of Connection

When I conducted my literature review for this dissertation, I was led to resilience literature (Doney, 2013; Le Cornu, 2009; Mansfield, et al., 2016; Raider-Roth, et al.,

2012). I struggled when reading this body of work as it often framed teaching in negative terms, as a profession one could stay in long-term if one found the correct coping mechanisms (Doney, 2013; Mansfield, et al, 2016)., This negative frame of both the profession and the way teachers should approach it did not align with how I view either the field or the NWP's role in supporting teachers in their careers. However, one resilience theory stood out from the others and aligned with my work and worldview. Relational Cultural Theory (RCT) advances the idea that "people grow through and toward relationships throughout the life span" (Jordan, J., 2017, p. 228). Intrigued by this focus on supportive relationships and growth, I wanted to see if and how this theory could be used as a lens for my participants' continued professional development throughout their career span in the NWP.

RCT has its start in psychology and feminist theories. Four counselors, Jean Baker Miller, Irene Stiver, Janet Surrey, and Judith Jordan, met weekly to discuss their field. Jordan (2017) explains:

> We were interested in lessening the pain of our clients, mostly women, and we were intent on listening carefully to their stories. We held no intention to create anything big or new, but create we did (p. 232).

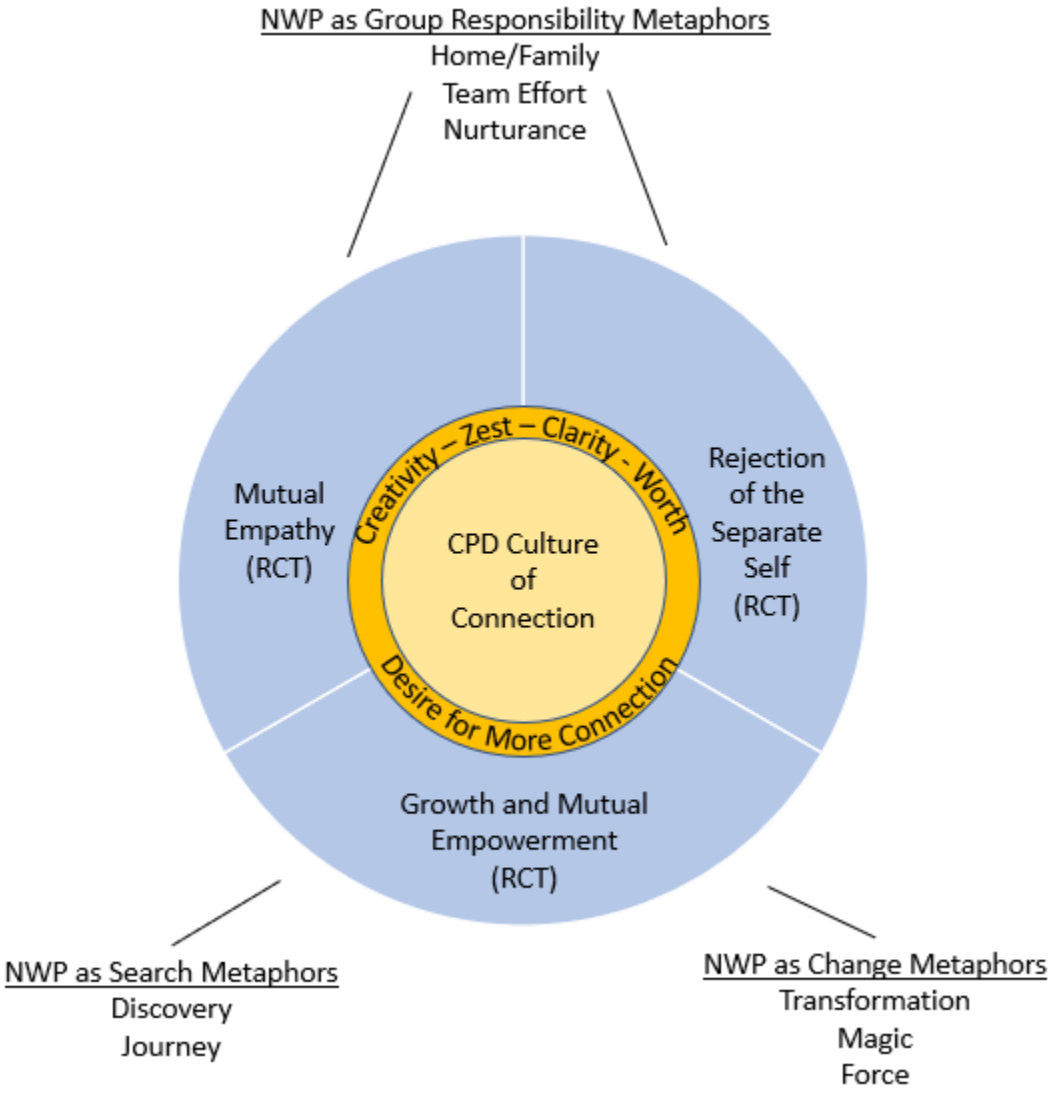
What began as four professional therapists sharing ideas about their practice with a centering on their clients' stories grew into larger discussions with other professionals and a theory that now embraces the psychology of men and women with practical applications in the field for all, including marginalized populations.

Utilizing RCT's strong focus on relationality and its accompanying three core tenets (a rejection of the separate self, mutual empathy, and growth and empowerment) as

a lens for continually analyzing my data, I began to see the ways in which NWP continued professional development creates and nurtures a culture centering on connection. It became clear the NWP approaches continued professional development from a culture-building viewpoint. Although the NWP utilizes many of the agreed upon professional development structures found in the literature such as professional learning communities, collaborative learning and lesson study (Capps, et al., 2012; Dunst, Bruder, & Hamby, 2015; Kennedy, 2016; McChesney & Aldridge, 2019; Parkhouse, Lu, & Massaro, 2019; "Standards for Professional Learning," n.d), its focus on intentionally creating what I have named a culture of connection is what sets it apart from other forms of continued professional development. The figure below provides a visual representation of how NWP continued professional development can be seen productively through the RCT lens. The graphic also maps the metaphor use participants in this study used to express this theory, which will be detailed in the next three sections of this chapter.

Figure 2.

National Writing Project Continued Professional Development
Through the Lens of Relational Cultural Theory



At the center of this graphic is the CPD culture of connection I believe the NWP creates for its members, as described by the research participants in this study. The NWP CPD culture of connection is encircled by the "five good things" that categorize growth-fostering relationships (creativity, zest, clarity, worth, and the desire for more connection), according to RCT and as illustrated across all data in this study (Jordan,

2018, p. 7). Also pictured here in the blue ring are the three main tenets of RCT, mutual empathy, the rejection of the separate self, and growth and mutual empowerment. I assert these tenets work together to create a CPD culture of connection in the NWP.

The most outer edge of the graphic reveals the metaphorical speech the participants used to reflect these tenets. The metaphors fell into three large categories, as fully described in Chapter 4: NWP as Group Responsibility, NWP as Search, and NWP as Change. The metaphors under the NWP as Group Responsibility category relate to the RCT tenets of mutual empathy and the rejection of the separate self. The metaphors under the NWP as Search and the NWP as Change relate to the RCT tenet of growth and mutual empowerment. The following four sub-sections in this chapter first give an overview of why metaphors are used to express meaning followed by summaries of three main tenets of RCT and how they are at work in the participants' NWP CPD experiences anchored by their meaning-filled metaphors. The last two sub-sections put the concept of recursivity in conversation with RCT.

Metaphors to Express Meaning. As I repeatedly engaged with the data and the myriad of metaphors and descriptive language my participants used to portray various elements of their involvement in NWP continued professional development, I began to question why metaphor use was so prevalent and what their repetitions could reveal in the research data. I thought about the purposes of writers who use metaphors. Often, I have told my own students such figurative language makes writing more vivid, more interesting for the reader. In truth, teachers participating in the NWP all believe in the power of writing and it should come as no surprise to find their snapshot stories riddled with metaphor comparisons and other rich language in order to appeal to their readers.

Yet the participants were just as likely to share metaphorical language to describe their experiences in focus groups and in their one-on-one interviews with me. Their casual and organic use of these rich descriptions and their repetitions across participants led me to think about the role of metaphor in meaning-making.

Prather (2019), a teacher and writing expert, regarding her students' use of figurative language states:

> I do want my students to be familiar with how writers use figurative language for specific expository jobs—to engage the reader, to clarify a concept, to create energy or a visual dynamic, or to connect something familiar to something unknown (p. 149).

In the same way, participants were trying to engage with their audience, the readers of this dissertation, in their writing of snapshot stories. Yet, in speaking with them in the interviews and focus groups, it was apparent to me the participants were also grappling with how to describe the intricate meaning of their NWP experiences in their professional and often, their personal, lives. Using metaphors to describe what the NWP has meant and continues to mean to them was in part to engage an audience consuming research, but was also to "clarify a concept" to themselves by "connect(ing) something familiar to something unknown" (Prather, 2019, p. 149). The metaphors, in this way, became a vehicle for reflection, a way to make meaning. As the participants thought about their NWP experiences, they used descriptive speech to illuminate the complexity of the culture of connection they had found as part of the organization.

Such metaphors as comparing their colleagues in the NWP to "family" and their local Project sites to "home," illustrate the core importance of the Project by elevating it

to the level of humans' most intimate relationships. Colorful comparisons to "rock bands" and "sports teams" help readers, but also the participants themselves think through the power of the Project in their collaborative professional endeavors. The participants were carefully choosing details through these metaphors that would clarify the meaning of their NWP continued professional development experiences. Metaphors hold meaning-making power as they make visual and visceral the ways in which people experience the world.

In the following sections, I will explain how the use of Relational Cultural Theory was a productive lens for viewing the data and summarize the main tenets of the theory. I will then feature how participants' metaphors, detailed in the last chapter, reveal the theory at work in NWP continued professional development and the meaning making of these participants (see Figure 1 earlier in this chapter).

A Rejection of the Separate Self: Group Responsibility Metaphors. Relational Cultural Theory and its overarching belief that humans "grow through and toward connection" runs counter to the idea of the "separate self" so often focused on in the field of psychology and in society itself (Jordan, 2017, p. 228). Jordan (2017) explains,

> In many branches of psychology, the self was seen as being the most developed (i.e., healthy and good) when it demonstrated autonomy, independence, invulnerability, and agency. The decontextualized self served the interests of a society that put individual success above all else and tended to devalue the importance of relationships (pp. 228–229).

In contrast to this "myth of the separate self" where "selves are primary and relationships are secondary," all of the participants described the role and importance of group

responsibility through multiple metaphors relating to home/family, team effort, and nurturance (Jordan, 2017, p. 228).

Metaphors and other descriptive speech revolving around group responsibility clearly demonstrate the RCT tenet of the rejection of the separate self (see Chapter 4 and Appendix Q for in-vivo examples of metaphors). The work of the NWP for its members is found in collective responsibility to each other as colleagues *and* as people, as well as to the profession and to students. Jordan (2017) explains "RCT is a theory about our basic interconnectedness, about the inevitability of needing one another throughout our lives. We are wired to connect" (p. 231). The participants give us insight into how NWP Teacher-Consultants make meaning of relationship building through their continued professional development experiences and in authentic connections to each other. In short, Teacher-Consultants are interconnected and "need one another" throughout their careers.

Mutual Empathy: Group Responsibility Metaphors. Another tenet of Relational Cultural Theory and closely related to the rejection of the separate self is the concept of mutual empathy. Jordan (2018) explains,

> …for empathy to facilitate change, each person must see, know, and feel the responsiveness of the other person. Mutual empathy involves mutual impact, mutual care, and mutual responsiveness (p. 7).

The group responsibility metaphors detailed in Chapter 4 (home/family, team effort, and nurturance) clearly reveal mutual empathy at work in the NWP. According to the founders of RCT "Mutual empathy is the core process that allows for growth in a relationship" (Jordan, 2018, p. 30). The participants described the relationships in the

NWP in the most intimate of terms, family, and as basic to their nurturance and sustenance, both personally and professionally. These descriptive terms detailed being seen, heard, and understood by their peers. Vulnerability, as discussed in Chapter 4, was foundational to cultivating mutual empathy for one another. Participants also categorized their continued professional development events with team metaphors that reflected growth in working together. In sum, mutual empathy is the cornerstone of fostering growth in the NWP. In these ways, growth is a social not solitary act. Growth impacts the individual, the group (in this case the NWP network), and radiates out to other relationships. For the participants in this study, those other impacted relationships were with their base school colleagues, their overall contributions to the profession as a whole, sometimes personal relationships, and certainly, their relationships with their students.

It is important to understand that RCT and mutual empathy "should not be misconstrued as a compendium of harmonious and cozy relationships" (Jordan, 2018, p. 8). The founders of the theory clearly explain the need for "good conflict" and how it is "necessary for change and growth" (Jordan, 2018, p. 8). In fact, Miller believed "we undergo our most profound change and grow most deeply when we encounter difference and work on conflict or differences in connection" (Jordan, 2018, p. 8). Interestingly, the NWP does not promote any one paradigm or standardized way of teaching writing. The two framing principles of the NWP are open-ended: teachers are the best teachers of teachers and writing teachers must write (Gray, 2000). There is a lot of room for discourse and productive conflict about both the theory and practice of writing instruction and related educational issues. Participants mentioned the continual discussion going on about the craft of teaching and the various viewpoints in the Project. Therefore, growth as

practitioners is found in the processes of mutual empathy, including occasional productive struggle between Teacher-Consultants.

Metaphors and other descriptive speech revolving around group responsibility (home/family, team effort, and nurturance) clearly demonstrate the RCT tenet of mutual empathy. The metaphors themselves hinge on interaction with others. The participants, through their word choice, describe the give and take that must occur for empathy to develop and lead us to a deeper understanding of how the NWP includes mutual empathy in its cultural norms.

Growth and Empowerment: Change and Search Metaphors. The founders of Relational Cultural Theory, acknowledge the importance of culture-building in relation to growth and empowerment (Jordan, 2018). To illustrate this point, Relational Cultural theorists have "depicted culture as more than the scenic backdrop for the unfolding of development; rather, culture is viewed as an active agent in relational processes that shape human possibility" (Walker, 2005, p. 48). I posit the NWP by intentionally creating a culture of connection fosters educators' empowerment and growth as professionals and, at times, as people in general.

In alignment with RCT's principle surrounding the power of relationships in cultivating growth and empowerment in its members, the study participants described these concepts in terms of change metaphors relating to transformation, magic, and types of forces at work in the NWP (See Chapter 4 and Appendix Q). Their metaphors and descriptive speech reflect how "People engage together in relationships where…people can be affected and affecting" (Jordan, 2018, p. 231). The participants described the importance of both contributing to the NWP and the profession and also how the Project

had impacted their professional and personal lives. In these ways and through relationship, they were both "affected and affecting" (Jordan, 2018, p. 231).

The search metaphors demonstrate the tenet of growth and empowerment at work in the Project. Two metaphors that stood out were the NWP as discovery and as journey. The participants saw inquiry into their field in community with other TCs as part of a long-term journey as career educators. The idea that careers could evolve and there was much to be discovered about the craft of writing and teaching writing empowered them to grow. These educators were searching for meaning in their careers and found it in NWP CPD where they could not find it in their interactions in their schools or systems. The NWP in its rejection of programs and the concept of "training" teachers and its assertion that teachers' careers should be nurtured in an atmosphere of growth through discovery and journeying, squarely focuses its energy on connection.

Metaphors and other descriptive speech revolving around changing and seeking clearly demonstrate the RCT tenet of growth and empowerment. The participants gave insight into how NWP Teacher-Consultants work together to support each other's growth and feel, collectively, empowered through their association. The NWP is a model of how "we empower others so that they in turn empower others" (Jordan, 2018, p36). This reciprocal empowering is key to meaningful growth for all.

The Desire for More Connection: Recursive Cycles in RCT and NWP CPD. Before I began the study, I believed NWP continued professional development mirrored the recursive cycle of the writing process, a process often mislabeled as linear. In truth, each person's writing process is filled with starts and stops and a movement between "the" steps of the process (i.e., brainstorming, composing, revising, editing, etc.). Flowers

(1981) describes writing process in terms of the roles we play (madman, architect, carpenter, judge) and how we can move back and forth between the roles as needed to suit our individual process and the product we are trying to create. In actuality, all writers develop their own processes for writing and it changes with the kind of writing task and over time as writers evolve their craft. So it is with the recursive cycles of NWP continued professional development. Each participant was able to find and design experiences suited to their needs as professionals, as writers, and as people throughout their career span. The Teacher-Consultants in this study would return to the Project to seek out what they needed time and again. In this way, the NWP is self-differentiating through its recursivity.

As I collected and analyzed data, a recursive process itself, I became fascinated by the overlap of my thoughts about CPD recursive cycles and what I read in Relational Cultural Theory literature. The theory states growth-fostering relationships are characterized by "five good things" (Jordan, 2018, p. 7). According to Jordan (2018), these are as follows:

> (a) Zest; an increase in energy; (b) increased knowledge and clarity about one's own
>
> experience, the other person, and the relationship; (c) creativity and productivity;
>
> (d) a greater sense of worth; and (e) a desire for more connection (p. 7).

The data repeatedly revealed these five elements across all findings (see Appendix S). Through the participants' relationality with the NWP network, they were involved in multiple layers of growth-fostering relationships that resulted in zest for their teaching and careers, clarity about theory and practice as well as how they fit into a larger view of

the profession in relationship with their Teacher-Consultant "family," a focus on the creative elements of teaching and writing, increased productivity in writing and contributions to the profession, and clearly a greater sense of worth supported through their connections with the people in the NWP, colleagues that valued them as both professionals and friends.

I assert the above four good things lead to the fifth good thing, a desire for more connection. The participants in this study found zest, clarity, creativity, and worth in the collective responsibility and growth-fostering relationships in the Project. This led to a desire to repeatedly return to the source of that meaningful growth, the NWP. In this way, the concept of recursivity is embedded into Relational Cultural Theory, providing another productive lens to reveal the *hows* of teacher learning and professional and personal development in the NWP.

The participants in this study described recursive cycles between NWP CPD and their practice in the classroom, their contributions to the profession, their writing lives, and even their personal lives (see Chapter 4). They also portrayed the striking differences between other CPD structures they had been involved with and those they found in NWP. They depicted an absence of recursivity in these other kinds of CPD, repeatedly stating their lack of value to them as professionals, educators, and people (see Chapter 4). The data suggests NWP CPD recursive cycles sustain TCs' careers in ways that traditional continued professional development cannot. I assert this recursivity works in NWP CPD due to the culture of connection the network nurtures and is lacking in more prescribed forms of CPD. At center, NWP CPD experiences hinge on relationality and a sense of group responsibility and empowerment often missing or lacking in school settings. These

NWP elements created a “desire for more connection,” manifesting in recursive cycles (Jordan, 2018, p.7).

The participants detailed ways relationships were rich, deep, and meaningful in the Project and how relationships felt more surface at their school sites. NWP continued professional development centered on true connections with others as well as professional sharing and inquiry. It was voluntary and Teacher-Consultants were treated as professionals. In direct contrast, the systems and schools were places where teachers were mandated to participate in top-down programs. Participants also often described their school-based colleagues as teachers, although well-meaning, who were not as invested in making authentic connections nor as committed to inquiry as Project members. Schools and systems seemed to be places cultivating a sense of what Relational Cultural theorist Miller called “condemned isolation” (Jordan, 2018, p. 133). She defined this term as “the experience of isolation and aloneness that leaves one feeling shut out of the human community” (Jordan, 2018, p. 133).

Several participants’ statements present the NWP culture of connection as a balm to the culture of “condemned isolation” they find at their schools/systems (see Chapter 4). Jordan (2018) describes condemned isolation as leading to people feeling “immobilized, unworthy, and alone” (p. 33). The sustaining power of NWP CPD recursive cycles made the participants feel they had a network of professionals and friends to help them manage the isolation of school, and to give them the energy to continue to teach. The data suggests that NWP continued professional development sustains teachers’ careers through a culture of connection, a culture needed to combat the condemned isolation

often found in schools. I suggest educators who are unable to find such connection, in the Project or other educator-centered outlets, are less likely to remain in teaching.

Condemned Isolation: When Recursivity is Denied. As explored above, NWP continued professional development can relieve some of the pain of "condemned isolation" the participants found in schools/systems (Jordan, 2018, p.33). Yet, when NWP sites close, go through difficult leadership transitions, or the participants themselves fall away from involvement for any number of reasons, the loss of former relationality and connection can be painful. Two participants, Elizabeth and Edward, described what occurs when disconnection happens in the NWP (see Chapter 4).

These participants' examples demonstrate how important a culture of connection becomes to NWP Teacher-Consultants and how protective they are of it. Losing the NWP in any way can lead to feelings of grief, a returning to the feeling of "condemned isolation" these educators often felt at their school sites. The participants' language described sorrow and, at times, even a deep sense of regret and responsibility for the disconnection. This strong language reflects the power of the culture of connection and the sense of group responsibility it builds, but also reflects what happens when, for whatever reason, that community is taken away.

The Role of Vulnerability in a Culture of Connection

As detailed in Chapter 4, a surprising overarching finding was the role of vulnerability in NWP continued professional development. The participants' descriptions of vulnerability in the Project were unlike other CPD they were involved in and led to the closeness of relationships developed in the Project, contributing to the culture of connection.

All six participants described vulnerability as part of their NWP CPD experiences. Often, the culture developed vulnerability in the context of writing and sharing writing in NWP CPD. As is detailed in the last chapter, NWP members encourage each other to write authentically and to share writing with each other, even when there is reluctance at first to do so. This relates to the concept of "en-couraging" in Relational Cultural Theory and how it disrupts isolation. Jordan (2017) explains:

> …we en-courage one another. We listen one another into courage, into voice. Courage, confidence, and a sense of strength grow in connection, not in isolated denial and in the glorification of the individual who defies the odds by possessing extraordinary internal fortitude. In reality, isolation erodes courage. Isolation interrupts growth. Isolation disempowers us and immobilizes us. As Karen Laing (1998) noted, 'isolation is the glue that holds oppression in place.' In contrast, connection confers power and enables action. (p. 231).

Participants shared examples of how the culture of connection works in the NWP and "enables action" (Jordan, 2017, p. 231). NWP TCs were regularly "en-couraged…into voice," literally, by sharing their writing aloud with their colleagues. That courage was nurtured through the culture of connection the NWP so carefully designed.

Participants described what happens when people meet together, share together, and grow together. As Jordan (2017) describes it: "The separate self grows hand in hand with a need for *power-over.* If instead we view boundaries as places of meeting, differentiation, and exchange, connection rather than power-over becomes the protective and creative factor" (p.229). In other words, vulnerability in a group context leads to growth together, instead of "power-over" (p. 229). Vulnerability was key to rejecting the

separate self, to fostering mutual empathy, and to propelling growth and mutual empowerment, all tenets of RCT. Vulnerability, in short, was key to creating and maintaining the NWP CPD culture of connection.

The pull of vulnerability, an authenticity the participants did not find in other forms of CPD in their schools or systems, called these teachers back again and again to the Project. In the Project the participants could be themselves, teachers and people writing, learning, and growing together.

Recommendations

The following sections offer concluding thoughts. First, I offer some methodological reflections. Second, I provide suggestions for educational practice regarding continued professional development for educators. Third, I suggest recommendations for future research in this area of scholarship. Lastly, after a summary of this chapter, I share a final metaphor from a participant to invite the reader to consider the impact of a culture of connection on educators' careers and lives.

Methodological Reflections

The research questions for this study center on participants describing and making meaning of their continued experiences with the NWP. I began this study with a belief that we create meaning through the stories we tell ourselves and others. My belief has been solidified through this research journey.

The six participants told stories of the connection of culture they found in NWP CPD through many mediums. They told stories in dialogue in the focus groups, folding each other's questions and comments into their own evolving stories and meaning making as they discussed both writing and their experiences in the NWP. They told

stories through writing their stepping stone lists, their rough draft snapshots, and their final revisions of stories that appear in their entirety in chapter four of this work. These written stories considered the readers of this dissertation and demonstrate how audience matters. In these crafted stories the writers strove to instruct readers about the core of relationality that is needed in successful continued professional development as well as in careers and what happens when relationality and professionalism are not honored. The participants also told stories through their interviews with me and I shared their words, their experiences, and their lessons through the lens of Relational Cultural Theory to reveal the conclusions and provide recommendations for the field in this final chapter. All of these stories are social ones, they were created in group process, dialogue, and with audience in mind. Telling stories is at core, like teaching, a social act.

It is interesting the data collection of this dissertation was undertaken during a global pandemic where a term new to many of us, "social distancing," became a way of life and, frankly, a way to continue living. At first, I was concerned my data collection, so dependent on connection, would suffer from videoconferencing. The irony of collecting data across the internet for a dissertation with theory centered on relationality was not lost on me. Still, what I discovered quickly in the first few minutes of my first focus group was the participants may have been *physically* distanced, but they were not *socially* distanced. The ease with which these participants, some who knew each other through the Project and some who did not, talked and shared is reflective of the NWP culture of connection. The NWP promotes social connection that permeates a career and gives teachers the energy to teach, even if that time is during a global pandemic when teaching and learning have shifted to foreign and distanced formats.

I found the videoconferencing data recordings had unseen positive benefits for this research. I always intended to recursively return to transcripts, memoing and reflecting before re-reading the data. Yet the re-watching of the interview and focus group videos helped me to feel connected to the participants all over again. Their tone of voice, their gestures, and even looking into their homes, repeatedly put me in relationship with them. Distanced from so many, safe in my home, these videos filled a craving for connection I have often been unable to fill these past 10 months.

I found the brainstorming of stepping stone moments, the rough draft and revision of snapshot stories, the use of focus group revision groups, and follow-up interviews to provide necessary multiple data points for my small sample size, and fruitful avenues for analysis. The data collection methods with their accompanying data collection tools layered the story of NWP CPD and made that collective story richer, highlighting the nuanced ways teachers learn and grow in a culture of connection. In addition, the data representation used in this dissertation, participants' full snapshot stories, filled a gap in the literature where teachers' experiences are often represented in a few disjointed quotes. To capture the complexity of teacher learning, we must listen to the entirety of what teachers have to say.

What a Teacher Needs

In the following sections, I will offer recommendations for educational practice regarding continued professional development for educators. The analysis in this study suggests what teachers need to sustain careers in education, a field plagued by turnover (Sparks, 2018; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). The participants all had their entry into the NWP around 20 years ago and have stayed involved in NWP continued professional

development in multiple ways since their Invitational Summer Institutes. In alignment with the statistics on how NWP Teacher-Consultants stay in education, these participants remain in the field two decades later, four as high school teachers, one as an elementary teacher, and one as a middle school librarian.

Interestingly, two of the participants credit the NWP with "saving" their careers in teaching (see Appendix Q for in-vivo quotes) This bold statement is one I share with these participants, as is seen in my own introductory snapshot writing that begins this dissertation. This narrative is seen in several of the snapshot stories (see Chapter 4).In some cases, the participants even described the NWP as an organization that "fixed" personal in addition to professional ails.

As demonstrated earlier in this chapter and by powerful quotes (see Chapter 4 and Appendix Q for in-vivo quotes), the NWP's culture of connection creates recursive cycles I assert sustain, and yes, sometimes even save, teachers' careers. What follows are the *hows* of NWP continued professional development. They hold lessons for what a teacher needs to not only sustain, but to thrive, in the field of education.

Meaningful Growth. As is evidenced in the data and findings, the participants were seeking change and growth. What was different from the experiences they had in NWP CPD versus what they found in other kinds of professional development can be categorized as *meaningful* growth. In much of the literature about teacher preparation and professional development there is an emphasis on teacher growth in their skills, knowledge and commitments to the profession (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005). Although important, skills and knowledge are easily packaged and in "one and done" professional development sessions often with little application to the classroom. Limited,

if any, true growth can occur from these isolated forms of PD. The research community has focused deep attention on PD models (Kennedy, A., 2005) and the features of PD (Capps, Crawford, & Constas, 2012; Dunst, Bruder, & Hamby, 2015; Kennedy, 2016; Parkhouse, Lu, & Massaro, 2019) while not extensively studying the ways teachers learn and grow in their profession. This study suggests that for meaningful growth to occur, teachers need to be in communities that foster it and that progress must center on creating cultures of connection.

It was clear the growth-fostering relationships in the NWP contributed to the overall meaningful growth the Teacher-Consultants experienced in their classrooms, their own writing, their professional career contributions, and sometimes, in their personal lives. They demonstrated the "five good things" found in RCT's identification of growth-fostering relationships: zest, clarity, worth, creativity, and the desire for more connection (Jordan, 2018, p. 7). I believe the transformational testimony so often described by these participants as well as in other NWP studies hinges on these five good things (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Kaplan, 2008; Locke, Whitehead, Cawkwell, 2011; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Whitney, 2008). To have an increase in zest, clarity, creativity, worth, and connection surely feels transformational in a field that often denies the professionalism of teachers.

This study presents these "five good things" from RCT as a way to evaluate how and if continued professional development is providing meaningful growth for its participants (see Appendix S for how they are reflected in NWP CPD). This research also suggests professional development providers should focus on cultural elements of CPD to

foster growth in educators. Relationality is not a "nice to have" aspect of CPD, it is foundational to meaningful growth.

Collective Responsibility to Counter the Condemned Isolation of School. In response to the second sub-question of this study, how do National Writing Project Teacher-Consultants describe and make meaning of relationship building in National Writing Project continued professional development experiences, the data suggests Teacher-Consultants locate relationship building at the center of their NWP work. The participants frequently used metaphorical and other descriptive language to reveal the importance of group responsibility in the Project (see Figure 1). The importance of this relationship building not only propelled dedication and collaborative work within the Project, but the sense of group responsibility nurtured within the Project acted as a protective barrier to what was seen as the frequently isolating nature of their base schools and systems, what I see aligned with RCT's concept of "condemned isolation" (Jordan, 2018, p. 33). Only Malcolm described some movement in his school towards a culture built on connection, one he had slowly fostered utilizing principles he learned in the NWP.

The data suggests teachers thrive, grow, and need a sense of group responsibility built on the RCT tenets of mutual empathy and the rejection of the separate self (Jordan, 2019). After engaging deeply with the participants, it was obvious their self-efficacy inside and outside of the classroom had increased through relationality in NWP CPD. Perhaps a better term to use than self-efficacy would be group-efficacy. Through their association and growth-fostering relationships, NWP Teacher-Consultants found

increased confidence and a deep sense of collective responsibility to teaching, to their students, to the profession, and to each other.

This study contributes valuable information on the role cultural networks play in promoting collective responsibility for teaching and the profession and how cultural networks have potential to sustain careers.

To be Seen, Heard, and Valued as a Professional. As is seen in the literature review of this study, professional development has been studied extensively. However, the main focus has been on professional development structures. Those structures vary in effectiveness due in large part based on who is planning and leading the professional development, as design and implementation vary widely (Capps, Crawford, & Constas, 2012; Dunst, Bruder, & Hamby, 2015; Kennedy, 2016; Parkhouse, Lu, & Massaro, 2019). After the review of literature, it became clear there is a need to know more about the ways teachers learn and grow and not just the features of "effective" PD. As Kennedy (2016) states, "there is little consensus about what happens in PD, (and) how it fosters teacher learning…" (p. 1). Although there was some literature on teacher motivation, it is evident we need more research that focuses on the *hows* of teacher learning.

The participants in this study repeatedly answered this call in a myriad of ways, but at center was their deep desire to be seen, heard, and valued as professionals. In NWP CPD, the participants felt they were valued as experts in their field and felt both encouraged and validated. In contrast, some participants described feeling like "factory workers" or "vessels" to pour programming into at schools.

This study adds to the call in the research community to get a more "nuanced understanding of what teachers do" and how they learn (Kennedy, 2016, p. 30). A first

step for researchers is to listen to the teachers themselves, to hear their stories of successful growth, and to pay close attention to what stymies that growth. Additionally, teacher voices and stories should be spotlighted in research literature. To do so is to elevate teacher professionalism and honor their expertise. A first step for administrators is to value that expertise in their buildings and to create opportunities for teachers to teach teachers their craft and engage in inquiry. Doing so, provides space and time for a culture of connection to grow organically. It must start with true recognition of teachers as professionals. As NWP founder James Gray believed when he held the first ISI in 1974, teachers must be at the center (Gray, 2000).

To truly put teachers at the center, we need the field to see and sustain educators' professionalism as a mission. As stated in the Learning Forward national standard about leadership, teachers need to "make their own career-long learning visible to others" ("Leadership," n.d.). Although I appreciate this nod to honoring teacher expertise from Learning Forward, I do think their standards should include more on how to support teacher professionalism in order for educators to make such expertise available to each other, the field at large, and the public—and how doing so can impact policy. Although the standards mention developing collective responsibility through learning communities, the standards need to go further in guiding how we can elevate, support, and center the role of teacher as expert. I believe this concept of teacher professionalism is lightly embedded in the standards' listing of professional learning characteristics, but a separate category called "Supporting and Sustaining Professionalism" is a needed addition (See Appendix I).

Voluntary Avenues for CPD and Support to Engage in Them. The participants in this study repeatedly highlighted the voluntary nature of the NWP. All of the CPD they engaged in, whether they were facilitating or participating, was a choice made by them. Yet the participants in this study, as is reflected in many studies of the NWP, chose again and again to return to NWP CPD. Even when some felt a bit burdened by some of the Project administrative duties the participants still voluntarily returned to the Project (for nearly two decades for most in the study), due to the value it provided them. In contrast, the participants regularly mentioned top-down, mandated and often packaged in nature, CPD at school sites. They felt these "cookie-cutter" sessions were not useful and viewed them as devaluing teaching as a craft and teachers as professionals.

The inherent lesson here is when teachers are treated as professionals who want to grow and are provided with professional development that honors their expertise, they will voluntarily commit to CPD. Two issues that need to be addressed in regards to CPD is the elevation of teachers as professionals, something the NWP does so well, and a reduction in workload so teachers feel they have the time to pursue voluntary avenues for their own professional development. We need to reimagine teacher professional development as centering on group responsibility—to the field, to students, and to other teachers -which is internally motivated. This is in direct contrast to the way the system currently views teacher professional development: as accountability, which is externally motivated. If teachers see CPD sessions as boxes to check as described by participants in the study, what real growth and learning can occur? A key to growth is genuine investment in learning.

Nurturance of the Whole Teacher and the Role of Vulnerability. There is much in research literature about teaching the "whole child" (Hendrick & Weissman, 1996; Miller, 2010; Noddings, 2005). The concept behind whole child instruction means we must see, and teach, children in "emotionally, socially, physically, creatively, and cognitively" appropriate ways (Hendrick & Weissman, 1996, p. 1). Noddings (2005) calls for a "holistic perspective" when we think about teaching the whole child where "discussions of moral and social issues should respond to students' expressed needs" (p. 9). She is quick to add that "some prior planning can be useful, too." These overarching philosophical stances towards educating our youth became battle cries in the midst of the standardized testing movement, when the educational pendulum swung to focus on discrete answers to measure student learning.

This study's findings suggest a need to focus on the "whole teacher" in education as well. As Noddings (2005) states, "most of us want to be treated as persons" (p. 8), and yet the teachers in this study reported often feeling their voices were silenced and their expertise devalued. Like the young teacher who leaves the profession in Edward's snapshot story, teachers felt unsupported by administration, and due to teaching "pre-programmed stuff," felt their creativity was diminished.

In opposition to this, the NWP TCs felt nurtured as "whole teachers," and often as "whole persons" in the Project. Emotionally and socially supported in the culture of connection, they grew creatively and cognitively through Project CPD. They were even nourished physically in the Project, as food is regularly served as a community building element as well. The result of all of this was energy, not exhaustion.

The study's findings suggest vulnerability may be a key element in accepting and nurturing the whole teacher. I was surprised by the reoccurrence of vulnerability in the data and when I followed up on this concept in interviews, found it was absent in other forms of CPD the participants were involved in outside of the Project. I returned to the RCT literature and found vulnerability's inclusion in the work. Jordan (2018) states, "The (societal) cultural mandate is to be independent, strong alone, and invulnerable (or to at least appear to be invulnerable)" (p. 230). In contrast, RCT invites vulnerability and relationality, as does the culture of connection in NWP CPD.

Brown's (2012) work has brought research on vulnerability into mainstream reading. Her words mirror the work of the founders of RCT, and she even utilizes their work to discuss the disastrous results of "condemned isolation" (p. 140). Brown (2012) states:

> Vulnerability is not a weakness, and the uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure we face every day are not optional. Our only choice is a question of engagement. Our willingness to own and engage with vulnerability determines the depth of our courage and the clarity of our purpose; the level to which we protect ourselves from being vulnerable is a measure of our fear and disconnection (p. 2).

I agree with Brown (2012) that we cannot avoid "uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure" and that our only "choice is a question of engagement" (p. 2). However, I would assert this study's results suggest there are key elements that create environments that encourage more engagement with vulnerability. NWP CPD has created such an environment, whereas the schools and systems teachers work within have, overall, not.

Key to encouraging vulnerability in NWP CPD are RCT's tenets of mutual empathy, the rejection of the separate self, and a focus on growth and mutual empowerment.

Support for the Social Acts of Teaching and Learning: The NWP. Teachers need support, both through policy and financial aid, for valuable continued professional development. When I attended the Invitational Summer Institute at a local site in the late nineties, my acceptance into the popular program was seen as an honor. I, along with others from my school system, received a large stipend from the county that covered the entire tuition of the six graduate credits I would earn from the institute. In addition, the Project itself gave me a small stipend in order for me to purchase texts to support my study that summer. These were more than financial supports; they were validation I was a professional. The money from my school system sent a signal to me the ISI was a valuable pursuit and one that would enrich my career, my teaching, and our school system. The stipend from the Project indicated the organization was supportive of my intellectual journey. The two systems working together demonstrated a belief in the social acts of teaching and learning, as the NWP would become my professional home.

Much has changed. The NWP directed federal funding was ended in 2011. The national network along with its local sites continue on "with support from a wide range of federal and private funders" ("National Writing Project," n.d.), but it is challenging to gain such financial aid. School systems have often channeled funding to programs and outside consultants, looking for speedy solutions to high-stakes testing fueled by policy decisions at the national and state levels. As a country, we have turned our attention to quick fixes to educational issues instead of investing in the long-term nurturance of

teachers and their development so teachers may place their attention on the development of their students. This results in high teacher turnover.

The National Writing Project has a long history and a track record of success. This study adds to the literature in its focus on the continued professional development of teachers. This research indicates teachers' careers are sustained through NWP CPD and teachers in the Project find meaningful growth in the culture of connection nurtured at the national level and local sites of the network. I suggest policy makers and those who control funding would benefit from investing in the social acts of teaching and learning. The NWP is one such program that is deserving of funding to promote the professionalism and sustained work of teacher growth.

Recommendations for Future Research

There is much to learn about teachers' continued professional development and how teachers make meaning of their CPD experiences. This study leads to several avenues for more study.

A surprising finding of the study was the role of vulnerability in creating the culture of connection in NWP CPD. The fact participants assertively said this was missing in other forms of CPD, and stated those forms were not as impactful to their professional development, is an area worthy of more study. More understanding of how vulnerability contributes to a culture of connection, ways to create environments that support vulnerability, and more about its relationship to writing would benefit the professional development community at large. Future research into creating habits of mind that support vulnerability in both pre-service and in-service professional development would be instructive to the teacher educator field at large.

Data analysis revealed instances of the "five good things" found in growth-fostering relationships in NWP CPD. Having said that, the five good things, zest, clarity, worth, creativity, and a desire for more connection, merit more study and a more nuanced understanding of their importance and specifically, how they work in educational settings. These concepts could be better defined and utilized in studies about how both teachers and students are involved in growth-fostering relationships. Researchers interested in the professional development providers' role would also benefit from a closer investigation of how TCs in the NWP nurture relationality and connectivity to build upon what has been illuminated in this study.

The study participants clearly described differences between the culture of the NWP, one of connection, and their schools, often one of isolation. I believe comparison studies between these cultures would benefit the educational community and could lead to policy implications. The relationality of the NWP is not program-based and the participants sometimes described the professional development in schools as a way to "teacher-proof" curriculum. From established literature, it is clear what the effective components of good professional development are (many also used in NWP CPD). Yet what needs more focus in research are the cultural components that sustain those professional development structures authentically. In other words, instead of CPD focusing on inauthentic pre-packaged programs or one and done skill-centered sessions, teachers would be engaged in more meaningful CPD, centered on the authentic processes of their contextualized teaching along with developing practitioner reflection. For example, educators in authentic CPD (like that found in the NWP) would focus on their content and their own inquiry into their expertise rather than learning an isolated skill

they may or may not “drop into” their teaching practice. This authentic lens provides an avenue for teachers to be responsive to their students instead of responsive to the curriculum, an approach aligned with relationality. This leads to a clear research avenue for scholars to study how professional development providers learn to nurture cultures of connection for teachers so they may do the same for their students. This study adds to the role such cultural networks have to sustain careers, but more studies that focus on recursive cycles and cultural elements of successful professional development are needed to enact change in schools and the profession at large.

The implications of this research point to the importance of studying an orientation towards connectivity in continued professional development outside of the NWP. This study’s findings assert connectivity not as a “nice to have” element for CPD, but as an integral aspect to sustaining teachers’ careers. The participants revealed the critical importance of connecting to other educators for long-term inquiry into their teaching where they shared their successes and failures with each other. They highlighted the need for a place and a mission to go back to, to have connections with others, in order to discuss not just what happened in a lesson, but what was occurring over the course of their career development. Thus, the research community would benefit in studying how professional development providers can help nurture such connectivity and further investigate relationality’s role regarding teacher satisfaction in and desire for engaging with continued professional development. A needed area of future research would involve this shift from studying CPD structures (i.e., lesson study, PLCs, etc.) so commonly seen in the literature to work centered on the cultural elements that sustain teacher growth. In other words, how can professional development providers consider

connectivity and relationality when designing CPD for educators? If CPD designers desire to sustain satisfaction in teaching careers and keep teachers in the field longer, this research suggests further investigation of the five good things found in RCT is needed. The five good things, zest, clarity, worth, creativity, and the desire for more connection, are evidence of growth-fostering relationships so clearly critical to the participants in this work. In addition, considering further research outside of the NWP, viewing connectivity's role in a longitudinal manner over a career is worthy of further study and would provide needed insight into re-envisioning the ways in which CPD is provided to educators.

Summary

NWP CPD is a model based on creating a culture of connection, rather than "training" teachers on educational programming. In this final chapter, I shared conclusions on how NWP CPD builds this culture of connection through the Relational Cultural Theory tenets of mutual empathy, the rejection of the separate self, and growth and empowerment of its members. The participants in this study describe a culture in the Project that helps them sustain and cultivate long careers in education and even provides healing from a culture of isolation they often find in their schools. At its core, NWP CPD finds its strength in the authentic relationships of its members, relying on both vulnerability and in its recursive cycles between continued professional development and their teaching, their writing, their profession, and even their personal lives. The key study findings around teachers' meaning-making contribute to "nuanced understandings" (Kennedy, 2016, p. 30) of the ways teachers learn and grow. These are social and cultural

understandings, which help to fill a gap in the literature about teacher continued professional development.

This chapter also highlighted methodological reflections highlighting the usefulness of storytelling-as-research. The study utilized the full stories of its participants in its presentation, filling a data representation gap in the literature so that teachers' meaning-making may be represented more fully. In order to learn about teacher continued professional development, we must listen to the teachers' own voices.

This final chapter also made several recommendations for what teachers need in terms of their continued professional development in order to sustain their careers. These recommendations, along with the recommendations for future research, ask for a re-visioning of teacher CPD to center on building cultures of connection. Doing so will honor the professionalism of teachers and will propel their growth as life-long educators.

One Last Metaphor

In this research, I have shared the participants' stories and spotlighted their metaphorical and descriptive language. I have done so intentionally, in order to address research questions centered on meaning-making, but also to position teachers as the expert voices in describing teacher development and learning. The metaphors in this study provided colorful language in order to help illustrate concepts more clearly. One metaphor stood out to me and I end this work with a teacher's words for your consideration.

Edward, in his interview, told me, "it's hard to separate the Project from who I am as a teacher, or what I do every day…I am the Writing Project."

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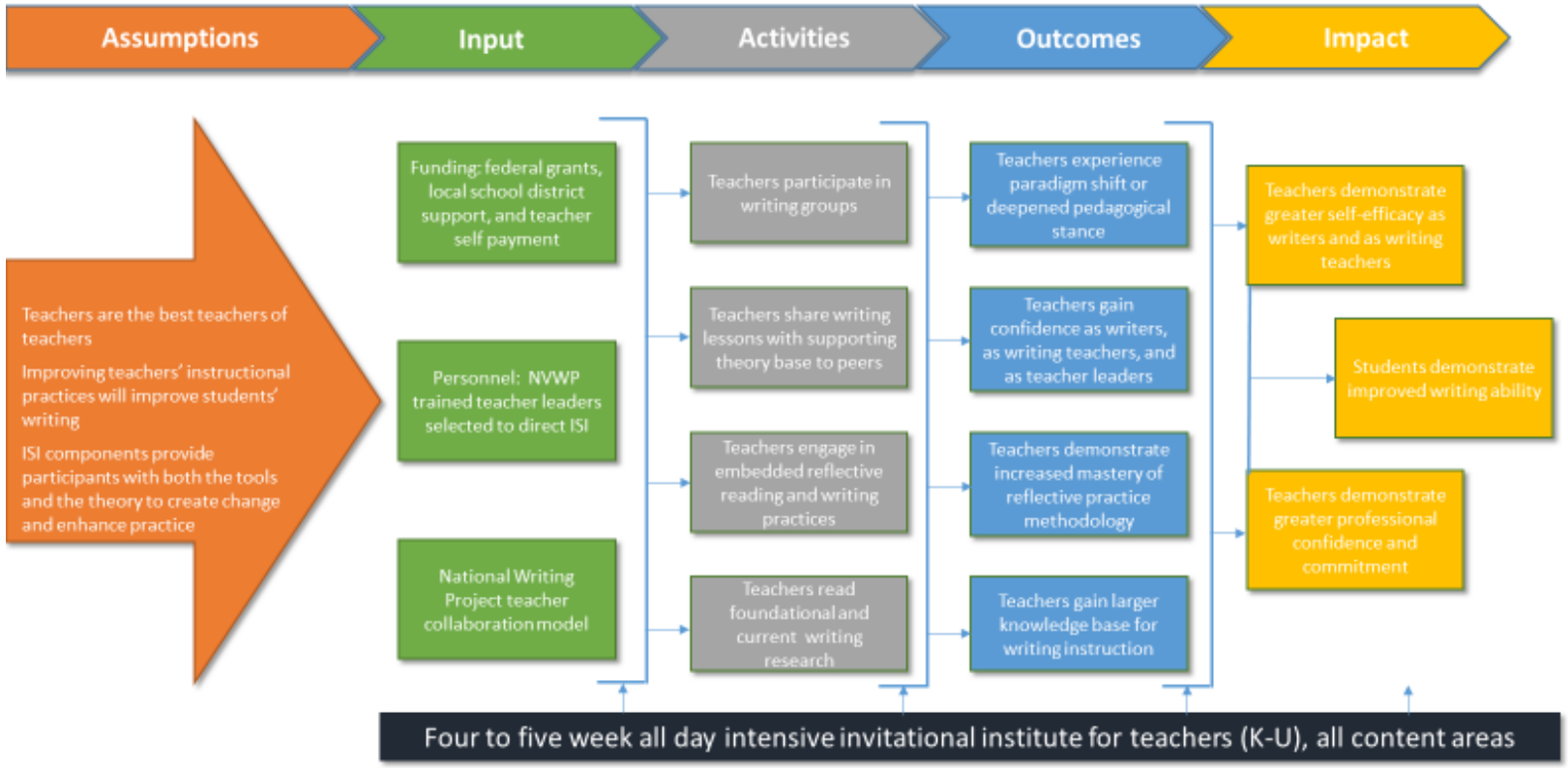
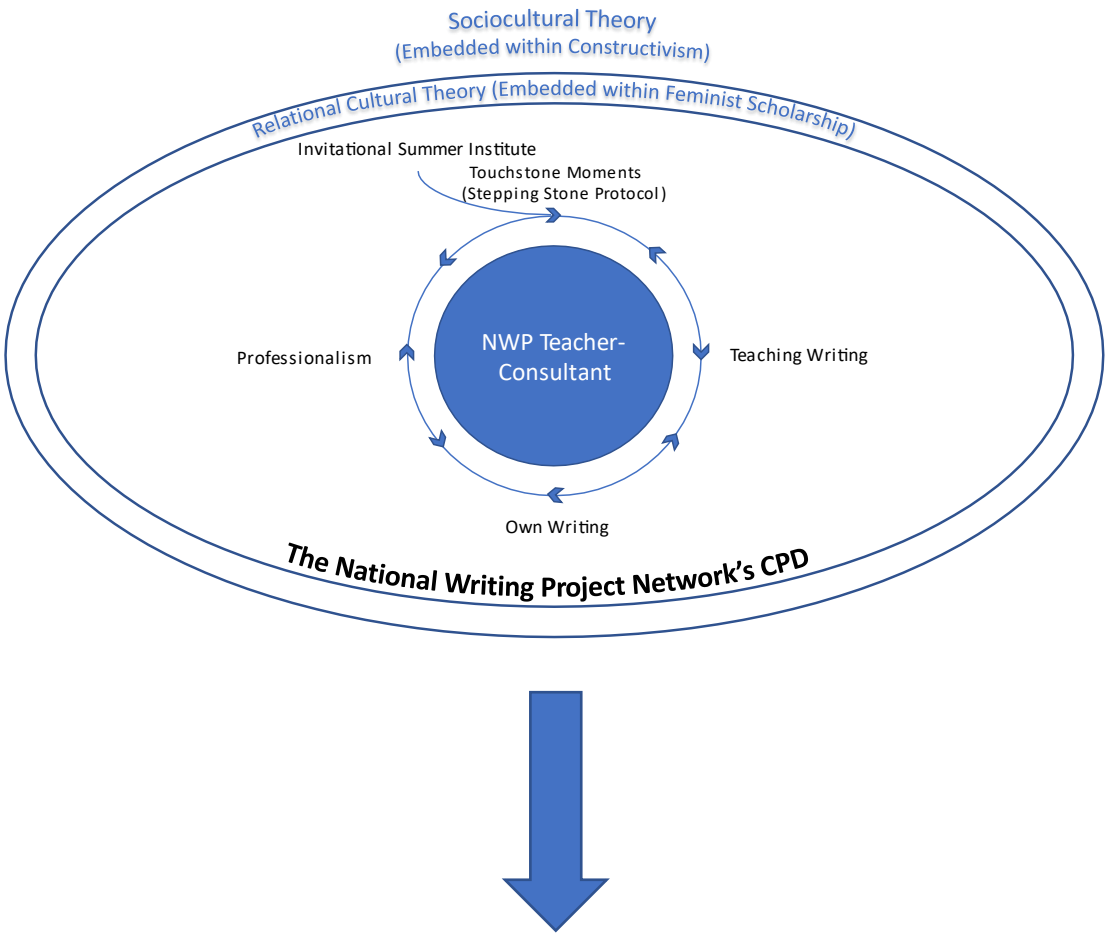
Appendix A

NWP Invitational Summer Institute (ISI)
Theory of Change



Appendix B

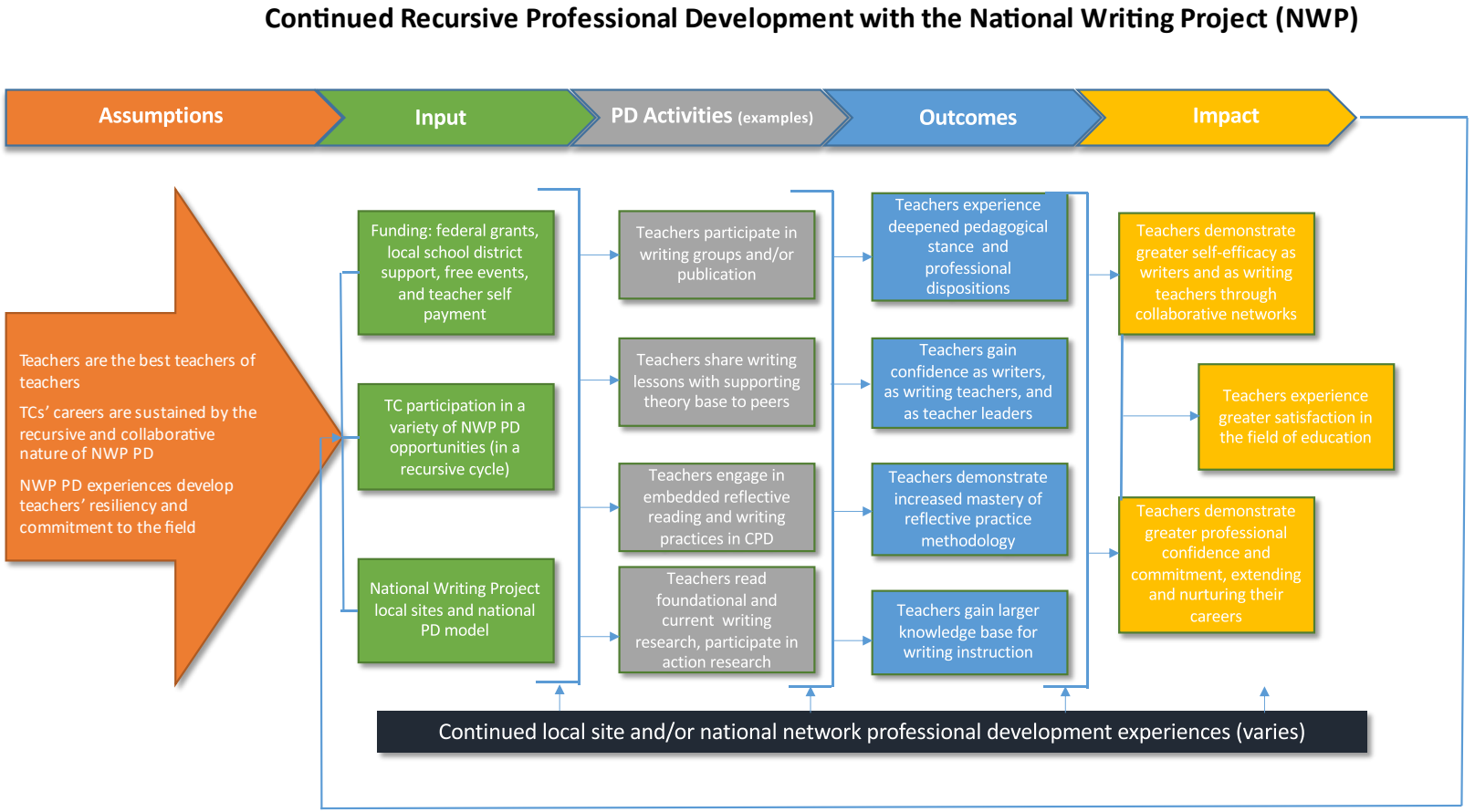
Conceptual Framework
The National Writing Project as Recursive CPD



Career Satisfaction

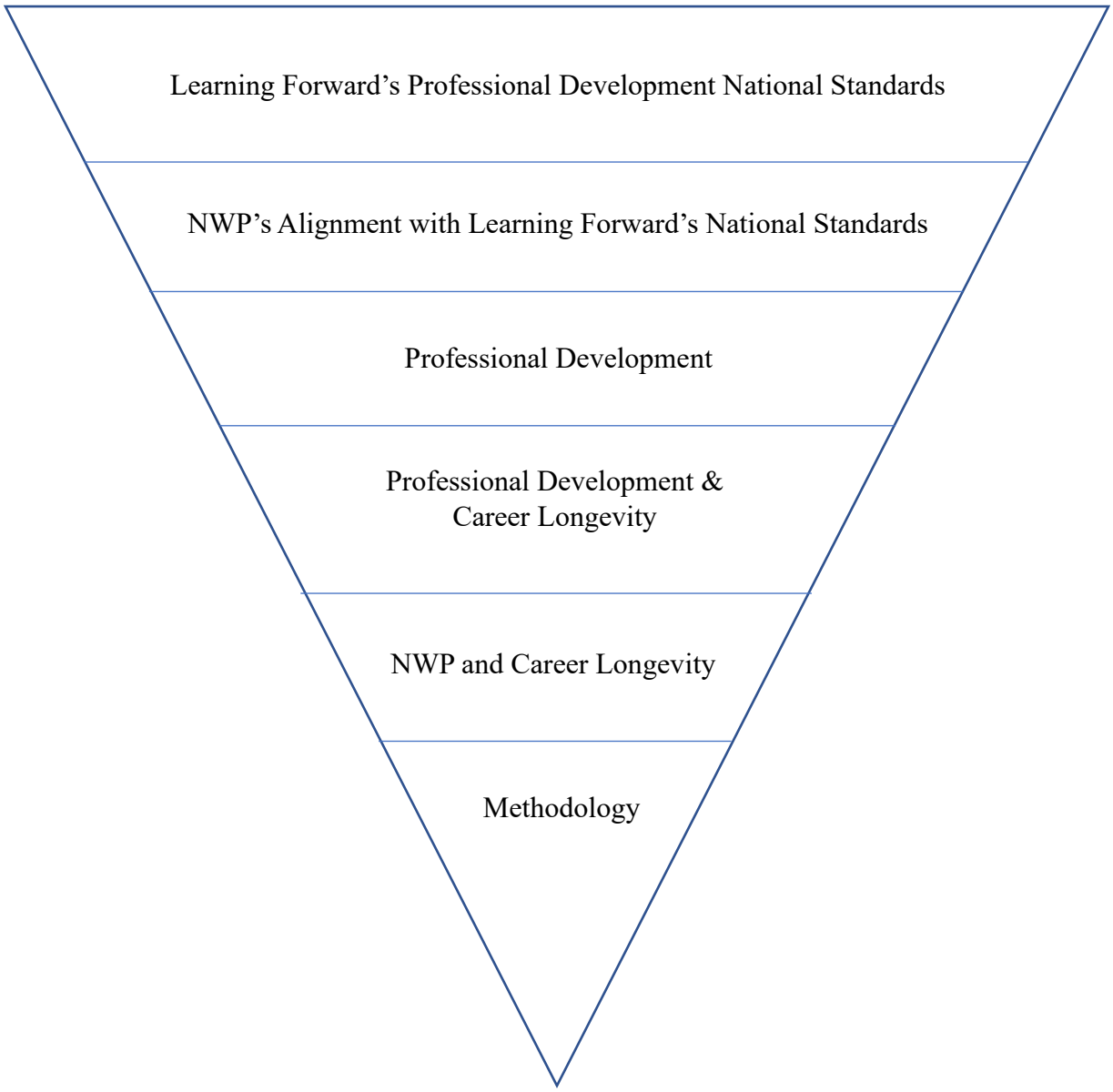
Appendix C

Logic Model



Appendix D

Literature Review Overview



Appendix E

Literature Review Notes

Learning Forward

Standards for Professional Learning

"Standards for Professional Learning outline the characteristics of professional learning that leads to effective teaching practices, supportive leadership, and improved student results. Learning Forward is the only association focused solely on the most critical lever in improving schools—building the knowledge and skills of educators. Through the Standards for Professional Learning, Learning Forward leads the field in understanding what links professional learning to improved student achievement. We assist classroom, school, and system leaders in solving their toughest problems of practice. Learning Forward members experience practical learning opportunities, receive timely publications, and connect to like-minded educators from around the world." From website https://learningforward.org/standards-for-professional-learning (look up how to cite this on Purdue OWL; THESE ARE PRELIMINARY NOTES, MAY WANT TO GO BACK TO AFTER SPECIFIC LITERATURE REVIEW TO SEE WHAT RESONATES DIFFERENTLY, be sure to check out the many articles that are put at the end of each section…to follow-up on)

Learning Forward was formerly called the National Standards Development Council, changed name in 2010—had international members and wanted to put a broader scope on their work. Professional Learning association. Under each are my thoughts after I read about each one on the website (and any connections I make to NWP)

Standards: The following is straight from the website (cut and pasted). Under each description are my thoughts after I read about each one on the website and any connections I make to NWP:

Learning Communities

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.

> *NWP does this and has been since its inception, before the term PLCs existed. I consider the NWP the original PLC. The website details the points under the main headings her (continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment). See website for specifics under each one of these standards as needed. One the authors cited in this section is Ann Lieberman who has written extensively about the NWP.

Resources

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.

“Resources for professional learning include staff, materials, technology, and time, all dependent on available funding. How these resources are prioritized to align with identified professional learning needs affects access to, quality of, and effectiveness of educator learning experiences. Decisions about resources for professional learning require a thorough understanding of student and educator learning needs, clear

commitment to ensure equity in resource allocation, and thoughtful consideration of priorities to achieve the intended outcomes for students and educators."

> *Look at where NWP is now. Used to be federally funded (at least partially). Has lost (all?) federal funding. Working under grants/supports from school systems. Commitment to this network is so strong that it continues on even in the current political climate. Could this study impress upon readers (school leadership) that partnering with on-going NWP professional development with local sites could benefit teachers/instruction? Why reinvent the wheel with PD when local sites have this already designed and are ready to serve? School systems could use their funds for open institutes, to send or help fund fellows to go to ISI, have presenters come in, send teachers to local site conferences, promote NWP programming in order to give area teachers a professional home for sustaining careers, contracting for courses (as NVWP did), etc—improving teacher retention (?). teacher satisfaction, instruction, agency…etc. (could this be a recommendation from the study?)

Learning Designs

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.

"Cognitive psychologists, neuroscientists, and educators have studied how learning occurs for nearly a century. The resulting theories, research, and models of human

learning shape the underlying framework and assumptions educators use to plan and design professional learning. While multiple designs exist, many have common features, such as active engagement, modeling, reflection, metacognition, application, feedback, ongoing support, and formative and summative assessment, that support change in knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practice."

"Educators are responsible for taking an active role in selecting and constructing learning designs that facilitate their own and others' learning. They choose appropriate learning designs to achieve their individual, team, or school goals. Educators' learning characteristics and preferences also inform decisions about learning designs. Learners' backgrounds, experiences, beliefs, motivation, interests, cognitive processes, professional identity, and commitment to school and school system goals affect how educators' approach professional learning and the effectiveness of various learning designs. Decisions about learning designs consider all phases of the learning process, from knowledge and skill acquisition to application, reflection, refinement, assessment, and evaluation. Learning designers consider how to build knowledge, develop skills, transform practice, challenge attitudes and beliefs, and inspire action."

> *Ways this relates to NWP study. Learning models of human learning. Different for adults. Include adult learning theory in my project? In my conceptual framework? The piece here about common features: all are found in NWP. Not true of all school-based PD. Another possible frame here: change in knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practice.

*The second chosen paragraph above highlights the role of the teacher in his/her own active role in PD. So…here is the sticky wicket. The NWP is voluntary and that makes all the difference. How do we get the buy in at schools? The NVWP would only be hired if there was at least a choice of presentations presented to the faculty. The workshops may be mandated, but the teachers at least got to choose sessions. It is a what I called a 'controlled choice' PD model. Better that all teachers seek out and want to be a part of the NWP or other PD, but perhaps a way to get teachers to pursue their own professional learning? How to get teachers to be motivated? How to get teachers to actively engage in their professional learning? At the least, it takes time to build the trust it takes for on-going PD. Also, must be practical and they must see relevance. Is there research around adult learning theory that can support these ideas? See notes on the site about active engagement—all true, but I think a lot of this has to do with the presenter(s) providing the PD. I think the magic of the NWP is the belief from the beginning that the experts are all the people in the room. The director and the co-director(s) are just more experienced participants because they have attended an ISI before but they are continuing to learn and professionalism is the key element. All are PD receivers; all are PD providers. The main difference between NWP PD and all other PD and maybe that is what makes all the difference as far as buy in goes.

Outcomes

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

“Teacher standards specify what teachers need to know and do to deliver on the promise of an effective, equitable education for every student. Typical areas included in teacher standards are knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to content knowledge; pedagogy; pedagogical content knowledge; assessment; understanding how students learn; understanding how students’ cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development influences their learning; engaging students with diverse cultures, language, gender, socioeconomic conditions, and exceptionalities; engaging families and communities in student learning; creating learning environments; professional growth and development; and professional collaboration”

Three areas broken down: Meet performance standards, address learning outcomes, build coherence

*NWP honors teachers’ knowledge as well as their ability to share what they know and how they know it. Demonstration lessons often revolve around equity for students. All the above characteristics in the paragraph taken from this standard are shared by teacher professionals with other teacher professionals. Standards are addressed through the needs of the participants. Research is read and discussed together.

Leadership

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students requires skillful leaders who develop capacity, advocate, and create support systems for professional learning.

“As advocates for professional learning, leaders make their own career-long learning visible to others. They participate in professional learning within and beyond their own

work environment. Leaders consume information in multiple fields to enhance their leadership practice. Through learning, they clarify their values and beliefs and their influence on others and on the achievement of organizational goals. Their actions model attitudes and behavior they expect of all educators."

*There is much in this section on leadership that resonates with the NWP. The above paragraph best describes the work of the NWP as it advocates for and develops professional development providers in its ISI and continues to develop TCs throughout their career (this has been studied in research…NWP creates teacher leaders; my study is about how…I can see that I am zooming in on teacher learning and learning to lead/become a PD provider. I want to show how TCs "make their own career-long learning visible to others" through their narrative stories of long-term involvement with the NWP.

Data

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students uses a variety of sources and types of student, educator, and system data to plan, assess, and evaluate professional learning.

"Knowing student learning needs guides decisions about educator professional learning, yet student data alone are insufficient. A comprehensive understanding of educator learning needs is essential to planning meaningful professional learning. Sample data to consider for identifying goals for educator learning include preparation information,

performance on various assessments, educator perceptions, classroom or work performance, student results, and individual professional learning goals."

"Those responsible for professional learning implement and maintain standards for professional learning and use the standards to monitor, assess, and evaluate it. Well-designed evaluation of professional learning provides information needed to increase its quality and effectiveness. Evaluation of professional learning also provides useful information for those who advocate for professional learning; those responsible for engaging in, planning, facilitating, or supporting professional learning; and those who want to know about the contribution of professional learning to student achievement."

> *See the important part that the NWP can address in this standard in blue. Also, NWP TCs often use student work in their demonstration lesson and evaluate it as data along with sharing the data, both formative and summative, from action research in their classrooms. The NWP advocates for professional learning, but also provides the avenues for people to become professional development experts.

Implementation

Professional learning that increases educator effectiveness and results for all students applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change.

"The primary goals for professional learning are changes in educator practice and increases in student learning. This is a process that occurs over time and requires support

for implementation to embed the new learning into practices. Those responsible for professional learning apply findings from change process research to support long-term change in practice by extending learning over time. They integrate a variety of supports for individuals, teams, and schools. Finally, they integrate constructive feedback and reflection to support continuous improvement in practice that allows educators to move along a continuum from novice to expert through application of their professional learning."

> *There was an interesting section on the website that talked about the need for a three to five-year time period to implement something into practice. That is another way the NWP sustains teacher development as TCs return again and again for PD, their work is reinforced. Process occurs over time…NWP supports that process. As for as "constructive feedback and reflection"—these are the cornerstones of NWP teacher professional development.

Questions:

*Is Learning Forward a network like NWP? Hmmm…actually says it is a company and it costs $1600 to become a member?

*I take issue with wording above— "is the only association focused on the most critical lever…" many associations, including the NWP, do this work.

*Most important, how do I use these standards (or just one?) to frame my work on the NWP? Also, look at NWP website to see what they use to frame their work. What are the

stated missions/standards of the NWP and how do these align/map onto/differ from the PD national standards?

Used the larger list of more detailed questions from comprehensive questions document to flesh out some of the most foundational/meta-analysis articles/large literature reviews.

For all other articles, highlight quotes that may be useful. Also highlight articles in reference list to pursue for "breadcrumb" research. Check the top when read and notate on top of each article the following and keep on a chart (see separate document):

Method:

Brief Description/Claim:

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used:

Key Findings:

What stood out to me:

Relates to my work:

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search)

Overall Literature Reviews/Meta-analyses

(Purpose is to get PD national standards, themes that are being investigated in literature around PD, answer the questions—how are researchers defining PD, how

are researchers looking at PD and relevance to my study: is there lit about teachers' experiences/role/voices—a deep telling—in (successful) PD?

(McChesney & Aldridge, 2019)

Methods: Literature review (didn't give details of search), from "teacher professional development" and "literature review" search—just 2019

Brief Description/Claim: Practitioner-led PD in schools is not being evaluated for impacts; not been "substantial…in scope…or conducted" (p. 317) and practical and psychological barriers in way (more finding on p. 312). Believe that quality of PD varies and there is a need for evaluation. They addressed claim but sometimes downplayed the complexity of schools' contexts and PD overlaps.

Theoretical/Conceptual FW: best practices/benchmark framework, number of evaluation frameworks have been presented as seem as—features of PD activity, contextual and strategic elements associated with PD, impacts of PD. They discredit first two and land on impacts as the most important to evaluate.

Key Findings: psychological and practical barriers to practitioner-based evaluation exist, their "review has shown that theoretical recommendations for evaluating teacher professional development are, in many cases, not reflected in the routine school-based evaluation of professional development" (p. 316). Call for a change and a possible evaluation tool to address disconnect from PD theory and evaluation practices.

What stood out to me: A bit of disregard for teachers' voices—doesn't talk about action research/practitioner research; makes some claims about needing a "generic tool" for

evaluating PD impact, but then says it is complex…says it honors teacher knowledge, but then wants to regulate with a tool.

Relation to my study: Researchers looking at PD in terms of evaluation and (murky) concept of outcomes, researchers defining PD as only outcomes and impacts without defining what they value explicitly as outcomes (p. 308), say teachers' voices are important, but then disregard? They did not discuss teachers' experiences in PD. Relates to my study in that it would deeply listen to teachers' voices and stories and honor their professional knowledge (if we would listen), honors their professionalism while elevating it.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): evaluation (maybe)

(Kennedy A. , 2005)

Method: Literature Review, from breadcrumbs

Brief Description/Claim: Trying to fill a need for CPD (Continuing PD) models in a comparative manner, proposing a Framework to do so (9 models)

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Ideas from autonomy and transformative practice and forms of knowledge from models. Interprets power relationships evident in the models.

Key Findings: Created a framework for comparing and analyzing CPD policies and practices (p. 247). Provides 5 questions for analysis. Makes a connection between teacher autonomy and

What stood out to me: Interesting section on how professional knowledge is acquired (academic context, institutional discussion of policy and practice, and practice p. 236). Love this quote from Nieto (2003)—"she claims that teacher education 'needs to shift from a focus on questions of 'what' and 'how' to also consider questions of 'why'" (p. 395 – Nieto). Find this. Is NWP an answer to why?

Relates to my work: Models may help me to categorize what NWP is and is not in regards to models. Utilize CPD a search term? This is an article to return to…the chart on p 248—models of CPD/Purposes of model. Identifies where NWP fits in the spectrum and may help to highlight what is needed/preferred in PD—teachers' voices? Makes an argument for increased professional autonomy. Important to my work and my study's intent to demonstrate the importance of teachers' voices and choices and also professionalism as it relates to increased autonomy.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): CPD, teacher autonomy, models of CPD/PD

(Parkland, Lu, & Massaro, 2019)

(This is the article Pat gave me as a starting point—first article read and notated. Have gone to an abbreviated notetaking for overall literature reviews. May need to go back to these details when looking at defined article set.)

1. Are there a set of national standards that guide and frame essential components of PD supported by teacher longevity in the field?

-

2. Does it matter which type of PD is provided to teachers who stay in the profession?

- This article says: "…the nascent state of the empirical research on ME PD"—nascent means just beginning/full of potential. Can the same be said for PD research in general? Read on…If so, could I use this as a foregrounding for my study and methodology.
- *** Important: "Many challenges faced by the PD providers in these studies are common across all types of PD, whether focused on ME or not. For instance, programs of all types have to compete against the many other initiatives faced by teachers and have to be compelling enough that teachers are willing to change their current practices (Desimone, 2009; m. Kennedy, 2016). —The NWP doesn't have a set curriculum for its PD—more about teacher development than professional development…the difference that keeps teachers coming back?

3. How does the PD that emerges as impactful align with the components of the NWP curriculum?

- p 419….other PD practices that align with NWP: "content focus, active learning, coherence, and collective participation each had a positive influence on teachers' learning" (Garet, et. al)—these align with NWP practices.
- Things for me to think about that surfaced—teacher/facilitator relationship, teacher reflection (key in NWP), how NWP learning transferred into the classroom practices, and "how teacher motivation mediates professional growth" p 420
- Model type: Is this a good construct for my research? Kennedy (2005)—9 types of PD programming: "training, standards-based, deficit, award-bearing, cascade,

coaching/mentoring, community of practice (CoP), action research, and transformative." P. 423. NWP has been studied as transformative and CoP, but I think it is a combination of these and more of a culture of thinking…(culture of thinking is my term. Something to consider for Conceptual FW?), seems like authors had some issues trying to classify the PD they read about in this way…

- Important: they coded for voluntary vs. mandatory: "Finally, we coded for whether the PD was mandatory or voluntary, noting M. Kennedy's argument that studies of mandatory PD may produce lower impact given that voluntary participants are more likely to be motivated to learn" (p. 424)
- Article references (hinges on) Kennedy 2016 article—must read. Information/quotes on importance of facilitator is key. Seems that this is a bit of a gap in the lit (NWP does a good job in developing facilitators…teachers teaching teachers…)
- Article cited Blank and de las Alas (2009) as seeing impact on student achievement from components such as—"a focus on both subject matter and pedagogical strategies for teaching it, a duration of at least 6 months, and 'follow-up reinforcement of learning, assistance with implementation, and support for teachers from mentors and colleagues in their schools.'" (p. 418)
    - This aligns with key components of NWP PD, but I think the difference may be that teachers develop a view of themselves as leaders/experts themselves….that confidence grows as they provide PD to others, they are also developing professionally….

4. What types of research methodologies (i.e. qualitative vs quantitative) have been applied about supporting knowledge about impactful PD in terms of career longevity?

- Meta-ethnographic, systemic lit review, 40 articles…not in terms of longevity
- Looking at "forms and features of such programs that contribute to teachers' self-efficacy and success in working with culturally diverse students" (416)
- Not sure what "meta-ethnographic" means here…not looking for "salient themes"
- Look at Table 1 on page 421—helpful in how to do a lit review search terms.
- ***This article is very helpful in explaining the steps they took in doing their lit review…can use it as a model!
- They "situate" the study in PD Frameworks and Multicultural Education
    - THIS IS KEY: How do I situate my study within the lit on PD and NWP? Look at how authors do this as I continue to read. They define broad PD!

5. What in the research base relates to PD as grounded in Co-Constructivism and Social-Cultural Theory which you have shown to align with the approaches of the NWP? This knowledge will serve to ground your theoretical framework and research design.

More Specifics:

1. How do the articles conceptualize the impact of professional development on teacher career longevity? (i.e. These articles will support the need for the type of research you are proposing, especially regarding the current issues of teacher retention and lack of respect for teachers)

2. How do the articles support the research about the NWP's professional development components and impact on career longevity? (i.e. This part of your review should help you make the case for the type of research you are proposing – "to look at something that is working.")
    - "too much variation across types of programs studied and outcomes analyzed to draw conclusions about factors" (416); difficult because they were studying different kinds of PD structures and even qual and quant methods were different, looking at different things…hard to compare when so much variations, different grade levels.
    - Important to my study b/c maybe we should look more in-depth at one functioning and successful PD program to fully and deeply analyze what is working…NWP. What can be gained from deep investigation of one established program?
3. How do the articles assist you in sorting out the appropriate methodology for addressing your question? (i.e. narrative vs. portraiture; your epistemological stance; your theoretical viewpoint about your approach to data analysis; and the conceptual frame you are bringing to this study based on the key constructs that inform your proposed research)
        - Hard to compare all the variations of PD (like apples to oranges especially when looking at different contents, age groups, types of PD) so…what about a deep look at one functioning PD that gets more to the heart of the way

teachers see productive PD over their career spans? More useful to PD providers to consider culture of PD? What do teachers need?

- Liked the part of this article that outlines "pedagogies to foster teacher learning"…p 426, a way to think about not knowledge, but the enactment of new skills in the classroom.
- Look at Table 2 – divided impacts by articles that addressed them…although lit review focused on Multicultural Ed, some of the articles could benefit me for looking at PD structures/approaches.
- Like word "nuanced"—wouldn't a narrative inquiry provide that?

As you read and explore the above questions, be sure to cover the specifics regarding the methodologies used to address the research focus for your study. What is the nature of studies in terms of sample size, methodology, validity and reliability or qualitative assurances of the trustworthiness of the findings associated with selected studies (both from the NWP and selected key studies you deem appropriate to acknowledge in your review that show impact on teacher longevity)?

OTHER: Although this article is about multicultural education PD (and not related to longevity), highlights trends in PD being offered such as culturally relevant pedagogy, culturally responsive teaching, and culturally sustaining pedagogy (p. 417).

Authors make argument that inequities in schools is one of the main reasons for "the need for teachers to have the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and supports needed to ensure success for *all* of their students" (p. 417). Make the argument that teachers need PD around these ideas in induction and throughout careers (p. 417). Call research on such programming as "scarce." (p. 417). Authors looking at "patterns …activities, aims, content, duration, and other features." (p. 417) as well as impacts of those PD structures… did 40 article lit review + one book.

**MUST READ both of the following: Desimone (2009) and Kennedy (2016), later study built upon first one. Desimone has five features of framework for studying the quality of PD: "content focus, active learning, coherence, duration, and collective participation" (p. 419) and then Kennedy followed up and "suggested that researchers have thus far paid too little attention to the relationships between PD facilitators and their participants, as well as teachers' desire for concrete strategies with well-developed rationales – as opposed to prescriptive directives or general content knowledge with no guidance of how to apply it" (p. 419). "She also found that when teachers willingly participate and are treated as equals to researchers/facilitators, they are more motivated and active in the PD, even when the content was prescriptive" (p. 419). THESE ARE NWP TENENTS. Article also says more research is needed to "know more about the practices that PD providers can use to build trust and create an atmosphere encouraging self-reflection, vulnerability, and openness" (p 448). This is what occurs in NWP. Study it? Part of why people come back to the "well?"

Terms: Practitioner Growth

(Imants & Van der Wal, A model of teacher agency in professional development and school reform, 2019)

Method: Literature review (gives a good idea of how they approached it), from "Teacher Professional Development" and "literature review"—just 2019

Brief Description/Claim: created a "model to analyze/view PD and school reform from teacher agency perspective"—5 parts explored, then used model to do a lit review of 36 articles that shared teacher agency as a theme to see if model was a useful analytical tool.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Characteristics of teacher agency related to PD and school reform

Key Findings: five elements of teacher agency as it relates to PD/school reform were helpful to integrate in a model, analysis of literature showed it "is a useful tool to analyze research on teacher agency, professional development and school reform in a comparable way" (p. 11), and found that "the analysis showed that research on teacher agency varies in how these five characteristics are elaborated" (p. 1).

What stood out to me: Models of PD in the lit review for the lit review may be worth looking into (general PD) on p. 2, made a statement that the models developed around teacher agency in the last few decades do not position teacher agency in the context of PD/school reform. So…think about teacher agency as part of NWP PD (over time)? Could use the model presented here as a theoretical frame if I want to look at teacher agency exclusively. Don't think so…

Relates to my work: See above.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): teacher agency, maybe…the difference between teacher growth and teacher development…

(Kennedy M. , 2016)

Method: Literature Review of 28 studies, breadcrumb article

Brief Description/Claim: State that PD reviewers look at design features, but not the underlying premises about teaching and teacher learning. Need to look at it from a problems of practice perspective as well as "underlying theories of action."

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Looking at the research around "PD theories of action"—main ideas and how to help teachers enact those ideas

Key Findings: Represented graphically, not statistically since studies varied, author found that some "popular design features" were not associated with program effectiveness and "pedagogies used to facilitate enactment differ in effectiveness."

What stood out to me: I like the frame of problems of practice used and the discussion section (reread!) raises issues about need more research about teacher learning NOT aspects of PD

Relates to my work: See the discussion section! Some strong support here for a focus on teacher learning, motivation, how teachers learn and grow versus just looking at models/aspects of PD. Also, some interesting call out for looking at how PD providers are trained/effective…NWP basically "trains" (hate that word) PD providers not just in content, strategies, model, but in HOW to be an effective PD provider. May need to be part of the work…

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): enactment, teacher learning, problems of practice

(Capps, Crawford, & Constas, 2012)

Method: Literature Review (targeted critical reviews), breadcrumb article

Brief Description/Claim: Literature review of inquiry-based teaching and learning and Science PD, nature of PD programs trying to instruct on inquiry, critique the features of the programs.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Inquiry in science surrounded by constructivist views

Key Findings: General alignment with recommended features of effective PD with some exceptions—no study reviewed show all desired outcomes from inquiry-based PD.

What stood out to me: "features" approach to PD evaluation—not what I want to do, but is something that I could build upon. This article seemed especially down on "teacher self-report" …narrative different from this, but something to consider as I proceed.

Relates to my work: All the critical elements described here (and not all represented in any one PD format reviewed) all exist in NWP PD, best practices of PD are reflected in the NWP, some definitions in this article could be helpful to my study.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): PD features, self-report

(Mansfield C. , Beltman, Broadley, & Weatherby-Fell, 2016)

Method: Literature Review (to create a framework), terms used “teacher PD” and “career longevity”

Brief Description/Claim: Reviewing literature (15 years) identifying key factors of teacher resilience leads to creating an evidence-based framework for building resilience in pre-service teacher education. Reason for the review and framework is the literature points to resilience as a factor in teacher retention (crisis), undercurrent in the article that teaching is a tough profession in need of resilient educators. Says that “Research highlights the importance of resilience in teacher quality (Day & Gu, 2014), yet often teacher resilience and wellbeing do not feature in such reforms” (p 78). Referring to standards for teaching and teacher education.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Resilience theory to build a framework

Key Findings: The review of the literature found 51 resilience factors found in four categories (see table 1)—personal resources, contextual resources, strategies, and outcomes. They then designed a framework based on the literature on four key themes – relationships, wellbeing, motivation, and emotions—connected these themes to the literature. Then gave implementation ideas for pre-service education.

What stood out to me: My personal response to the work resilience is a negative one as it relates to teaching, sounds like we have to overcome, I know teaching is a tough career, but this frame feels like more negativity to me about the profession…prefer the positive psychology movement work on happiness. Interests me a lot (in my personal reading as well)

Relates to my work: Really good quotes that relate to my work with NWP on page 81 in reference to ongoing professional learning, professional communities. Questions bubbled up for me: Does the NWP promote resiliency in teachers? Over time? Over careers? Is this part of sustaining? Do I need to investigate, read more about resiliency theory? Use this theory in my work?

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): Resilience, resilience theory, burnout, teacher stress

(Dunst, Bruder, & Hamby, 2015)

Method: Metasynthesis of 15 research reviews (Lit review of lit reviews…550 studies represented)

Brief Description/Claim: Metasynthesis of 15 reviews compiled core features of teacher PD for in-service teachers, there is agreement in the articles of the "what" and the "how long" of core PD features/length (not one-shot), calls for more study on student outcomes…

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Replication logic and reviewer agreement

Key Findings: "Taken together, the metasynthesis indicated that in-service professional development was effective when it included most of the key characteristics and core features described in Table 2, was of sufficient duration and intensity, and included extended follow-up supports and opportunities to reinforce the use of content knowledge or practice" (p. 1737).

What stood out to me: p. 1742: reasons narrative would be good? Support for finding out the whys and hows behind these components. This metanalysis has great summarization charts.

Relates to my work: Good place to start as it compiles a LOT here, good foundational piece. Also, NWP has all of these research-supported qualities, but the why and the how is needed. In-depth narrative work would be able to supply this.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): maybe look at "teacher change," and "metasynthesis"

(Han & Yin, 2016)

Method: Literature Review (of motivation studies)

Brief Description/Claim: 5 research areas discovered—"influencing factors of teacher motivation; teacher motivation and teaching effectiveness; teacher motivation and student motivation; teacher motivation across different disciplines; and the instruments for assessing teacher motivation" (p. 1), authors assert many approaches to explain motivation has left field with "no agreement on generally applicable motivation theories on teacher motivation" (p. 12).

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Created a 5-area framework from the reviews, paper also includes a variety of motivation theories discussed throughout

Key Findings: There is much to still be studied yet the authors feel there is overdependence on surveys when studying motivation and make the argument that richer interpretation is needed.

What stood out to me: The article was a bit difficult to read—organizationally. Tough to find the cogent points.

Relates to my work: Authors seem to think complexity has been ignored a bit with all the quantitative measures of motivation. This could be helpful as a way for me to uphold narrative inquiry. Also, good breadcrumb articles to pursue if needing works on motivation research. Should motivation research be part of my proposal lit review?

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): to pursue…teacher motivation and narrative inquiry and career longevity?

(Roesken-Winter, Hoyles, & Blomeke, 2015)

Method: Literature Review (a "survey" review of what will be in the rest of the volume)

Brief Description/Claim: Scaling up PD is tough to do (specifically in reference to math PD) and needs to consider teacher learning aspects, CPD frameworks, how to spread CPD effectively is a need

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Literature/developments in CPD, evidence-based CPD (conceptualizing)

Key Findings: CPD needs to take teacher learning (what we know) seriously. CPD definitions vary—large scale CPD is tricky (and fleeting, many initiatives)—need research to show evidence and honor teachers' voices/investment

What stood out to me: mention of teacher networks

Relates to my work: See definitions of CPD—very helpful, much of what is described as needed for large scale CPD is done by NWP (PLCs, large scale, honors teachers' knowledge, efficacy, etc.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): CPD, efficacy (shows up again…)

Specific Studies

(Le Cornu, 2009)

Method: Review of studies—surveys of 2 pre-service cohorts' experiences, self-studies of profs (embedded in literature), from search "teacher professional development" and "career longevity"

Brief Description/Claim: Examines the role of pre-service teacher practicum work in building resilience focuses on the learning communities model. Claims it works for doing so.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Relational Resilience model (components of mutuality, empowerment, and courage development)

Key Findings: Survey data/self-studies along with literature support the idea that learning communities in pre-service PD builds resilience capacity that is needed in our field (attrition). "…been suggested in this article that professional experiences courses framed around learning communities, provide a most effective vehicle for building this capacity" (of resilience) (p. 722).

What stood out to me: Not sure of how the research was done, numbers of participants…etc. Although the chosen quotes fit in the relational resilience model, I am not sure it provides enough detail on how this assures resilience is being developed. Shows examples of their statements that fit into the categories, but I guess you would have to buy into the theory first and I am not sure there is enough context provided for the theory or the study. Also, this article is about pre-service educators NOT in-service (like NWP)

Relates to my work: May want to investigate the relational resilience as a useful framework for NWP work (I do think this is in the work NWP does…). Also, some good quotes in this article about social constructivism and connection to learning communities. NWP is a leaning community.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): investigate relational resilience? Learning communities.

(Doney, 2013)

Method: 2-year qualitative study of 4 science teachers, interpretive case study with cross-case analysis

Brief Description/Claim: The study of 4 novice science teachers over two years to understand how and why some stay and some leave the field of teaching as it relates to resilience

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: resilience framework (based on resilience theory and relational culture theory)

Key Findings: Interaction between stressors and protective factors creates a resilience process that changes over time, counteracts negative stress effects, resilience not an innate personality trait, but a process for the positive adaption to adversity, protective findings use of individual skills; creating support systems

What stood out to me: Clearly written, conceptual fw drawing helpful to show process (look at it as I am trying to draw mine…)

Relates to my work: How to form good "how" questions, a positive framing of resilience for sustaining/teacher retention, possible theories for me to use—resilience and relational culture theory, methods like the ones I want to use (interviews, prompts, etc).

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): RCT, Relational Culture Theory…maybe

(Mansfield C. F., Beltman, Price, & McConney, 2012)

Method: Survey data coded (qualitative)

Brief Description/Claim: Surveyed 200 graduating and early career teachers on how they perceive/define resilient teachers and from the responses created a four-dimensional FW for resiliency

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Resilience theory, then created their own conceptual framework

Key Findings: Found 23 aspects using the "in vivo" codes, demonstrated the complexity of the construct of resilience, created 4-dimensional framework and demonstrated (in their opinion) a need for resilience instruction in pre-service education

What stood out to me: Weirdness of asking novices about resilience, I wonder why not ask resilient and long-term career teachers about it instead, also found (in lit and in this study) a connection between resiliency and context, this is an issue that needs to be addressed as the NWP is a "place" to go…not a specific context.

Relates to my work: I am wondering about the "negativity bias" I see in these articles, also not listening to more veteran teachers?, weird perspective on resiliency?, why not support resiliency not teach it? This is what I think national networks do...especially the NWP. I need to decide on resiliency and if it is a frame for my study…many created frameworks here.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): feel like I need clear definitions to use on resiliency, self-efficacy, and agency.

(Smethem, 2007)

Method: 4-year study, analysis of qualitative data (general interpretive?), using initial survey, journal reflections, and semi-structured interviews

Brief Description/Claim: The teaching force is having a change in "demography" as the profession undergoes increasing accountability. Looks at "career trajectory" and what may be impacting teachers' trajectories. Claims that induction is critical to keeping teachers and that "professional satisfaction" (one of the key reasons people leave the field) needs to consider the 'moral purpose' underlying teaching as well as unreasonable and increasing workloads.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: used a backdrop of retention studies to create a conceptual framework of "career," "classroom," and "portfolio" teachers

Key Findings: Suggests a "typography of teacher (see above) with different commitments to teaching, results support idea that induction is necessary to retention, too much is being asked of teacher…increasing challenges, multiple initiatives burning teachers out….so induction support with a focus on belief is important to retaining

What stood out to me: The conclusion (see implications) that belief and support in belief (is this agency? Self-efficacy?) is what sustains a career. A need to focus on that in early as well as late years…I wonder if it would change some "portfolio" teachers in to classroom or career teachers…

Relates to my work: values and belief supports in NWP (Agency? Efficacy?); ways of dealing with initiative overload found in Project association? A way to keep

belief/passion central to work? See implications section as it helps support NARRATIVE as a method to use.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search)

(Raider-Roth, Stieha, & Hensley, 2012)

Method: Action research/inquiry (with narrative representation?)/Utilized a three-time listening protocol for analysis

Brief Description/Claim: 1-week teacher institute (Jewish texts) to investigate moments of disconnection and the opportunities in such moments for reconnection—reconnection as an "act of resilience." The interaction between resistance and resilience is the focus. How this relates to PD and specific methodology to be used by providers in PD is presented (instructional moves).

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Hawkings' "I, Thou, It" framework, Relational Cultural Theory, and Relational Psychology

Key Findings: "Rupture and repair are cyclical" involving both resistance and resilience, important for teachers in PD to have a place to voice resistance in order to repair and develop resilience

What stood out to me: Specific recommendations for PD providers to use an inquiry stance and specific instructional "moves" provided to recognize disconnection and resistance and move to repair and resilience

Relates to my work: Veteran teachers' learning investigated, Inquiry stance is shared in NWP, Relational learning, maybe the way narrative was used here, Also, are there moments of resistance in NWP PD that help teachers to move on to resilience?

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): resistance? Resilience, some mention in this article of transformational learning

(Hadar & Brody, 2018)

Method: general interpretive with grounded theory as a data analysis approach: semi-structured interviews, audio recordings, reflective writings, attendance records, documentation of teaching and learning

Brief Description/Claim: PLCs used as an "in-house" method at a university when working with teacher educators is successful at integrating learning and work and is helpful in promoting innovation and collective responsibility

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Lit on professional learning of teacher educators, PLCS and socio-cultural theory (Lave and Wenger)

Key Findings: PLCs of the "in-house" nature increased personal and professional learning of the teacher educators involved, increased their satisfaction, resilience, sense of belonging and professional commitment, break isolation, created an integrated university feeling, promoted innovation, and increased understanding of the student overall experience, gave all a sense of collection responsibility.

What stood out to me: Many of the characteristics and findings mentioned here resonate with how the NWP PLCs work.

Relates to my work: Theory base and breadcrumb articles can be useful, use of the reflective writing is one of the same methods I want to use, this article is about teacher educator PLCs, and the NWP creates PD providers… an angle to consider?

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): consider Lave and Wenger work, breadcrumb articles on both theory and teacher educators (which many NWP TCs become)

(Keegan, 2019)

Method: Action Research, Self-Study (calls is a case study, too?)

Brief Description/Claim: PE teacher did AR self-study to determine if AR was effective CPD. Found it could be used in this way for CPD, but called for it to be married with collaboration and to be more supported.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: AR compared to what has been found to be CPD literature components that work, AR practice in the context of social-constructivism and Schon's "reflection in and on action"

Key Findings: She became more reflective, students' participation increased, she developed "professional disposition," changed in both practice and beliefs

What stood out to me: systematic approach to AR and self-study, closely aligns to NWP PD components

Relates to my work: Look at Hunsicker work? Schon work? NWP a larger PLC to support AR? P. 127 an argument for narrative study? Good definition of PD on p 113 by Day.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): AR as CPD? Should action research or practitioner research/inquiry.

(Louws, Meirink, van Veen, & van Driel, 2017)

Method: Quantitative, questionnaire (convenience sampling); descriptive statistics, multiple regression analysis

Brief Description/Claim: Authors believe self-directed learning may change in "what, how, why" framework at different career stages and that stage of career would and should impact PD structures presented to teachers

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: "how, what, why" framework looked at from PD/Self-directed learning literature and adult learning theories (Knowles—who I have looked at before…), also theory of self-determination (SDT)

Key Findings: Teachers vary in the "what, how, why" of learning—BUT early and late career teachers are interested in behavior management, a differentiated approach to PD is recommended (like NWP…multiple pathways, no one right way espoused to teach writing)

What stood out to me: Some of the results were in conflict with other research—limitations section?, Shows the complexity of teacher learning and may help my

argument for the need for narrative research, article doesn't mention AR, but seems like it could be a good response to me as it is by design differentiated PD

Relates to my work: see above, but some support here for self-directed learning, NWP supports this (keeps it going?), Also, the theories in this article could be of use to me for framing, etc.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): maybe self-directed learning, SDT, adult learning theory (maybe revisit Knowles)

(Perry & Boylan, 2018)

Method: General interpretive design of a pilot program for PD facilitators centered on action research

Brief Description/Claim: PDFs were involved in video analysis and discussion of each other's and their own PD workshops (ones they led), feedback given to improve practice (action research model), some face to face, some on-line discussion, researchers used a model to get facilitators to think about their practice and the researchers used the same model to analyze data (mode: Clarke and Hollingsworth's—2002 - interconnected model of teacher professional growth). Also claim PD pilot program may be useful—ideas: action research, video analysis and face to face hybrid for feedback, using the theoretical model as a way of discussing PDFs practice

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Clarke and Hollinsworth's (2002) interconnected model of teacher professional growth (for PDFs), and literature about what makes good PD

Key Findings: "study illuminated the complex professional learning needs of PDFs as they perceived them" p. 269 and PD developers need to "collaboratively reflect on, analyze, understand and improve their practice" p. 269 (the NWP does this)

What stood out to me: the researchers say there is not much in the way of literature/studies on how PDFs learn or their learning needs (a gap?)

Relates to my work: I wonder if this is a more interesting angle/gap or could be a part of my study as the NWP develops developers, could address this gap in the literature about how PDFs learn (the how seen best in narrative?), a question: How do PD developers learn to be PD developers/presenters/facilitators?

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): PD developers, PD facilitators, PDFs

(McCarthey & Kang, 2017)

Method: Case Study (observations and interviews, compare)

Brief Description/Claim: Study of 2 kindergarten teachers, trying to look at how writing PD impacted instruction, one experienced teacher and one novice teacher (undergo different PD trainings? Hard to compare?)

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: "continuum of learning to teach"; stages approach to writing instruction PD, "critical features" research

Key Findings: new teacher: need for more sustained relationships and more opportunities for quality long-term PD" (p; 414); "The contrasting cases demonstrate how two teachers drew upon their experiences with teaching writing and PD with differing outcomes for instruction and underlying beliefs about writing." (P 402); novice—skills based—follows curriculum verbatim, experienced teacher—considers developmental needs of the kids—tweaks curriculum

What stood out to me: the recommendations for more sustained PD at all levels and stages (see p 415 for lots of supports from NWP on this. However, should it have been the same PD offered to truly compare? The novice teacher was in more prescriptive training. Was it just stage or the type of PD that impacted their instruction? The kind not just the sustained time…?

Relates to my work: Lots here on the need for sustained PD that the NWP offers, the more experienced teacher was involved with the NWP.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search):

(Friedrich & Whitney, Orientations for the teaching of writing: A legacy of the National Writing Project, 2013)

Method: Interview coding (so general interpretive), data from a "larger mixed-methods study of the legacy of the NWP more generally" (p. 7)

Brief Description/Claim: Claims that the NWP has a legacy built on orientations— "a set of orientations that guide teachers in making decisions about their work and

learning about and from that work" (p. 1)—See page 1 abstract for the three findings align with the theoretical fw being used (see below) and help to think about PD in a new way that provides "a possible approach for long-term influence of conceptually based interventions" related to PD (p. 2)

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Orientations framework of science teaching used in writing teaching context (from Friedriechsen, Van Driel, & Abell 2011)—and the "beliefs that influence practice" (p. 27)—3 levels

Key Findings: Orientations presents a richer approach and thinking about PD than a workshop mentality and is one explanation for the enduring quality of NWP, PD should not be about what teachers do, but rather the ways teachers learn to frame their practices, context matters (provides richness to practice)

What stood out to me: Not a narrative study, but many quotes used. Teachers' voices valued. It is important for me to defend use of narrative and not just analysis of quotes as is found here in a more general interpretive way…

Relates to my work: Questions—Am I interested in how these orientations (or stances) sustain NWP teachers' careers? Deep stories needed to do so? Is it more about developing mindsets? Habits? Both? Their question for this study was: "How do teachers describe the influence of the NWP on their teaching?" I am interested in this, too, with a slight difference in that I am interested in if that involvement/influence supports longevity and in what ways. Is this too subtle of a difference or is it that I think the NWP is larger/bigger than just an "influence…on teaching…"? It is more than teaching. What makes a career teacher happy? Is my

study a deep investigation of these orientations? Is that a FW to use? To consider? Is my study an extension of this work?

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search)

(Heenan, Houghton, Huntworth, Meyer, & St. John, 2006)

Method: Evaluation (report), observations and interviews, 3-year study

Brief Description/Claim: Key design features of NWP infused into the New Teacher Initiative (NTI) program from "underlying fundamental NWP beliefs and values" (p.1). 18 sites piloting a program to support new teachers in the teaching of writing (across discipline areas/grade levels)

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: NWP "social processes" as translated to new teacher support, critical design features framework

Key Findings: Features are the "best practices" of new teacher support, NTI "spans across" teacher learning phases (p. 20); takes care of new teacher "tracking," writing is key to this development and support, core values from the larger umbrella of NWP frame all work

What stood out to me: Not sure of details of methods…; well-written as the researchers seem to capture the spirit and deep understanding of NWP principles

Relates to my work: new teacher "induction" study, again—how are these features/PD/values part of continuing PD for TCs – sustaining? This study did listen

to voices – passages (but not narrative study)—a smattering of quotes, I believe a larger and more in-depth narrative is needed to understand the complexity of what the NWP is doing.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search)

(Lieberman & Wood, 2002)

Method: 2-year study, qualitative, looked at 2 sites (urban/rural)—larger study was of these two sites and then 6 teachers, this study/report—looked at 2 teachers (interviews/observations)

Brief Description/Claim: How the NWP "enacts its unique approach to PD in quite different geographical, historical, and cultural contexts" (p 318); analyzed ISI experiences for core activities/principles and then how 2 teachers took them back into the "reality" of classrooms

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Hmmm…. what networks bring? Ways of working/PD? PLCS?

Key Findings: Networks of teachers as change agents ('teachers teaching teachers') help teachers with principles that help them adjust to changing (ever-changing) dynamics and "complexity" of our schools

What stood out to me: back to idea of "principles" and flexibility, methods not clear. Not really narrative but highly relies on quotes

Relates to my work: see stars and notes in document starting on page 324 to 329, some these I see that may help frame my work: courage, strength, satisfaction..., this is about ISI and right after…how does it look years after the ISI?

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): Hmmmm…satisfaction?

(Nasheeda, Abdullah, Krauss, & Ahmed, 2019)

Method: Presents a "multimethod restorying framework for narrative analysis"—not a study, but a step by step/ how to (learned thru author's experience doing a dissertation)

Brief Description/Claim: Narrative inquiry and analysis provides context, needed in research, provides a how to.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Presents a narrative inquiry "restorying framework"

Key Findings: not a study

What stood out to me: Aligns with stepping stones method I want to use in my research; chronological remembering of touchstone moments with the project/effects of them

Relates to my work: How to change interviews into stories, co-authoring, see page 2 and page 4 (C & C) provides context, may provide one solution to the gap in literature that does not provide rich context, NWP is complex and the study would demonstrate and listen to teachers' stories about their careers and PD experiences.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search): narrative inquiry, restorying (a term just by these authors?), narrative analysis

(Wood & Lieberman, 2000)

Method: General Interpretive (has some narrative representation…at the beginning, but doesn't really connect to the rest of the article?), themes, multiple data collection methods: focus groups, observations, interviews, participants wrote narratives of experiences—2-year study of 2 NWP sites (6 teachers)—related to the other study I read (2002)

Brief Description/Claim: "principles of writing instruction to frame and foster teachers' PD" p 255

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: teacher-author stance, principles of authorship, authority, and authorization—the themes found in the study

Key Findings: "The Writing Project, in taking principles of good writing and translating them to principles of good teaching, offers a powerful model for professional development" p 271 also collaboration/PLCs matter, HOWEVER not sure how they analyzed the data they had collected. I want to be explicit about this part of research…

What stood out to me: Well-described overview of how the network is so successful and promotes teacher leadership

Relates to my work: hmmmm…. like my idea for my conceptual fw in many ways. Not sure that this is a problem in that it doesn't explicitly talk about its connection to teacher retention/teacher happiness/teacher satisfaction with career…doesn't connect those dots, also I want to talk also about the back and forthness, recursive nature, to sustain the will to teach (resiliency? Finding joy?) Also, I want to present co-constructed rich stories.

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search)

(Gebhardt, 1982)

Not a study, but an article tying together multiple theories on writing process theory in order to come to a more comprehensive theory. Excellent quotes to use in conceptual FW and/or theoretical FW sections. Also, I was struck by how the piece made me think about the similarities between writing and teaching that I want to make and how the NWP is able to use WPT to develop writers, writing teachers, and career teacher-leaders.

(Jordan J. , Relational Cultural Theory: The power of connection to transform our lives, 2017)

Method: An overview descriptive article about RCT and its foundations and purposes

Brief Description/Claim: See quotes below, but model constructed to build on strengths of relationships. This work came out of the field of psychology and started with its relationship to women/feminism.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: RCT—relational cultural theory based on connections, mutuality and ideas of empathy

Key Findings: "RCT is a theory about our basic interconnectedness, about the inevitability

of needing one another throughout our lives. We are wired to connect. We grow through and toward connection throughout our lives." P.231 I think this is also happening in the NWP in its back and forthness of connection over a career.

What stood out to me: like the quote below about courage. Perhaps courage is the construct for looking at NWP…and courage is found in community not in isolation.

Relates to my work: See the quotes below but it all resonates as theoretical consistent with the relationship building and power of community structures in the NWP…how it connects to resiliency? How it connects to career longevity? Not sure how to connect those dots. Also, Miller (originator of RCT with Jordan) said—relationships that are giving include: "zest, creativity, worth, clarity, and desire for more connection"—p235 … sounds like NWP!

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search)

"We could just as easily have constructed a model for the self where boundaries were viewed as places of meeting, more intense interactional activity, engagement, and potential for change." (p.229)

"Courage, a topic rarely addressed in the field of psychology (whose researchers are busy looking into our flaws and weaknesses rather than our strengths), can be seen in a relational–cultural framework as a relational concept: we *en-courage* one another. We listen one another into courage, into voice. Courage, confidence, and a sense of strength grow in connection, not in isolated denial and in the glorification of the individual who defies the odds by possessing extraordinary internal fortitude. In reality, isolation erodes courage. Isolation interrupts growth. Isolation disempowers us and immobilizes us." (p. 230-231)

"In contrast, connection confers power and enables action." (p. 231)

"People engage together in relationships where both people can be affected and affecting" p.231

"However, RCT builds on the idea of "fluid expertise," where both counselor and client hold certain aspects of knowledge and understanding; there is not one expert who dispenses interpretations or wisdom like a Delphic oracle." P. 231

"We slowly began to take these ideas out into the world, at conferences where female clinicians and academics would often thank us profusely for saying what was in their

hearts: Therapeutic change occurs in healing relationships (Jordan, 2008a, 2008b, 2017)." P. 233

"RCT further introduced a new way to think about human nature: growth based in mutuality.

Mutual Empathy

A core process in RCT that speaks to relational dynamics is mutual empathy. Mutual empathy suggests that real empathy involves empathic attunement and responsiveness on the part of two people. (I will address this as dyadic, but it actually applies to larger groups.)" p 234

"In mutuality, both people grow and both people contribute to the growth of each other and to the relationship. In growth-fostering relationships, each person is inspired to shine, to change, to value his or her own well-being at the same time, he or she shares in the growth of the other person and in the well-being of the relationship (Jordan & Carlson, 2013)." P235

"The path of connection is not always comfortable or easy. It is regularly punctuated with acute disconnections. Disconnections are ubiquitous. We cannot avoid them. How we handle disconnections, however, becomes important to our well-being. In a culture that espouses the superiority of separation, the resilience found in relational support is challenged. As we attempt to regain connection, we experience vulnerability and a fear of rejection. There is powerful energy behind our resilience; we turn to one another to keep

going, to get back on our feet and try again. We desire to contribute to others, to be part of something larger than the self; call it relationship, or nature, or community. We also have a need to feel competent and able, to matter, to make a difference." P236

"Nevertheless, the potential for abundant caring and a genuine desire to share in relationships that enhance the well-being of all is another prevailing and potentially transformative aspect of our human condition. RCT posits that our task is to expand and support this positive relational potential, to embrace the power of connection, and to practice mutual empathy for the good of all." P 242

(Gu Q. , 2014)

Method: Qualitative , phenomenological 3 year study of primary and secondary teachers in England; semi-structured interviews (300 teachers in different phases of their careers), also statistical analyses of teachers' effectiveness—test results of students (so mixed methods?); "To link the quantitative value-added data on teachers' relative effectiveness with the qualitative data sets, teacher effectiveness profiles were compared for the relatively 'more effective' and 'less effective' groups as identified by the multi-level analysis" p. 512 then resulted in grounded theory…lots of methods discussed here….BUT resulted in profiles of teachers

Brief Description/Claim: Adds to "the emerging but still limited literature on the factors which influence teachers' capacity to be resilient" p 502, trying to "build upon but take further current understanding of resilience in teachers by exploring in greater

depth the nature of resilience in teachers as a relational concept and the ways in which it may be related to the learning and achievement of pupils" p 502

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Relational resilience…; much of research on resilience has been done on children; still new the researching of it on adults and specifically teachers. Claim that relational resilience has not be "sufficiently investigated" p. 509 (using Jordan as the basis)

Key Findings: "Teachers' resilience building processes are …influenced, positively or negatively, by the quality of the relationships in which their work and lives are embedded" (p. 513), relationships: teacher-teacher relations, teacher-principal relations, teacher-student relations "Individually and collectively, they shaped the social and intellectual environments of the workplace and through this, fostered or hindered teachers' sense of professionalism, resilience, and commitment" p. 513. Found: "…fostering relational resilience in teachers matters because it is closely associated with the growth of their intellectual, social, and emotional well-being over time, and also, with the learning and achievement of their students. We have identified evidence of associations between resilience and measurable improvements in pupil attainment" p. 520

Two key observations:

1 - "…the widely used definition of resilience as the capacity to 'bounce back' in adverse circumstances does not adequately or accurately describe the nature of resilience in teachers….it fails to acknowledge that the ways in which teachers build

their resilience are inherently embedded in their everyday professional lives. It is a complex, continuous, and fluctuating process" (p. 521)

2 – "… the nature and sustainability of resilience in teachers is not innate…but influenced by the strength of trust in the multilayered relationships in which teachers' work and lives are embedded. Teacher resilience is a relational, multifaceted and dynamic construct…It is the culmination and continuation of collective and collaborative endeavors driven by a common understanding of moral purpose" p. 521

LIKE THE NWP CPD

What stood out to me: "Collegial, emotional, and intellectual connections with colleagues were reported by most teachers as a positive influence on their well-being, commitment, and capacity to sustain a sense of effectiveness on every working day: and this is the case of teachers in all six professional life phases identified…" p.513

This is the NWP way.

Relates to my work: All the above and the survey they gave also found "…teachers who participate more actively in professional learning communities reported higher levels of self-efficacy" p. 522

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search)

(Webb, 2018)

Method: Case study (3 female teachers)

Brief Description/Claim: RCT and resilience of teachers needs a more "nuanced" look – case studies. Unpacking decisions for why they stay using RCT and through the view of their relationships.

Theoretical FW/Conceptual FW used: Relational-Cultural Theory (Miller)

Key Findings: "teachers' colleagues and administrators impacted directly what teachers did and how they accomplished their goals in the classroom. The impacts of relationships, both growth-fostering and growth-hindering, were evident in the experiences recounted by participants" p 14

Student relationships mattered the most—enabling resilience…

"opportunities for connection, collaboration, and collective action may be fostered during teacher preparation, induction, and professional

What stood out to me: the five good things…see p 3

Relates to my work: more support for using RCT as a frame and maybe the "five good things" see p 3

Keywords (as relates to my topic/search)

Maxwell Notes for Comprehensive Exams

Chapter 1

"In qualitative research, any component of the design may need to be reconsidered or modified during the study in response to new developments or to changes in some other component" (p. 2)

"The activities of collecting and analyzing data, developing and modifying theory, elaborating or refocusing the research questions, and identifying and addressing validity threats are usually all going on more or less simultaneously, each influencing all of the others" (p. 2).

5 components to the design: Goals, conceptual FW, research questions, methods, validity (see definitions on page 4)

Definition of memos: "This term refers to any writing that a researcher does in relationship to the research other than actual field notes, transcription or coding….What all of these (kind of memos) have in common is that they are ways of getting down on paper (or in a computer), and of using this writing as a way to facilitate reflection and analytic insight. When your thoughts are recorded in memos, you can code and file them as you do your field notes and interview transcripts, and return them to develop the ideas further" (p.20)

TO DO:

**See page 5 for interactive design model. Have a model started to play with the interaction between these components (based on the Independent study I did on ISI). May also want to do a matrix. See tables on p 14 thru 17.

Begin handwritten memos in dissertation journey journal to work on design freshly.

Also, memo on the top of each of the articles I read/memo in margins. Not just annotate, but a deeper thinking about the concepts/ideas.

Chapter 2

Goal setting: Personal, practical, and intellectual goals

"Personal goals are things that motivate *you* to do the study, but are not necessarily important for others" (p. 24).

*curious about the experiences of people in the NWP

*preference for qualitative research—stories esp., suits my abilities and aligns with my epistemology far better than a quantitative approach.

*advance career (in regards to PD specifically)

"The touchstone of your own experience may be more valuable an indicator for you of a potentially successful research endeavor" (Strauss & Corbin (as cited in Maxwell), 1990, p. 35-36).

"What is necessary *is* to be *aware* of these goals and how they may be shaping your research, and to think about how best to achieve these *and* to deal with possible negative consequences of their influence" (p.27).

"Practical goals are focused on accomplishing something—meeting some need, changing some situation, or achieving some objective" (p. 28)

Intellectual goals, in contrast, are focused on understanding something—gaining insight into what is going on and why this is happening, or answering some question that previous research has not adequately addressed" (p. 28).

"The strengths of qualitative research derive significantly from this process orientation of the world, and the inductive approach, focus on specific situations or people, and emphasis on descriptions rather than numbers that this requires" (p. 30).

KIM: The two next things explain why you want to do qualitative and may help support your plans for a general interpretive design with narrative representation (address the intellectual goal part):

"…it is important to recognize that the meanings, beliefs, and so on of the participants in your study are a major part of what you want to understand. In a qualitative study, you are interested not only in the physical events and behavior that are taking place, but also in how the participants in your study make sense of these, and how their understanding influences their behavior" (p. 30).

**SEE PAGE 30…UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS… #3

Also…see p 31, #5—am I talking about the concept of "local causality" …? (how does x play a role in causing y…what the process is that connects x and y…for example, continued connection with the NWP).

Practical goal part:

"Generating results and theories that are understandable and experientially credible, both to the people you are studying and to others" (p.31).

"Conducting research that is intended to improve existing practices, programs, or policies, what is often called 'formative evaluation (Scriven, 1967, 1991, Patton, 2001), rather than to simply assess the impact or value of these" (p. 32).

"Engaging in action, participatory, collaborative, or community-based research with participants in the study" (p.32).

Chapter 3

"The most important thing to understand about your conceptual framework is that it is primarily a conception or model of what is out there that you plan to study, and of what is going on with these things and why – a tentative *theory* of the phenomena that you are investigating" (p. 39).

*think about "system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs you research" (p. 39) …this may be incomplete or a work in progress.

Conceptual FW contains:

*" research problem"— "identifies something that is *going on* in the world, something that is itself problematic or that has consequences that are problematic" (p. 40). Something not fully understood…want more info about, helps to justify study

….so, I want to study something that is working. It is not a problem that NWP sustains teachers' careers, but I don't think we know enough about it. Not fully understood. Also, good PD would help a problematic issue in that we need to know more about effective PD…PD is in need of study. b/c we spend a great deal of time and money on it. Need to keep teachers teaching and PD may be a key aspect in that…(teachers leaving the field)

"The most productive conceptual frameworks are often those that bring in ideas from outside of the traditionally defined field of study, or that integrate different approaches, lines of investigation, or theories that no one had previously connected" (p. 40)

Need to look at what issues there have been with past research/theory, contradictions or holes (the gap?), and then make an original contribution to the field

Maybe writing process theory as recursive and NWP PD as recursive? Is this "outside" enough? Look elsewhere?

Abstract and general level: Positivism, constructivism, realism, pragmatism, and postmodernism

Ideas about reality: ontology How we gain knowledge of it: epistemology

More specific levels: interpretivism, critical theory, feminism, queer theory, and phenomenology

Theory is: "…the linking of two concepts {or more} by a proposed relationship" (p. 49)

Do I want my theory to be a coat closet (hang anything in it) …see page 49: I think of this like transformative learning theory, I can fit what is happening in the NWP to fit in the coat closet, cram it into the categories OR do I want it to be a spotlight (see page 50) …having a theory in mind makes me see the data through that lens…so maybe not fitting it into steps of transformational learning theory, but I see it in general terms…NWP is transformative?

I wrote down some ideas in my journal about mapping my theory. Want to revisit my mapping from independent study and from my work this past semester.

"Thought experiments challenge you to come up with plausible explanations for your and others' observations, and to think about how to support or disprove these. They draw on both theory and experience to answer the "what if" questions, and to explore the logical implications of your models, assumptions, and expectations of the things you plan to study" (p. 68).

TO DO: Look at Creswell to get a better sense of where I am at with ontology and epistemology

Constructivism, pragmatism, postmodernism and interpretivism

4 things to help build conceptual fw: experiential knowledge, existing theory and research, pilot and exploratory research, thought experiments

Play the doubting game and the believing game (see page 52). In other words, use theory as you totally believe it and use theory as you totally doubt it. Take it from both sides to see what pieces make sense and what you bump up against.

"In the believing game, you accept the theory and look for ways it can deepen your understanding of the things you study; in the doubting game, you challenge the theory, looking for its flaws." (p 52).

Look over my maps from independent study on ISI and my maps from seminar. Read some and try to do a conceptual map and/or theoretical map for the connections. May also want to look at logic model I did in Dr. K's evaluation course.

MAYBE…. Look up permeable curriculum by Dyson as something to integrate into my conceptual fw. The NWP allows teachers' lives into the work they do.

ALSO…Play the doubting/believing game (see above) with the theories I research as well as the theories in the literature I read. Also, what are the theories my participants hold (p. 52). this is an interesting tactic to take in the research. What do the participants think is going on in the NWP and how it does/doesn't help them sustain careers? What

makes this PD the same or different? This could be of major importance in evaluating the study's results and for the discussion section.

Chapter 4

To Do: Need to revisit RQs from independent study, talks with Dr. Ali and Dr. Howard, seminar paper, and evaluation class with Dr. K. Look at logic model from Dr. K's course as a possible framework.

See notes in dissertation journal for research question memoing.

"They (RQs) are the component that most directly links to all of the other components of the design. More than any other aspect of your design, your research questions will have an influence on, and should be responsive to every other part of your study" (p. 73).

"…qualitative researchers often don't develop their final research questions until they have done a significant amount of data collection and analysis" (p. 73)

To Do: Ask Dr. Tate and Dr. Beck about the above. Will my revision of RQ evolve/change even more after I collect data? How does that work with IRB?

"In a research proposal or published paper, the function of your research questions is to explain specifically what your study is intended to learn or understand. In your research *design*, the research questions serve two other vital functions as well: to help you to focus the study (the questions' relationships to your goals and conceptual framework) and to give you guidance for how to conduct it (their relationship to methods and validity)" (p. 75)

“Your intellectual goals for the study can function as a link between your practical goals and your research questions: What do you need to understand in order to improve these services” (p. 77).

To Do:

Maybe make connections between lit I read about teachers being “dissatisfied” and happiness need in profession? Find out what brings contentment/longevity thru NWP association and then can improve PD services? Use a logic model/improvement science chart to figure this out.

see above…these are different purposes for RQs so begin with design. Maybe have an appendix for design and the connections to show my thinking? See what I did for independent study and page 76. Also need to consider sub-questions more…see page 74 4th paragraph).

**Reread p.76 and 77 after lit review to revisit questions.

Appendix F

Search Terms

Table F1

Literature Search

Primary Search Term	Secondary Search Term	Third Search Term	Date Range	Scanned Results	Skimmed	Read and Notated as Potentially Useful
Teacher Professional Development	Literature Review	n/a	2019	1060 total results, scanned	20	0 (refined search below)
Continual Professional Development	Literature Review	Teacher	2019	40	6	5 (1 was a study, not lit review)
Continuing Professional Development	Literature Review	In-Service Teacher	2015–-2019	573 titles (abstracts read)	7	3 (2 were studies, not lit reviews)
Teacher Continuing Professional Development	Narrative Inquiry	n/a	2015–2019	1	1	0 (didn't relate closely enough)
Teacher Professional Development	Career Longevity	n/a	2000-2019	81	11	7
National Writing Project	Career Longevity	n/a	all	8	3	1
National Writing Project	Career Longevity	Teacher Professional Development	all	2	1	0
National Writing Project	Career Longevity	Narrative Inquiry	all	0	0	0
National Writing Project	Teacher Retention	Narrative Inquiry	all	12	0	0 (all dissertations/not helpful)
National Writing Project	Narrative Methodology	n/a	all	12	1	0
National Writing Project	Narrative Methodology	Teacher Professional Development	all	2	0	0 (both dissertations)
National Writing Project	Narrative Inquiry	Resilience	all	37	16	0 (many dissertations/rest not helpful)

National Writing Project	Narrative Inquiry	n/a	2015–-2019	88 (skimmed all titles)	5	0 (many dissertations/rest not helpful)
National Writing Project	Narrative Inquiry	Satisfaction	2000–2019	68 (skimmed all titles)	5	1
National Writing Project	Relational Cultural Theory	n/a	all	4	4	0
Relational Cultural Theory	Teacher Resilience	n/a	2015–2019	11	5	2

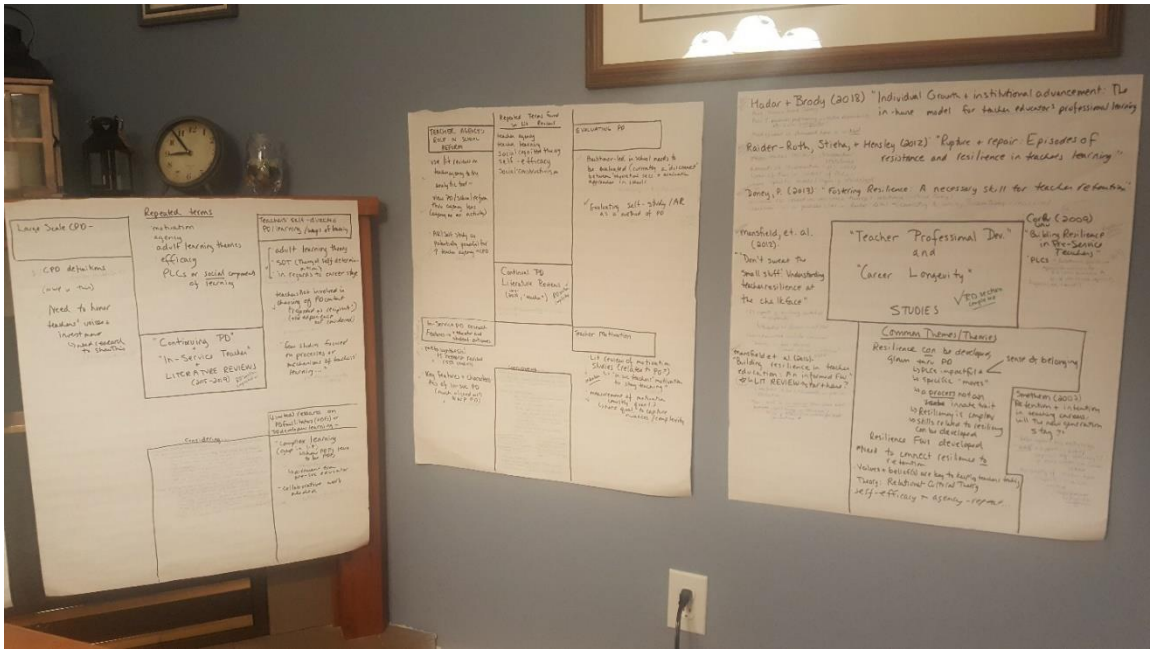
Table F2

Breadcrumb Search

"Breadcrumb" Article(s) Reviewed and Notated	Type of Article
Capps & Crawford (2012)	Literature Review
Gebhardt, R. (1982)	Foundational article
Heenan, et al. (2006)	Evaluation/Report—NWP Design features of New Teacher Initiative Program
Jordan (2017)	Foundational Article on theory (RCT)
Kennedy (2005)	Literature Review
Kennedy (2016)	Literature Review
Lieberman & Wood (2002)	Qualitative (2 participants)
Nasheeda, et al. (2019)	Methodology
Parkhouse, Lu, Massaro (2019)	Literature Review (provided by advisor as a starting point for my literature review)
(Standards for Professional Learning, n.d.)	Learning Forward Website on National PD Standards
Whitney & Friedrich (2013)	Qualitative Interview data (110 teachers) on orientations of NWP "legacy"

Appendix G

Core Idea Maps



Appendix H

Memo Examples

7/21/19: Memo on Friedrich & Whitney (2013)—Excerpt

The questions these researchers ask: "How do teachers describe the influence of NWP on their teaching?" at first seemed like my question(s) or maybe too closely related. Yet as I read the article, I began to wonder if my study might be an extension of this work—they had 110 interview participants—quite a lot of data! —But my narrative aims may provide more of the "how" – a deeper investigation of these orientations.

They define (thru Friedriechsen, Van Driel, & Abell, 2011) orientations as "beliefs that influence practice" (p. 27) and I do think this is what the NWP does best. Yet I wonder if these orientations also impact happiness and sustainability of a career? If so, how? What are the TCs' mindsets? How are they developed? What habits of teaching? Of writing? Of….? Keep them engaged and productive and staying in the field when others leave?

IDEA: What if I found my 1997 or 1999 cohort and asked them if they are still teaching or in the field some way? What if I asked them about their NWP lives/stepping stones/orientations? What is more powerful—to follow one cohort or take from many? What about NWP stays with them? How does it keep them in the field? Data from a bunch of them and then richer, deeper narratives from a few?

Finally, how do I conceptualize PD?

7/26/19: Memo on concept map of lit review ("CPD" and "In-Service Teacher" and "Literature Reviews"—2015 to 2019

- How does NWP promote teaching learning outside of their regular PD sessions/conferences/structures?
- What do TCs do each day that may be different from other educators? —based on NWP experiences that helps them continue to grow and nurture careers? (Be happier?)
- Is it a new lens they use? Reflective practices? Is it a new sense of being a teacher-leader (may be for some…)? More confidence?
- Is it the use of WTL each day in teaching? Habits of mind? Habits of practice? Their practice has changed? Their lives? Action research lens? Lens of hope?

**Excerpts. Many more memos were written by hand in dissertation journey journal.

Appendix I

Learning Forward Standards and NWP Literature Support

Table I1

Learning Forward Standards and NWP Literature Support

Learning Forward Standards—Characteristics of Professional Learning	Components of Learning Forward Standards	Literature Supports of NWP PD Supporting the National Standards
Learning Communities	Engage in continuous improvement Develop collective responsibility Create alignment and accountability	(Kaplan, 2008) (Whitney, 2009)
Resources (human, fiscal, material, technology, and time)	Prioritize resources Monitor resources Coordinate resources	(NWP & Nagin, 2006)
Learning Designs	Apply learning theories, research, and models Select learning designs Promote active engagement	(Friedrich & Whitney, 2013) (Gray, 2000) (Locke, Whitehead, & Cawkwell, 2014) (Whitney, 2008)
Outcomes	Meet performance standards Address learning outcomes Build coherence	(Gallagher, Woodworth, McCaffrey, Park, & Wang, 2014) (Stokes & St. John, 2012)
Leadership	Develop capacity for learning and leading Advocate for professional learning Create support systems and structures	(Friedrich, Swain, LeMahieu, Fessahaie, & Mieles, 2008) (Whitney, Zuidema, & Fredricksen, 2014)
Data	Analyze student, educator, and system data Assess progress Evaluate professional learning	(Gallagher, Arshan, & Woodworth, 2016) (LeMahieu, 2008) (St. John, Dickey, Hirabayashi, & Stokes, 2001)
Implementation	Apply change research Sustain implementation Provide constructive feedback	(Lieberman & Wood, 2001) (Lieberman & Wood, 2003) (Locke & Kato, 2014)

Appendix J

NWP Descriptions of Learning Forward Professional Development Standards

NWP learning communities. The NWP ISI is collaborative in all its components ("What sites do," n.d.). Participants receive coaching on developing their demonstration lessons from ISI staff members, who also work as a collaborative team. Participants engage collaboratively in the hands-on presentations, share their reflections, discuss and analyze research, and work in writing revision groups. Participants work together in these multiple iterations of learning communities after the ISI. These learning communities continue to be the focus of all PD after the ISI, through the many opportunities provided at both the local and national levels of the organization ("NWP Teacher Consultant Badge Framework," n.d.).

NWP resources. The NWP is "the only federally funded program that focuses on the teaching of writing. Support for the NWP is provided by the U.S. Department of Education, foundations, individuals, corporations, universities, and K-12 schools" ("About NWP", n.d.). The NWP utilizes these available resources in pursuing their mission. Even in the face of reduced federal funding, the NWP continues to expand the network. Funding is used to support teachers during and after the ISI, partnering with local school systems to provide PD for teachers provided by NWP TCs**,** which also further develops them as teacher leaders. NWP sites report yearly on how all resources (human, fiscal, etc.) are being utilized.

NWP learning designs. The Learning Forward learning design identified aspects (see Appendix H for all components) are all key elements of NWP PD, as described in the overview provided earlier in this paper. The NWP asserts "knowledge…comes from

many sources: theory and research, the analysis of practice, and the experience of writing. Effective PD programs provide frequent and ongoing opportunities for teachers to write and to examine theory, research, and practice together systematically" ("About NWP," n.d.). It is clear the NWP believes in the role of the teacher in his/her own active role in PD. The NWP also provides an opportunity for teachers to become facilitators of PD as well. This active engagement is mirrored in Learning Forward's learning design standard when it states "educators are responsible for taking an active role in selecting and constructing learning designs that facilitate their own and others' learning" ("Learning Designs," n.d.). NWP TCs are actively engaged in their own and in the larger profession's development.

NWP outcomes. The NWP honors teachers' knowledge as well as their ability to share what they know and how they know it ("About NWP", n.d.). Demonstration lessons often revolve around equity for students. All characteristics from this standard are shared by teacher professionals with other teacher professionals and are addressed through the needs of the participants. The NWP regularly evaluates outcomes of both its PD and its impact on student learning, aligning with the Learning Forward's standard for meeting performance stands, addressing learning outcomes, and building coherence ("NWP Results," n.d.).

NWP leadership. The NWP advocates for and develops PD providers through its ISI and continues to develop TCs throughout their careers ("About NWP," n.d.). As stated in the Learning Forward standard about leadership, NWP TCs "make their own career-long learning visible to others" ("Leadership", n.d.). The NWP has a foundational belief that teachers are the best enactors of systemic school reform ("About NWP," n.d.). The NWP

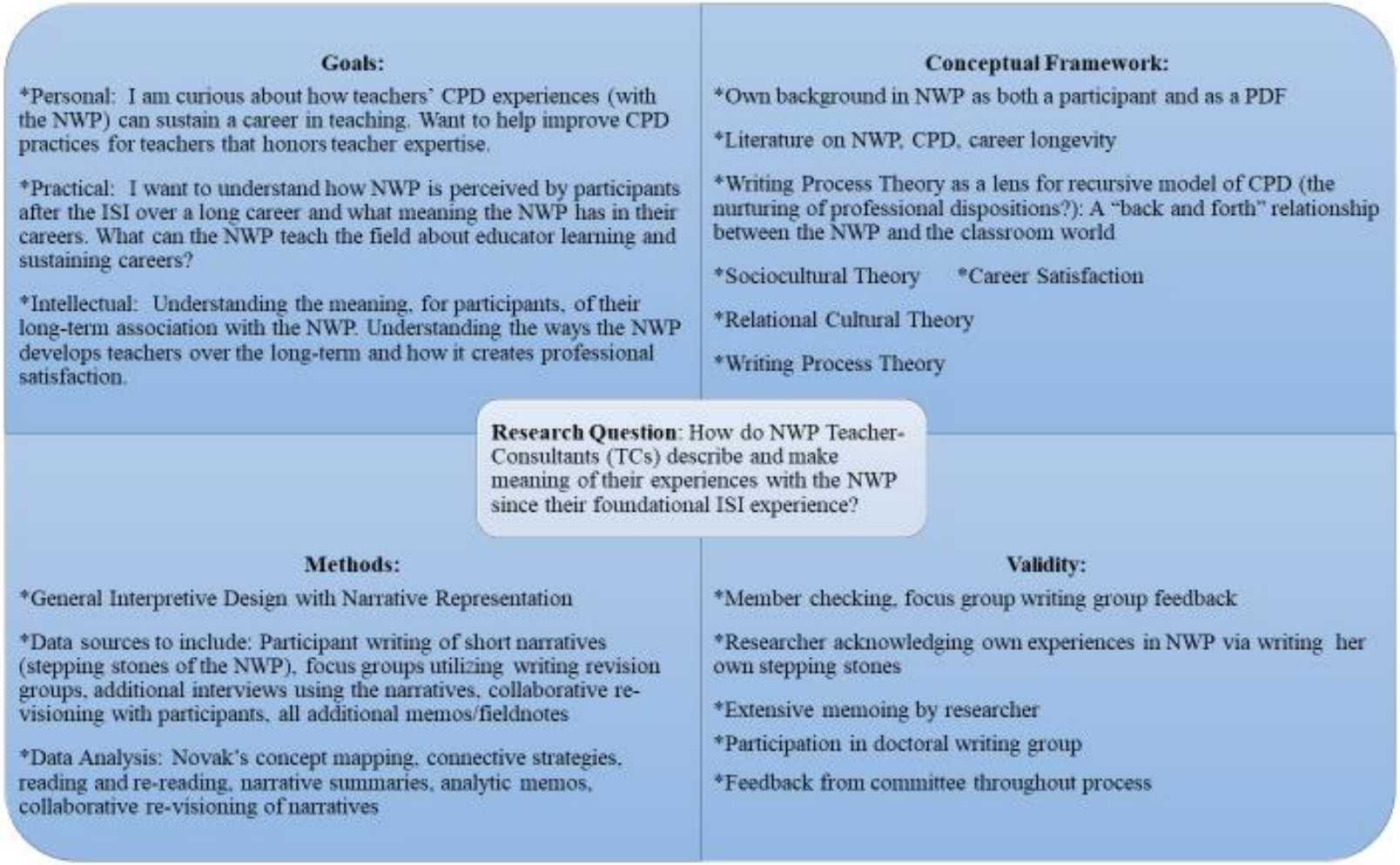
has a long history of developing teacher leaders in the field as captured by their leadership study research ("NWP Results," n.d.).

NWP Data. The key element in this Learning Forward standard is it applies to both student and professional learning data. NWP TCs use student data, both quantitative and qualitative, in their demonstration lessons. By doing so, they share results from their action research. The NWP also advocates for TCs to participate in the research community and helps provide avenues for them to engage with research and publishing about their work inside and outside of the NWP ("NWP Results," n.d.). NWP continues to develop national programs to evaluate data on NWP contributions ("NWP National Programs," n.d.). Past programs included regional site research as well as LSRI, a local sites research initiative ("NWP National Programs," n.d.).

NWP implementation. The NWP begins with a foundational ISI and then provides a variety of CPD experiences throughout the rest of TCs' careers. Learning Forward explains implementation is a long-term process and one that requires PD providers to "integrate a variety of supports for individuals, teams, and schools (and) integrate constructive feedback and reflection to support continuous improvement…that allows educators to move along a continuum from novice to expert through application of their professional learning" ("Implementation," n.d.). The NWP respects TCs are both teacher experts and persistent learners who utilize feedback and reflection as key components, supporting their own growth and the growth of other professionals.

Appendix K

Study Design Map



Appendix L

Study Timeline

January, 2020: Defend proposal successfully.

February, 2020: Submit to IRB; revise proposal chapters based on feedback from committee. Continue to read literature and methodology resources to add to proposal, as necessary.

March/April, 2020 (or when approved by IRB): Contact both Project directors to discuss study and obtain necessary contacts for the project. Finalize email list and study description for invitation.

May, 2020: Send out invitation to participate in the study. Choose participants.

Early to Mid-Summer, 2020: Hold the two focus group sessions (one at each Project site). Collect stepping stone lists, first drafts, and begin memoing. Researcher will participate by writing her own stepping stones and narrative pieces. Begin narrative summaries.

Mid-summer, 2020: Collect revised drafts. Continue memoing. Revise interview protocol as is necessary based on writings. Create any necessary concept maps. Continue narrative summaries.

Late Summer, 2020: Interview all four participants utilizing their lists, drafts, and revised piece(s). Transcribe all interviews. Memo immediately after each interview. Continue narrative summaries.

Early fall, 2020: Validity check the revised stories with the participants, taking care to honor confidentiality concerns. Continue analytic memoing. Complete concept maps. Complete narrative summaries. Submit Chapter Four for committee feedback.

Fall, 2020: Analyze all the data, recursively, utilizing the data analysis methods outlined in this document (and utilized in the above steps as analysis and collection are intertwined). Write Chapter Five.

December, 2020: Submit dissertation draft to committee.

January and February, 2021: Revisions and final validity check with participants. Submit to outside readers. Submit to office for defense.

March, 2021: Defend Dissertation.

Data Collection and Analysis Timetable and Details

Timeframe/Participants	Action	Details
6/29/20 Design Focus Group Powerpoint with Protocol Directions; Practice Timing	Work to revise and work out timing issues due to having two focus groups and moving to online format	Visually attractive slides, clarity of directions for WebEx Format
7/1/20 Review my own stepping stones list and snapshot writing (drafted in proposal phase)	Before Focus Groups: Revise my Snapshot Writing with feedback from my Dissertation Writing Group	Piloting my protocols and addressing my own researcher subjectivity
7/6/20–7/10/20 Review my Focus Group PowerPoint Slides with Dissertation Writing Group; Recruitment Email sent out	Outside audience gives feedback on the clarity of slides and directions as well as timing	Editing of PowerPoint for Focus Group so it will be ready to go as soon as recruitment is complete
7/13/20–7/17/20 Assess response to recruitment email	Assess candidate responses, memo about participant recruitment, participant choice and schedule focus groups, practice WebEx Videoconferencing	Participants are enthusiastic about study and easy to schedule for the focus groups
7/22/20 Michele, Steven, and Malcolm	Focus Group #1: Collect Stepping Stone Lists, Rough Drafts of Snapshot Stories, Transcripts of Focus Group Discussion, Memo during and after FG (including documents–lists and drafts)	Utilize WebEx videoconferencing for conducting three protocols: Stepping Stone Lists, Rough Draft Snapshot Writing, and Writing Feedback Session
7/27/20	Focus Group # 2: Collect Stepping Stone Lists, Rough Drafts of	Utilize WebEx videoconferencing for conducting three protocols: Stepping Stone

Edward, Elizabeth, and Roger	Snapshot Stories, Transcripts of Focus Group Discussion, Memo during and after FG (including documents -lists and drafts)	Lists, Rough Draft Snapshot Writing, and Writing Feedback Session
Deadline: 7/29/20 Receive revised stories from Michele, Steven, and Malcolm	Memo what I notice from revisions and discuss with dissertation writing group, prepare for and schedule interviews	Begin listing what I see from memos of Focus Groups and how they relate to the Stepping Stones, drafts of the Snapshot Writing, and Revised Snapshots
Deadline: 8/3/20 Receive revised stories from Edward, Elizabeth, and Roger	Memo what I notice from revisions and discuss with dissertation writing group, prepare for and schedule interviews	Begin listing what I see from memos of Focus Groups and how they relate to the Stepping Stones, drafts of the Snapshot Writing, and Revised Snapshots
8/3/20–8/7/20 Correct WebEx transcriptions of FG #1 and #2; memo while correcting; conduct WebEx interviews with Elizabeth, Steven, Michele, and Edward; memo after each interview	Memoing includes looking at visuals/body language on video, themes and commonalities, surprises and general thoughts/insights as I correct transcriptions and after each interview	Focus on memoing as it relates to research questions and literature as well as keeping an open mind for insights; important to review focus group content before interviewing
8/10/20–8/14/20 Conduct WebEx interviews with Malcolm and Roger; memo after each interview	Memoing includes looking at visuals/body language on video, themes and commonalities, surprises and general thoughts/insights after each interview	Focus on memoing as it relates to research questions and literature as well as keeping an open mind for insights
8/17/20–8/21/20 Review Proposal Feedback tape from committee members	Take notes while listening to proposal feedback to re-ground myself in study and get a sense of revisions needed for chapters 1-3	This step back helps me to get a global perspective on data again and results in memoing

8/24/20–9/18/20 Write first half of data Chapter 4 centering on Michele, Steven, and Malcolm	Write an introduction to data chapter and decide to snapshot write focus group experience as an introduction to their full revised snapshot stories submitted for the dissertation; submit to chair for feedback	Snapshot writing of first focus group (Michele, Steven, and Malcolm) involves reviewing all memos, consultation with participants regarding confidentiality checks, re-watching segments of the focus group recording, and going back and forth between video and the participants' revised writings
9/21/20–10/16/20 Writing Group memo sharing; Begin correcting interview transcripts	Re-watch interview recordings, memo during re-watching and transcription correcting, begin to look at interview transcripts a bit each day to keep grounded in data (while extremely busy teaching in distanced environment)	Continuing to connect participants' statements to theory/literature via memoing and re-watching of interview recordings.
10/19/20–10/24/20 Revision of Chapter 4, Part 1 - Focus Group #1 and drafting of Chapter 4, Part 2- Focus Group #2	After receiving feedback on Chapter 4, revise for resubmission (includes this table); Draft Chapter 4, Part 2; Review Chapter 4, Part 2 with Dissertation Writing Group	Snapshot writing of second focus group (Edward, Elizabeth, and Roger) involves reviewing all memos, consultation with participants regarding confidentiality checks, re-watching segments of the focus group recording, and going back and forth between video and the participants' revised writings
10/26/20–10/30/20 Await confirmed confidentiality checks Focus Group #2, Revise all of Chapter 4	After Dissertation Writing Group comments, review and revise all of Chapter 4 to submit to chair for feedback, Add interview synopsis	Small revisions/edits along with memoing about metaphors I am seeing throughout focus groups and stories

11/1/20–11/30/20 Chapter 5 work	Continued data analysis, memoing, and framing of Chapter 5 (review proposal)	Focus on the meaning-making and metaphor use of participants, findings–put in conversation with RCT and Recursivity
12/1/20–12/29/20 Continue Chapter 5 Revise Chapters 1–4	Review Proposal Defense Tape for feedback on Chapters 1–3, continued data analysis, memoing, and supports in Chapter 5	Review new literature to put in conversation with the conclusions; send to committee on 12/29
January/February 2021	Complete edits based on committee feedback; send to outside readers	Submit to office for defense

Appendix M

NWP Sample List of CPD Opportunities

*Each local site of the NWP offers varied CPD based on the needs of the TCs at that site. Below is a sample of CPD opportunities the participants mentioned being involved in at their local sites (3 represented) and at the national level of the organization. Please note that the participants in this study viewed the leadership opportunities as part of their own CPD. This is not a comprehensive list of CPD activities the participants engaged with over their years as TCs.

- Giving Project demonstration lessons at the local, regional, state, and national level.
- Creating new Project presentations for professional development requested by the site.
- Developing and delivering specialized PD series for area districts.
- Facilitating or participating in Project graduate level courses offered in school systems.
- Facilitation of Invitational Summer Institutes as a staff member.
- Serving on a variety of advisory boards.
- Collaborating on new initiatives at the local site or at the National level.
- Submitting and publishing in Project (local and national) publications as well as other outlets.
- Continuing to engage in writing revision groups with Teacher-Consultants after the ISI.

- Engaging in and sometimes initiating/leading any number of professionally driven (i.e. writing retreats) and/or socially driven continuity events with the Project.
- Co-directing local Project conferences.
- Co-directing established and new sites.
- Co-leading summer institutes and year-round writing camps for students.
- Establishing writing centers at their schools for their students.

Appendix N

NWP Protocols

Stepping Stones, Snapshot Writing, and Writing Group Feedback sessions, are protocols regularly used in the local Writing Project site by the participants in this study. As detailed in Chapter 3, these protocols were adapted for use in data collection. Below are details on the original protocols and how they are used at the Writing Project local site.

Stepping Stones Protocol: The NWP local site in this study regularly uses a protocol for personal writing in their Invitational Summer Institute experiences called "stepping stones." The stepping stones protocol was invented by American psychotherapist Ira Progoff as part of his intensive journaling workshops. Progoff explains that a stepping stones list is a "list of the cycles of time (people) have lived through so far" (Gestwicki, 2001, p. 61). Gestwicki (2001) explains Progoff believed

> a person is always in the midst…(and) the work with the present period of time with its issues and commitments—its hopes and anxieties—begins by placing the present period of time in the overall movement of the life (p. 62).

In this way, stepping stones and the stories that are then written about them are a vehicle for capturing the present moment while still considering the context of time.

During the participants' ISIs, they were all led through the stepping stones protocol not as a psychotherapy session, but as a way of encouraging personal narrative writing. The ISI fellows are asked to list their 10 stepping stone moments, the first is labeled "I was born," and then each participant must choose nine additional moments of significance, positive or negative, in their lives. The limiting of the number to 10

moments forces the writers to carefully consider the most impactful moments of their lives thus far while also contemplating the perspective of the present moment.

In the ISI, fellows are then asked to take one or more of the stepping stones and write a narrative piece that begins with the phrase, "That was a time in my life when…" and then write in as much sensory detail about the chosen moment. These stepping stone narratives are often revised in the writing group component of the ISI, although fellows are always given open choice as to what they bring for feedback from the writing groups and writings found in an institute run the gamut from personal to professional and are wide-ranging in genre.

Snapshot Writing Protocol: Lane (1993) describes snapshot writing as "having a magic camera" to "point at the world and create snapshots that contain smells and sounds as well as colors and lights" (p. 35). I explained to the participants that their snapshot writing of their stepping stone story or stores is about "zooming in" and writing with the "power of physical detail" (Lane, 1993, p. 35). The participants had utilized the idea of snapshot writing in their ISIs and other NWP CPD. Some were familiar with Lane's above procedure, but all were familiar with the concept of using sensory detail in writing to describe a moment in time.

Writing Group Feedback Sessions. Writing group feedback sessions are a critical component of the NWP ISI. The ISI fellows meet multiple times a week to give and receive feedback on their writing in small groups. At most ISIs, fellows are expected to revise one professional and one personal piece of writing during the summer. Many fellows write and revise additional pieces. After the institute, the fellows are encouraged to keep meeting with the group they worked with in the summer or to begin a new

writing group with other TCs from the local site that want to continue. The intent is to keep teachers writing as the NWP believes that the best teachers of writing are writers themselves (“About NWP,” n.d.).

Appendix O

Revised Interview Protocol

Stories of Teachers' Long-term Experiences with the National Writing Project

Researcher: Today's interview is an opportunity to discuss your "stepping stone" moments with the NWP and to further describe what you chose to write about in our focus group session. Please take your time and describe your experiences and what they mean to you and your career as fully as possible.

Researcher Prompts:

1. First, I would like to talk to you about your stepping stone moments.
    a. How did you feel when you were writing your stepping stone list? How do you feel when you look over your list of stepping stones?
    b. Was it difficult or easy to write your stepping stone list?
    c. Did you have a difficult time picking the one you wrote about? Why or why not?
    d. You have a variety of NWP experiences on your stepping stone list.
        - Why did you choose to continue your participation in the NWP/your local site?
        - How did you choose the CPD/events you attended and/or stayed involved in?
        - Why did you accept the invitations for participation in the NWP CPD?
        - Why do you choose to come back again and again to the Project?
        - Were there times you had a lull in your participation? If so, why?

e. How did the entries on your SS list impact your teaching and teaching career (if not addressed already)?

f. How did the entries on your SS list impact your writing (if not addressed already)?

g. How did the entries on your SS list impact your life (if not addressed already)?

h. How did the Writing Project impact how you interact with colleagues both inside and outside of the Project?

2. Now, I would like to discuss the piece you wrote in the focus group and its revision.

   a. After revising your stepping stone story (or stories) and participating in the focus group, what more have you learned about your stepping stone moments and/or your involvement in the NWP?

   b. Did you consider audience when you were writing in the focus group?

   c. Did you consider audience when you revised? (Possible follow up: Who were you writing for – self, me, FG, or the dissertation readers?)

   d. What thoughts did you have about the focus group process?

3. I noticed that your snapshot moment(s) (and those of the others in the focus group) showed a lot of vulnerability.

   a. Do you think the Project impacted your ability to express yourself in that way? If so, how?

   b. Can you remember being vulnerable (ex. Open to sharing) in other professional development/groups outside of the Writing Project? If not, what do you think it is about the NWP that allows for that vulnerability?

**These are possible prompts. The interview is inductive, open, and intended to capture the participants' stories.

Thank you for participating today. I appreciate your willingness to participate and all the time you are investing in this study.

Appendix P

Narrative Summations

FOCUS GROUP #1: Steven, Michele, and Malcolm

Steven—

Steven's interview lasted a bit over an hour. It began with a discussion of his stepping stone list, a list he described as the "watershed" moments he has had with the NWP. After reading the list aloud to him, Steven commented that the list had a common theme of "community and community building." He described people in the Project as "my people" and compared them to colleagues in his building as those he would "not necessarily…want to sit down and work with." This was clearly in contrast to the WP colleagues he wanted to collaborate with, a group he called "like-minded" as they are "interested in the things that you're interested in and care deeply about, namely writing instruction. Steven went on to say he didn't remember what brought him into the ISI, but he was a bit taken aback when the director of the site asked him what he had to offer the Project. He felt he had "very little to offer" and was actually "reluctant" about the ISI. Yet after participating he stated he "learned probably as much that summer as I did in four years of undergraduate work" citing "life changing moments," usually connected to writing.

Steven actually took the in-service course connected the Project a while after his ISI (unusual as many take the in-service course as an entry into the ISI/Project) to get some needed graduate level credits. What he found in coming back to a Project experience through this course was also "life-changing." He said, I thought, "everything

they do (the Project), they seem to do is like wow, and I can measure it against other PD, and it's better than everything." As I followed up on his list of CPD activities, asking him why he chose to do the CPD he did, he said it was "like a chain-reaction" where his presenting at an in-service course for the Project led to a connection with a TC who asked to "get a beer" and ended up sharing ideas about writing and teaching. That led to a friendship that led to an invitation to co-present at the NWP conference which led to more community building and the meeting of new Project people (what he wrote about in his snapshot). He noted that the presentation didn't start with an idea for a presentation or a topic, but "it started with people" and the discussion then led to the idea for the presentation. Those elements of chain reaction that stem from the people he has met continued to impact him. He mentioned in the interview that he was writing an article and had been citing that very TC who had invited him to present at the conference. The community building and invitations continued for Steven and he ended up sitting on an advisory committee for his local site. For Steven, the importance of the community and the community building in the Project could not be overstated. For him, it was central to the work and his continued involvement in the Project. He had "found his people," people who were "very receptive" to him "as a writer and researcher and teacher." Steven wanted to make it clear that it was a "two-way street" in the Project. He said, "…every time I interact with these people, I think I become a better teacher…. It's the people who want to listen, people I want to listen to, and people who want to listen to me." He was quick to qualify that it wasn't "an echo chamber" and that there was a rich, continual discussion going on about the "craft of teaching."

Steven was clear in contrasting this openness to inquiry to the school where he works at. In addition to the pushback, he receives from administration for some of his teaching ideas, he also feels a bit of a distance from his colleagues as well. He works with what he calls a "very bright faculty who are very good at what they do," but stated they are not the people he is going to find "professional collegial satisfaction" with and instead he was "gonna have to get it elsewhere." The elsewhere for Steven was his connection to the WP as well as reaching out to the publishing world. This desire to publish was nurtured in the WP ISI when he wrote a deeply personal piece about surfing that was significantly and positively impacted by a writing group member who suggested he change the POV of the piece. This experience (like another chain reaction) followed him back into the classroom where he helped his students to experiment with POV and genre in new ways. In addition, when he took the in-service course after the ISI, he read Alphie Kohn and was taken aback by his words, thinking, "that's who I want to be…I want to write." So that book along with the genre work in the classroom (all stemming from his association with the WP) led to a string of publications. One article in an educational journal had recently caught the eye of ASCD (publishing) and their book acquisitions people had requested a table of contents for a potential book on the topic of the article. "And that never would have happened. I don't think if I hadn't taken the ISI, I would have never taken (name of TC) course (the in-service course), and if I hadn't taken that course I just don't think I would have been turned on to the possibilities of writing."

In his interview, Steven took me on a journey from a reluctant participant in the ISI to his continued and varying connection with the Project community to its effect on

his classroom and ultimately to his writing and publishing. The common thread though all of his professional development: writing and learning with the WP.

Throughout the interview, the focus group, and his writing for the dissertation, it was clear the respect and sometimes a bit of icon admiration that Steven had for some of the TCs he had met. From the "rockstar" co-presenters he described in the snapshot writing to "being in awe" of a TC who invited him to present to his in-service course to his clear admiration for the instructor of the in–service course he had participated in, Steven was quick to praise the WP colleagues who had mattered so much to him and his development. Steven credited the writing groups as the way the Project developed and encouraged vulnerability, a vulnerability that was necessary for the "risk-taking" he wanted to take and wanted to encourage his students to take in order to develop and grow. He said, "…to put it on paper is an act of vulnerability. So, I think that's kind of inherent in the writing process, and in sharing writing and publishing writing, putting yourself out there in black and white. And I think that's being a writer." The writing groups then are necessary and it's the "practice of the writing project to be supportive." Steven went on to explain that the Project "doesn't follow anyone's political agenda…they're not out to make money either…they're driven by some, some larger purpose that makes them particularly interesting."

The writing project to Steven was all about community and community building. That community is a supportive one that nurtures his teaching, his professionalism, and his writing—all things he could not easily find in his district or his school building.

Themes in Steven's Stepping Stones, Snapshot Story, Focus Group Participation, and Interview:

The importance of finding like-minded people (and how this is different from school)—RCT

The importance of professionalism and NWP's role in helping teachers feel like and become professionals, central to his professional self (recursivity)

The difference between the way we see teachers and the project seeing teaching as CRAFT:

> The difference of how society sees teachers: do they see them as "blue-collar" or more like "doctors and lawyers?" …."I think that what might cause people to burn out is when it's just like, if you're just a technician that if your following along with like lesson plan forty two on this particular day and we all just kinda do the same thing and there's no craft…Are you just kind of a factory worker?….I would want to quit that job too, but when you think of the writing project—what it does is again, reminds us that it's a craft, you know, and what's cool is that, you know, it's teachers teaching teachers…"

Recursivity throughout… a returning to the Project and then back to his school, his experience with the contract course—come back for more—that theory to practice and practice to theory connection, connecting with other TCs to present, the WP influence on him as teacher, writer.

Contrast between county and school PD/approach and the PD of the Project

"my people"—RCT

Community and community building

A lot about passion—see metaphors throughout, especially about rap/rock stars, etc.

"Chain reaction" keeps him involved and evolves – his writing career (recursivity)

Michele—

Michele and I spoke for a little over an hour. We began with a discussion of her stepping stones and how difficult it was to narrow down—in fact, she had more than 10 steps in what she submitted. She said she struggled a bit with whether she was focusing on how the Project had impacted her "career, my life, and my friendships, and all the things I gain from it." This was evident throughout our discussion as Michele went back and forth between discussing the friendships and connections she had made in the Project and then discussing how it had impacted her professionalism as well as her teaching. Michele described how each thing she did with the Project led to another thing. At first, she was rejected for the ISI. She was disappointed but relayed that this was a very popular time in the Project and it was very competitive for the 25 slots. She understood. When someone had to drop out, the director called her with the spot and she jumped at the opportunity. This led her to being asked to be on staff the following summer and a board position that led her to co-lead the yearly conference for a decade, the stepping stone moment she wrote about for this research. Although she didn't see herself as a "salesperson," running the conference helped her to develop some skills such as "pitching for the keynote, convincing TCs to present…advertising." She said, "I grew as a professional for sure." In addition to these CPD experiences, Michele taught the contract

course several times, participated in Progoff journaling for herself as a writer ("I still go back to that binder that I created because there are so many potential pieces"), and co-led many student workshops on writing that the Project offers. When I asked her how she chose these things it was clear that some things led to others, but that in general, she wanted to stay connected. She said, "I feel like it's kinda having things that I was drawn to as a writer and then the other half of things that I was drawn to…as a teacher." The Project allowed her to try out new roles as well such as working with young writers instead of the high schoolers she normally taught. She also commented that teaching the contract course was her own CPD even though she was facilitating it as she got so much out of the experience herself for her teaching and writing.

A repeating refrain in Michele's interview was the combination of the personal and professional. She has a firm belief that once you commit to something you "follow through" and her commitment to the Project was secured through the many relationships she had made. Her "two great summers" (one where she participated and one where she was on staff) had made her "not want it to stop there." She said, "I kept being drawn back to the people who I have made connections with." She went on to explain that she had met a lot of Project people from many summers due to the opportunities she had in the Project, some that found her and some she sought out, like participating in student workshops. The student workshops occurred throughout the school year and in the summer "so I knew I would have a chance of continuing to do that" whereas she wasn't sure if she would be asked to teach more contract courses. So, she sought the student workshops out intentionally to stay involved. When I asked her why that was important, she said, "it's professional, the things I can get out of it, but it's definitely also the

people…the like-mindedness…it's the opposite of the school isolation, it's all about working together." She elaborated: "you feel supported, no matter what…you know somebody's got your back and when push comes to shove, we absolutely will help each other out to do anything in the name of the Project, but also in the name of friendship and ties to each other."

Michele spoke about a colleague, B, at her school that had done an ISI and how they would "keep finding each other" and they "just get each other" and "we don't have to say it out loud." Michele commented that this colleague and she had observed each other's classes and they were "seeing the exact same things happening with our kids because of the training that we had and the commitment that we've made." Michele was quick to say that her other, non-Project colleagues were also good writing instructors, but that there was something different about B, describing it as "different" and as "a freedom." This led Michele to discuss her first teaching year after her own ISI and how "that was an absolute transformative school year for me. Nothing looked the same in my classroom. Before that, and after that, it was so powerful." Her contributions to the Project and its contributions to her career and her friendships stem from what she mused was, "I guess a similar belief system….kids can do it. They can, they can write, everyone's a writer." Later in the interview she pondered where that similar belief system came from since the NWP does not have one philosophy of teaching writing other than teachers of writing should write and teachers are the best teachers of teachers. She thought it may have something to do with the recommended books and research that circulate in an ISI and an "internalizing of those philosophies," yet there is a wide range of books that are recommended and as Michele stated, "there's no handbook that says do

this and do this" and yet there is a deep understanding between TCs in the NWP. Although Michele herself, like others in the study, was not on the "brink of leaving teaching," she did say she entered the ISI "missing something, needing something" and "remember(ed) thinking, you know, there's got to be more than this." It was clear that the "more" she was looking for was found in the Project—in its CPD and in its relationships. As she reflected on her stepping stone lists and through the focus group and her snapshot writing, she came away feeling "satisfied" and "very proud" of the work she had done. She also felt a bit "guilty" in that she has been not as involved as of late with the new transition of directors at her local site. Thinking about her Project experiences via her research participation made her think that it is time to "ramp it back up" and it also made her think of her younger colleagues "that I want to steer in that direction"… to "just keep that continuity going."

When I questioned Michele about the vulnerability in the Project she talked about the writing and "that was one of the things that drew me to the Project and the summer institute and terrified me about it." She knew she would be with others "growing together from the small groups to the large group…putting yourself out there…" She recalled a time in her ISI when someone shared something intensely traumatic and personal with the group and had a hard time reading it out loud. This moment made her reflect on how this occurs: "Someone's bolder than someone else, right? So they're going to be the first one to come out and share something whether it's a funny piece or a sad piece…" She related that there was a piece she was reluctant to write herself in the ISI, but she kept coming back to it and was encouraged by her group members. This vulnerability matters she said because "that vulnerability transfers, I think to the classroom, too, because you

want your students to be the same way, to take a chance to take a risk." What was "worked up to" in the Project ISI until everyone was "doing that very, very easily" was something she strove for with her high school students. In the Project, she credited the encouragement of the group, the bravery of the early sharers, a safe community, the small group size (25 or less) and outside social gatherings (some mandatory!) for the vulnerability. She said, ultimately, "there's gotta be something that brings you over to the other side which is the courage that it takes to share." When I asked if she had experienced this vulnerability in other CPD she said, "Never. I can answer that really easily."

Themes in Michele's Stepping Stones, Snapshot Story, Focus Group Participation, and Interview:

RCT throughout—the importance of the connections and friendships made in the NWP (and across summers)

Recursivity—coming back to the Project for energy, to learn and grow, to stay involved (especially the conference and the student workshops); theory to practice; importance of reading, Leading CPD was also her CPD, one thing leading to another, but also seeking out things to stay committed and involved

The personal and professional reasons for staying involved

Contributing to the profession (esp. contract course)

Even after a personal tragedy—attending a conference that grew out of the Project—needing to be with her people as a coping mechanism, Project comforting in a time of distress

Project = drive + energy of teachers teaching teachers – impacts kids

Commitment to career, to the Project, to projects in the Project, to others

School's isolation vs working together in the Project

Tenets of the Project: Teachers write, teachers teach teachers

Transformation of teaching after ISI (needing more in career—found it)

Pride in the work she has done for Project A bit guilty for not staying more involved in later years.. collective responsibility/ nostalgic

Vulnerability—how it happens/why it is important and how it transfers to the classroom (not in other CPD)

Social aspects of the Project and their importance.

Reflecting on the research—made her write more (get journal), think about recommitment to start up Project again, help new teachers get involved, reread her books, feel proud of her work with Project, energized but also nostalgic

Malcolm—

Malcolm and I spoke for over an hour. He described the listing of his stepping stones and the writing of his snapshots (he revised one from the focus group and decided to add another piece as well) as "fun" in that it "allowed me this little trip down memory lane." He enjoyed thinking about the WP and its connection to his professional growth because you "don't get to sit and rest on your laurels" in education. He stated: "You have

to keep on developing, you know, growing, broadening your repertoire and moving forward." As he wrote the snapshots he said he "felt very lucky, very charmed" to have been able to be so involved with the WP. He admits he was an "actor" in the things he chose to do with the Project, but relayed that the Project "is there for whatever you need" and even though he was busy with teaching and many might wonder why he would choose to add on more to an already demanding career, for him, "It's all worked together….all this stuff rejuvenates me and pays dividends in the classroom with fifth graders and vice versa" (referring to his university teaching and Project work).

Malcolm related that he was quite confident as a young teacher and one who found himself "at odds with the school that I was working at—with the teams, the teachers." He was quick to say these teachers all "loved kids," but that they just had "very different philosophies, and very different beliefs." After his third year in the classroom, he found himself in the ISI where he also found "commonality" with the others in the ISI. Malcolm was quite to qualify this commonality saying that the people in the ISI "didn't' exactly think like me all the time or vice versa, but at least we had some things in common." The most important things in common were the two tenets of the Project—that teachers are the best teachers of teachers and that in order to be a successful teacher of writing one must write. He compared those who teach writing without practicing writing to those teaching piano without knowing how to play ("which just boggles my mind," he said). What he also found in addition to this commonality was friendships and often the "attraction" of doing things in the Project had to do with "who I would be working with." Malcolm identified the friendships first and then said those friendships "developed into something stronger than that, as far as the professional community was concerned."

Malcolm was involved in many aspects of the Project such as teaching the contract course for the Project, leading workshops for school systems in the area for the Project, leading student camps/programs, publishing with NWP publications, co-directing a local site, participating in my writing groups with other TCs through the years, and giving multiple Project presentations at the local, state, and national level. He also changed protocols at his school for how teachers shared ideas based on Project philosophies (such as voluntary and teachers being at the center of the sharing of their expertise) and was quick to credit his time with the Project as changing the way he taught his elementary students. In addition, the Project involvement created pathways to other professional endeavors such as becoming national board certified and adjuncting for a graduate program in the teaching of writing.

When I received an email from Malcolm with his revised snapshot, I was surprised he had written an additional piece on another stepping stone. I asked in the interview why he wrote an additional one and he said he felt like he "had unfinished business" and needed to write about it. He had discussed the event, a teacher in a summer institute he had been on staff for describing how the Project was "life-changing," in the focus group and then felt compelled to write it. He wrote it because he wanted to "get to the point where I came to the realization that the writing project can, in fact, make your life exponentially better as a teacher," an idea he had "resisted for whatever reason, my overactive need for autonomy." It was important to him to put it in writing for his "own satisfaction" and he went on to explain he is sometimes compelled to write. He had just submitted an opinion piece to the newspaper about the need to go into the distanced learning year with optimism. He explained, "I felt the need to write this op ed piece, to

use writing to process my thoughts, even though I am busy with a lot of stuff." This would include getting ready for a most non-traditional year of teaching ahead due to COVID-19. And although he wrote before the Writing Project it was the teaching aspect that changed for him. He said, "…everything I thought I knew did get turned upside down in a good way. The only way I could make sense of it was to write and I realized how little I actually knew…you have to know how to give the gift of writing to the students and the pedagogy of it." Malcolm had been instrumental in bringing that pedagogy to his elementary school where they do regular voluntary sharing and have an open-door policy of observing each other's teaching. He was quick to credit the Project with him becoming "more accepting" of the other teachers at his school because in the Project, although there is commonality on the two tenets, there is "plenty of diversity outside of that (the tenets)—pedagogically, philosophically, politically." The Project had helped Malcolm by "sticking true and fast to my philosophy, my non-negotiables, what I believe the goal of education is, keeping testing in perspective, et cetera, but at the same time allowing myself to learn and see that there are many ways to do it and that none of us are all things to all children."

Malcolm said he was often called "the writing guy by parents, students, and teachers," but he actually loves all the subjects he teaches and perhaps social studies the most. However, he stated "writing has been the thread" through all of it – a way to help students with the "process of personalizing and making the information meaningful" in all of the subjects. Much like the thread writing is in his classrooms, writing his stepping stones showed him the "interconnectivity of every little thing" in the WP and how one stepping stone would lead to the next. Sharing those in the focus group was an

opportunity to be reminded that "there are these other courageous hardworking teachers doing what's difficult, but not doing it surreptitiously, doing it in the open for anyone to learn and grow from it." To him, the WP is a brave place where teachers share, collaborate, and grow together. His words about courage led me to ask him about vulnerability in the Project. He believes the WP to be a "psychologically safe space for sharing" and that it is "a supportive organization that stands with you and beside you, I think, helping you, pushing you, nudging you forward to be a little more courageous to take a little more autonomy, but to do so very intelligently." There may be vulnerability in the WP, in the ISI, but it is a safe space where "you find that support. It does embolden you, empower you, to go forward." In some ways, the writing project to Malcolm is a collective space that then allows you to move ahead in your career, with your students or with other teachers, in an autonomous way, with the theory and practice to support your pedagogy. This is done through moving back and forth between the Project and daily teaching—a touching base with a professional home before moving back out into the world of teaching again. Malcolm summed up— "The Writing Project does...serve as a liberating force for a great many teachers."

Malcolm stated firmly that "I learned more those five intensive weeks than everything else combined, I mean, it's not even close quite honestly, and that to me is laughable." Malcolm was comparing the ISI to his Master's plus 30 credits, his certification in gifted education, and his "thousands of mandated and voluntary school based or district based professional development" and found that the ISI still "permeates everything I do today…I do believe it's the best professional development any teacher could do regardless of what they teach."

When he thought a bit more about vulnerability, Malcolm qualified the term a bit, stating the Project is "real, it's authentic, and vulnerable is part of that." He reiterated the importance of the voluntary nature of the Project and how the lessons shared are demonstration lessons, where the participants try the ideas as if in "the shoes of students" and then it is up to them to reflect and revise for their own students, if they choose to adapt the ideas for their subjects or their grade levels. Malcolm said he was able to adapt all the things he learned whether from a high school teacher or a college teacher to his 5th graders.

Key to his experience in the Project is the idea of professionalism. He said, "For the first time in the WP, teachers sometimes feel like they're a professional, that their opinion matters, that what they think is valuable, that they have something to share." Malcolm shared this as different from schools and that the Project, "a safe haven," provides a place to return to again and again for a myriad of purposes both personal and professional.

To balance out some of his effusive praise of the Project, Malcolm did comment that sometimes he felt a bit tired and burdened by some of the administrative duties he was asked to complete, tasks he felt should have been handled more internally so that he could focus on the teaching, presenting, and designing her was also in charge of.

Still, the Project had contributed to his personal and professional development in numerous ways over nearly 20 years, and was an organization that "reminds you that you are a teacher, you're a writer. This is what you're made to do."

Themes in Malcolm's Stepping Stones, Snapshot Story, Focus Group Participation, and Interview:

The importance of professionalism and NWP's role in helping teachers feel like and become professionals, central to his professional self (recursivity)

Interconnectivity of the stepping stones—how they worked together, variety

Growth and development in the Project and in teaching, chance to work with kids and adults

Rejuvenation and energizing—the work of the Project (fed teaching and teaching fed Project—recursive)

Finding friends in the Project and then grows into professional community (RCT)

The importance of finding commonality—the tenets—(and how this is different from school)—RCT

Power of writing

Writing to process…and compelled to use it to process

Writing as "thread" throughout the day's curriculum…

Impact of Project on your career/life ("exponentially better")—Project as transformation/paradigm shift in how he taught— "changed my life" (skeptical at first)

PD at school different than PD in Project—voluntary is part of it, teachers at center is the other part/treated as professionals with knowledge to share

Recursivity between life and Project, between teaching and Project, between career and Project, between writing and Project…etc.

Collaboration as necessary (for writing for teaching)—RCT

Courage

Role of autonomy but with collective community behind it—the Project "emboldens" and "empowers", helps you to do it "intelligently," the WP is a "liberating force"

Vulnerability in Project (and also in contract course via writing)—thru writing, but also likes the words "real" and "authentic" better …not seen in other PD. He muses because the Project is a safe space and one where teachers' voices are heard so willing to take more of a chance…invited not mandatory; treated like professionals, real authentic

Multiple ways to participate—and contribute to profession—the idea of revising a career (Recursive)

Exhaustion in Project

Teachers as writers/working with adults/failing and growth—his inservice course experiences and the ISI "changed my life" testimonial (see writings for more notes)

FOCUS GROUP #2: Elizabeth, Roger, and Edward

Elizabeth—

Elizabeth's interview lasted almost an hour. It began with her detailing her stepping stones and her approach to them. She said she definitely had on her "professional hat" when writing her stepping stones and that lens colored her list of

touchstone moments with the NWP. She thought of her stepping stones as "turning points" in her history with the Project, an organization she said is "just so central to everything about me professionally."

Although her stepping stones highlighted many wonderful and positive moments—including the establishment of a successful Project site she currently co-directs—she chose to write about a troubling stepping stone on her list. She wrote about what she considers the "loss" of her home site where she attended her ISI and had worked with for years. She considered it a loss when the director announced he would be leaving and the new director was appointed by him and the English department at the university. This was difficult for Elizabeth in many ways. One, she felt the board (made up of Teacher-Consultants) should have been part of the decision about who would lead the Project, as they had been part of the current director's hiring just a few short years before. She also felt a sadness in the choice, as she did not see the appointed person as someone ready to lead. Finally, she felt the teachers in the room were the real leadership of the Project and that there were many in the room willing and ready to take up the Project's leadership who would be better prepared to do so. (She didn't say this in the interview, but my analysis is that the reason she was so upset is that the Project is a place where teachers are valued for their professionalism and this felt like an affront, an attack, on that professionalism. Another time when top down-ness said teachers were not good enough to truly lead). In the interview, she said that this was the stepping stone she chose to write about because she needed to "put a pin in it." She said, "I think it was traumatic. I had a home there and what do you do when somebody, you know, when your house burns down well, you move somewhere else but you know, you still had your house burn

down." She saw this as a major loss—it mattered to her deeply and she wrote about it to process her emotions, emotions that came out in tears as she read her draft in the focus group.

The importance of the Project to Elizabeth is all about the people in it, people she described as her "tribe" in the focus group. When asked about this in the in the interview she said, "It (the NWP) feeds me. It feeds me on a very deep level…it attracts the kind of people that feed me, they don't deplete me, they feed me and I really need that." This nurturing quality of the NWP is what brings her back again and again, to a place where she finds "other people who care about what we are doing and care about kids." This was in direct contrast to what she finds at school, a place where often teachers complain and she said, "that can chip away." In this way, the Project sustains her. She recursively returns to Project events and CPD, whether she attends or leads, to refill, to replenish and to return to the work that waits. She is fed and can now nurture the students at school. It made me think of the self-care suggestion we hear about—put on your oxygen mask first.

When I asked her how the Project does this, she talked about the cheerleading the others in the Project do. She said, "I wouldn't have done any of it (meaning her stepping stones) without L and M and J…none of it…. People like, give you a nudge, sometimes when you don't even know you need a nudge…It's cheerleading. Well, you think if these accomplished people think I can, maybe I can, right? And I'm just gonna go with what they believe until I believe it myself." It is through that community that she found belief in herself. I found this to be an interesting description of how agency is developed in the Project—it is in collaboration, cooperation, and in relationships that individuals find their way. (RCT/Recursivity)

Themes in Elizabeth's Stepping Stones, Snapshot Story, Focus Group Participation, and Interview:

The importance of professionalism and NWP's role in helping teachers feel like and become professionals, central to her professional self (recursivity)

The importance of finding like-minded people (and how this is different from school)—RCT

The NWP being so important that the "loss" of her home site feels "traumatic"—RCT

Recursivity throughout…a returning to the Project and then back to her school, "feeding" her, her experience with the contract course- teachers back and forth between course and school trying stuff with kids and it worked , come back for more – that theory to practice and practice to theory connection, her wanting to contribute by continuing the "teachers teaching teachers" philosophy—that is the part she gravitated to—any of the CPD that she could be part of as a participant or as a facilitator revolved around teachers teaching teachers…RCT and recursivity

Transformation in the Project

Feeling "more secure about my philosophy and my strategies and…I can defend them"—Recursivity

Vulnerability and writing—something that surprised me that came out frequently across the data—for Elizabeth—crying in the focus group when she shared, thinks vulnerability in sharing writing is about the "people," she wrote about the most traumatic thing that

ever happened to her (personal story) in her ISI and shared it…she is an introvert and it was a "huge thing" …she said: "what is it about the safety in that room that made me believe it would be okay? Which, of course, it was. It always is, the people are fabulous, but that was big. It was a big deal for me." RCT

She also fleshed this out a bit: "I think one of the things we learn is you gotta write about the stuff that matters. And that's really hard sometimes…That's the only writing that people can relate to even if they've never experienced what you have, they can tell the emotion of it and the depth of feeling you have. Which I think is just magical, you know, that words can create feelings in other people, it still blows my mind. But there is a real safety factor…" RCT

> Hmmmm so vulnerability has to do with a safe space, writing truth and reaching people, connecting to people's emotions. This builds community. People want to connect, want to share with each other—RCT

She said she was not that open in other CPD—just in the NWP—and she thinks "it's gotta be the writing groups"

> The community of writing groups? I think maybe she is right…RCT

How it happens in the NWP: She said, "…how somebody always breaks the wall first and writes about something big. And then it's like, everybody else has permission to do that and then it just starts coming, you know, coming, coming, coming…So, somebody's gonna make that first move, but then once they do, and we respond the way that we respond as humans and encourage." RCT in that response and connection as humans (Kim look up that part about en-courage…that is part of RCT). Also, I wonder if

response is so much a part of a teacher's job that this also is reflected in the needing of response from other teachers?

Roger—

Roger's interview was a little over an hour. We began by talking about his stepping stone list which had 21 entries instead of the 10 requested. He laughed saying he knew the purpose was to narrow down, but the memories just flooded back and when he looked them over, he said he "didn't realize how many things I had done" and that when he looked at them he said: "that was a significant chunk of time and a lot of experiences."

Throughout Roger's interview, he made comparisons between NWP PD and school-based or county-based PD. He moved several years ago to an area that does not have a NWP local site, something he immediately looked for when he moved and was sad not to find. He compared the NWP PD, even when it was himself providing it, as his professional development and not the stuff that is to "check off boxes" for the system (getting hours, etc). He described the mandated PD as "yes, I did this. Yes, I did that but it was not really helping me be a better teacher."

Roger had not really intended to do a lot of CPD with his base site because he lived at a distance from the university where he attended the ISI. However, his summer writing group continued to meet after the ISI and that kept him connected (RCT/Recursivity). The leader of his writing group asked him to do a presentation for her NWP contract course she was facilitating and he "couldn't say no to her" and he just kept doing more presentations which he believed led to him being asked to be on the staff of a few summer institutes. He said, it "felt like stealing. Honesty, they were paying me

and…I couldn't believe I was getting paid to do that." He often talked about how giving presentations and being on staff at a few ISIs was his own professional development so being paid for it felt like stealing. There was also the feeling of pride—"you felt honor" to be asked to facilitate CPD for the Project, he said, "…from that long list of presenters and they called me? Really?" (RCT)

Roger again returned to comparing and contrasting CPD in the Project to county PD saying the Project gave him positive feedback. R: "You know you hardly get any positive feedback as teachers…from students or parents or faculty or your administrator. So I think that's one thing that keeps people coming back. It's like one of the few places you get some positive feedback and in addition, some really important critical feedback because you don't get that either as a teacher." (RCT/Recursivity) Roger then detailed his experience in the feedback sessions commonly held in the ISI. After a week's worth of presentations, all the staff and the people who presented that week would have a feedback session about the presentation on what went well and what could be improved. He said, "…sitting in on those feedback sessions—that's more feedback on my teaching in one session than I've gotten, then I've had, if you added up twenty years of sitting with administrators who watched my lessons."

After seeking out a Project in his new home state and finding none, he sought out Project CPD on his own, turning to his TC friends on Facebook and Twitter to follow what they were doing and reading professional books written by those who were "Project people." He held up several to the screen to show me in the interview saying that one he started reading and thought, "wow, this guy really knows his stuff" and then was not surprised to read in the bio that he was a TC from California. "You see, I'm looking for

Writing Project people in books or wherever I can find them." He relayed a story about trying to make suggestions that teachers should teach teachers in his new state, sending letters to school board members and the superintendent "and almost got fired, because I didn't have tenure…before I knew they weren't interested in suggestions." He then successfully went through the National Board process in part because he didn't have a Project and was looking for ways to grow. Having the title of NBCT and tenure, he is just now again feeling like maybe he can make an argument for valuable PD. He recently started an anti-racist book club with some colleagues and has made some headway about teachers leading PD with the LA curriculum central office director. He detailed what he feels is different in the Project that needs to be the cornerstone of learning for students and for teachers: the power of discovery. He said, "I don't think you really learn anything unless you discover it yourself." For Roger, the NWP created conditions for discovery and the mandated PD of his county was a different model, one that "didn't stick" because it was "sit and get" without discovery. This focus on discovery and inquiry he learned in the NWP is what he tries to recreate for his students as well. (recursivity)

Throughout Roger's interview he referred to learning from other teachers in the Project and the growth it provided him as a teacher and as a person.(RCT/recursivity) Again, was the concept that there was "isolation" in schools where you "never get to see what they're doing" which was in contrast to the sharing of the Project network. He clearly credits his experience in the ISI and his CPD with the Project as saving his career as he was "ready to get gone" and he even credits his first summer institute with making him a better person and teacher. It got him through a divorce. He writes in his snapshot piece: "Now it is almost 20 years since my first experience with the Writing Project, and

it is crystal clear to me that without that Summer Institute and my subsequent experiences, I would not be a teacher today and have my doubts that I would be a husband and father. It helped me open up as a teacher and person in a way I had not thought possible. Simply put, the NWP helped save my professional and personal life." (RCT/recursivity) This is a bold statement. The Project, for Roger, was a savior.

Themes in Roger's Stepping Stones, Snapshot Story, Focus Group Participation, and Interview:

Recursivity throughout…a returning to the Project and then back to his school, a sense of "discovery" and "inquiry" in learning for teachers/kids…learned in Project and taken back to teaching students and trying to improve PD in his county, returning to do Project work because invited back and can't let people down (also RCT). His experiences with ISIs and getting valuable feedback that improved his teaching.

Contrast between mandated county PD and the PD of the Project

Value of learning from other teachers, growth, teachers as sounding board (Recursivity and RCT); seeking growth

Keeps notes/poems from other TCs to "buck him up" (like cheerleading) kept all these years (20!) they matter RCT/recursivity

Project had him interact and learn from diverse populations (in his former writing groups: gay people and a woman with a disability—expanded his view by listening to their stories (personal writing matters).…led to a closer investigation of his own biases—advisor for the straight/gay alliance at his school and starting an anti-racist book club…" he became a better person in the Project (See long excerpt below)—RCT

Isolation of school vs Togetherness of Project (RCT)

RCT: Not wanting to let writing group down so you stay up to write poem at 2 am… "you wanna show em you're a good teacher you want to show them you're a good writer"

Vulnerabilty and writing—something that surprised me that came out frequently across the data—asked Roger about it – feels Project helped him to open up and use writing to do so— "a lot of it has to do with the writing groups…you make those strong connections with your writing group and then, you know, you obviously feel more comfortable with the full group." RCT

Also, his experiences: "I've always felt more comfortable around women. I, I think that's one of the reasons I like to teach. I just, you know, I've always been like a jock and sports guy. So, but with men, it's superficial stuff generally, you know, we're talking about sports, but, you know, if I'm with a group of women…I have always been much more comfortable, saying things that I probably wouldn't say…growing up in the seventies as a man in the South, you know, you're just expected to be and act a certain way. And so, but I think I was reflecting on too. I had a writing group member who was gay and honestly, I probably knew people who are gay and already family. Yeah so, I had my first gay friends in the writing project I've taught gay students obviously…I mean, I had a woman with a disability in one of my writing groups, and obviously I knew people who might be disabled, but in reading her pieces and, like, knowing her, like, I had never had like, a real relationship with someone who struggled with a disability. And she let us drive her Segway…so I just think about, like, the diversity of opinions and and backgrounds of

people that, but,you know, I never thought of myself as racist or sexist or ableist or , any of those things, but I think I was and and still am in some ways and working on it but I think all those connections, you know, feel like over the years with all the different people…So, the, that helps, I think, open things up to, you know, you you get such a diverse array of backgrounds and experiences and, and, personal stories, you know, you see all sorts of stuff that you wouldn't been exposed to…so I think that helps with feeling open to express yourself because….People would share those personal stories of discrimination and, you know, and I'm not sure why they trusted us to hear them and not judge them, but they did. So and I'm thankful for that." RCT

He also laughed (like Elizabeth did) when I asked if he was vulnerable in other PD than the Writing Project, but as he thought about it…he was vulnerable in a different way, trying to speak up when he disagreed with something, but it didn't make change. (back to PD in Project being different from county)

In his writing for the dissertation—vulnerable about being broken professionally and personally, developed in the Project personally and professionally (RCT/Recursivity)

See all the metaphors!

In FG: Like a sports team; irrational fandom—pursue this? (RCT)

RCT/Recursivity throughout his writing—see markings. Writing about his ISI (not after…CPD), but that experience led to the other CPD and trickles into his professional and personal life even today—20 years later. Lasting impact.

Edward—

Edward's interview was a little over an hour. Quickly into our talk, Edward said he felt like he had "failed…I was not able to find one illustrative moment." He was referring to picking a stepping stone and writing a snapshot moment. He was surprised by this as he teaches his seniors to use stepping stones and snapshot writing to compose what he feels are excellent college application essays. He said it was like trying to "tackle an octopus…very slippery and all over the place." The experience created a "new empathy for my own seniors" as they sometimes struggle with the college essays. This empathy is actually one of the tenets of the Project that in order to teach writing one must write and feel the successes and struggles of producing writing.

Edward described feeling like he had never taken time to "grieve the loss" of the Project until being involved in this research project. He lost the Project, he felt, when he had stepped away from to care for personal crises such as a divorce and a daughter who had had a "surgery a year" for the first seven or eight years of her life. The way he described this loss of the Project had a couple of levels. On one hand, he knew he had to lessen his Project involvement to take care of his daughter and that it couldn't be helped. On the other hand, he felt a deep sense of responsibility for what he saw as his Project site's struggles over the last few years and described his own stepping away as "I abandoned it." The loss of the Project, no matter the reasons, was deeply upsetting to Edward and participating in the research allowed him a bit of space to finally "grieve," something he said was "good for me."

As we returned to his writing, Edward described how in the focus group he drafted and shared a piece about his professional mentor in the Project. He reported that he got excellent feedback from the focus group members, but when he returned to revise the piece afterwards, he felt it was "too personal about her situation in her life" to share in the final dissertation. He wanted that original piece to be about how "that moment (the one he was writing about with his mentor) sort of meshed the Project into what my life was, the two things and then how then they weren't separable." Yet when he decided to abandon the piece, he struggled to write a piece that he felt encapsulated what the Project means to him.

After multiple different attempts, he settled in on a moment with his "now former colleague" to frame some of his thoughts. What resulted (see snapshot story) is a tale of discord between the school and system he teaches at and the Writing Project. The PD found at the school level is one where "they see you as a vessel. I think they think that if they fill you up with the stuff, it will trickle down (to the students." He views this type of "trickle down" PD as a "denial of teaching as an artform…and a denial of the teacher as human being…of each teacher with her own passion and her own interests in her own favorite books and her own approaches to how to inspire a kid…" The inference here is that the Project is all of those things—a place where teaching is seen as an art and teachers are seen as individuals with autonomy. His final revised writing tells the tale of how the Writing Project saved and sustains his career and how it saddens him that the current site is, in his view, now not strong enough to support his colleague in the same way. Sadly, the profession loses another promising teacher. Would it have lost Edward if it hadn't been for a strong local Writing Project site? He believes that to be the case.

He highlighted that the best moments in teaching and in the Project were those moments of discovery, where he provided a frame, but the students (whether they be high schoolers or teachers he was teaching in a contract course or a summer institute for the Project), were set on their own inquiry journey. This journey was one he "couldn't foresee what they were going to come up with while they were doing it." He again related the differences he saw in the system PD and the Project PD in his experiences leading a Project in-service course for teachers. The teachers chose to take the course, a course that leads many into the ISI later, for a myriad of reasons. Edward described these teachers as "people who would come in (to the course) like people crawling through a desert, never had a drop of water and you were there and all you had was one canteen and they were just thanking you, they would thank you up and down." That canteen of water was the NWP CPD that he was providing to those teachers, CPD he himself had received through his Project site. They were thirsty for the valuable PD that was not available, in Edward's opinion, at their school settings. He reiterated that the Project understands "that each of us does stuff differently. That each of us are an individual. We are artists in that. You give people the space, you give them tools…You say, go off and do this thing." To Edward, the Project believes in the artistry and professionalism of teachers and believes in their autonomous decisions to provide excellent instruction where the school and/or the system believes in a top-down directive approach with structured curriculum and little teacher choice.

Edward's interview repeatedly went back to the idea that the WP supported professionalism. After his ISI he was "filled with a new confidence about what I was doing as a teacher." He was a career switcher and still uncertain of his transition to

teaching, but the Project buoyed him; he felt "very empowered" by his ISI and like "I was authentic as a teacher of writing because I was finally actually writing." Armed with a combination of theory and practice, he "felt more serious as a teacher and as a professional," something that led him to "want to go back to the Project to give to other people." This sense of service is a piece of recursivity—there is a desire to go back again and again, and connect with others in the Project. Doing so for Edward didn't just help others, it helped him. He states: "…the more I came back to the Project and stayed involved with it, I started to feel legitimately like somebody at the top of my game." Of course, he also had listened carefully to the director's call to service at the end of his ISI when he said, "When the Project calls, you answer that call…. You have gotten this. We've given this to you. And now for the rest of your career, you will show up." And that continual involvement is what feeds the Project—both for its newest members and for those, like Edward, twenty years after their first association. And even though he feels like he has fallen away from his home site (i.e., serving as instructor, presenter, etc.), Edward was quick to say that "it's hard to separate the Project from who I am as a teacher, or what I do every day…I am the Writing Project. I am a teacher, a product of the Writing Project." He equates himself in the most direct of metaphors. Core to his professional and at times personal identity is the Writing Project.

Themes in Edward's Stepping Stones, Snapshot Story, Focus Group Participation, and Interview:

Recursivity throughout…a returning to the Project and then back to his school, a sense of "discovery" and "inquiry" in learning for teachers/kids…learned in Project and taken back to teaching students and trying to improve PD in his school by recruiting teachers

for Project, returning to do Project work because you owe a debt for the "gift" of the Project and because it fed him as teacher—the service was also aligned with his definition of professionalism

Sense of responsibility for the success or failure of the Project—collective responsibility; saddened by falling away from Project (like grieving)

Contrast between mandated county PD and the PD of the Project—vessel vs. autonomous; art vs. a top down type of canned mandated curriculum

Value of learning from other teachers, growth, teachers as "professional lifeline" (Recursivity and RCT); seeking growth; responsibility to pass on the Project to others.

RCT: A desire for connection with others and for them to be proud of you; still meeting with WG

Blurring of relationships in the Project—professional AND personal (RCT); Project and personal life "intertwining"

Saving of his career (teaching career may have lasted three maybe four years…24th year)

Isolation of school vs. community of Project (RCT)—connectivity and being part of a whole

Confidence—marriage of theory and practice

Transformation and "my people": "…I'd found other people like myself who had dared to make teaching transform from a job you do to a profession you nurture. These were *my people,* and I held them as tightly to myself as I was able." RCT/Recursivity – this is from his snapshot.

See master list of many metaphors.

Connections between teaching and Project (like snapshots)

RCT and recursivity evident in his service to Project—back and forthness—see the SS list (also contract courses, ISIs, Workshops, etc)

Importance of the two tenets of the Project.

Colleagues who were transformed by Project and easier to talk to at school site…so Project makes schools better places, too. (RCT/Recursivity)

Vulnerability in Project because Project "is a place of no bullshit" also must be "vulnerable and honest" to get the feedback; "you're not doing your work" … "it is the authenticity of the writing" Vulnerability in sharing the writing (real writing) moves a group along—it has a role in the WP. Also a bit competitive he thinks.

Been vulnerable in other PD? "Nope, nope." WP taught him: no time to be inauthentic.

Appendix Q

Metaphor Master List

	Elizabeth	Roger	Edward	Steven	Michele	Malcolm
Metaphor						
Home/Family	X	X	X	X	X	X
Transformation	X	X	X		X	X
Team	X	X		X	X	X
Magic	X	X				X
Nurturance	X		X		X	X
Discovery		X	X		X	
Journey (teaching/Project)			X		X	X
Art (teaching/Project)			X	X		X
Gift			X			
Force			X		X	X
Descriptive Language						
Invitation				X	X	X
Savior (personal/prof)		X	X			X

As Home/Family

Elizabeth:

- "my tribe, my people, my professional family"
- "I had a home there and what do you do …when your house burns down, well, you move somewhere else but you know, you still had your house burned down."
- "…like putting on a comfortable pair of slippers! Right back in it!" (re: focus group writing group)
- as "burnt down house" re: loss of her "home" ISI site
- as "safe space" (in reference to vulnerability in sharing—"how somebody always breaks the wall")

Roger:

- as "a generational thing" you pass on/down

- as family—in reference to a TC mentor— “I wanted her to be my mom, my best friend…”
- as “home”

Edward:

- as “finding a place” (in response to Roger’s piece)
- “…it makes me incredibly sad that I’ve lost a home…” (in reference to home site’s issues/becoming distanced from Project)
- re: icon/mentor in the Project: she was a “second mother”/ “she is my family now”
- “this Project made this not just be about my job”
- “my life and work are intertwined” (re: the Project and its people)
- as “my people”

Steven:

- they “brought me into the fold” SAYS THIS 4 TIMES
- NWP as “my people”
- NWP as a way to “find your people”

Michele:

- as “people in my corner”
- as “a place to belong, a place to lead”
- as “somebody’s got your back when push comes to shove”
- “my people” “the people”—multiple references

Malcolm:

- NWP as a “safe haven”

As Transformation

Elizabeth:

- "if you tell them (teachers) that story about how it (NWP) transforms you, which for almost of us it did…"
- "my stepping stones are turning points of transformation"

Roger:

- "it's a collection of little things" that "transforms you"

Edward:

- as "transformation"

Michele:

- as "professional transformation"
- first year of teaching after ISI as "transformational" (stepping stones)
- as life-changing – "The reach of the Project and its people and how much it has changed my life."

Malcolm:

- if we were to write stepping stones as stories in chronological order: see Project as "evolution"
- as "life-changing"; "the Project changed my life"

As Fandom/Collaborative Team (sports/band, etc.)/Team Effort - Not sure what to do here

Elizabeth:

- "these icons of the Project"
- TCs as "cheerleaders"
- "cheerleading" (leads to her self-efficacy)

Roger:

- "it's like a sports team" …." super intense connections" … "you sweat; you sacrifice" … "you have an irrational fandom for it"
- as "sounding board"

- they “cheerlead you”—The “TCs back you up…”

Steven:

- NWP director at conference as “unofficial mayor of conference” and “as an academic tour guide”
- “I am about to become a drummer in a rock star, academic rock band” (collaborative presenting)
- “rock star teachers” in the NWP
- (a particular TC) …” like a Pentecostal preacher” …“fire evangelizing” (his passion for writing)
- (I am) “like a star-struck Hollywood tourist” (re: seeing writing icons)
- TC in presentation is “dropping lyrical fire on the crowd” (rock star again)
- presentation is collaborative and is “somewhere between a Pentecostal religious revival meeting and a rap concert” (as performance/passionate show…also says “set the stage”)
- “to return to the rap metaphor”—knows he is using metaphor as a writer
- NWP as a collaborative band— “It brings together talented teachers who, working together, accomplish more than they could alone.”
- becoming an “academic rock (rap) star”
- NPW as “community and community building”

Michele:

- part to whole “…your part is necessary. Obviously, a rock band needs a drummer.” (in response to Steven’s piece)

Malcolm:

- focus group as collaborative process that “sort of primes the pump” (this led to his second snapshot story he sent—the focus group discussion brought out the story)

As magic

Elizabeth:

- "the magic of NWP" – response to Edward's writing

Roger

- as "magical"—ISI as/like "falling in love"

Malcolm

- as "magic"

As Nurturance/Sustenance

Elizabeth:

- "It (the NWP) feeds me."

Edward:

- WP as a "place that can sustain you through a broken time in your life"
- as "professional lifeline"
- as "nurturance"
- re: contract course in the Project that he facilitated many times as nurturance/sustenance: "…those people would come in, like, people crawling through a desert, never had a drop of water and you were there. And all you had was one canteen, and they were just thanking you up and down" Project as "canteen"

Michele:

- NWP as "renewal" (coming back to site/NWP)

Malcolm:

- teacher in story—as renewal/rebirth—"I feel renewed. No, I feel reborn."…"school was my life"

As Savior (not direct metaphors, but descriptive speech in relation to career/personal life being "saved" by Project):

Roger:

- as fixing professional "brokenness"
- as fixer/savior of personal and professional ails: "I was broken"

- "the WP helped save my professional and personal life"
- "I was ready to get gone"

Edward:

- "the Project, being part of the Project, sort of saved me from all sorts of other personal kinds of crises." (in reference to looking at his stepping stone list)
- Project and profession and the CPD in Project as a "savior" of personal troubles: "devotion to professional ethos is what saves you, drags you through a divorce…"
- WP as a "place that can sustain you through a broken time in your life" (also put in nurturance)

Malcolm:

- teacher in his story: "How many times I felt like quitting"…ISI changes that

As Discovery

Roger:

- Project as "discovery"

Edward:

- ISI as "eye-opening" (metaphor?)
- "the Project and teaching when at their best are discovery"
- ISI as taking "scales off of your eyes"

Michele:

- as "eye-opening" (metaphor?)

As Journey

Edward:

- teaching is "a professional person undertaking a journey" Project recognizes this; schools do not

Michele:

- Project/teaching as "journey"

Malcolm:

- writing stepping stones/snapshots as “little trip down memory lane”
- NWP have “charted this territory” (for others)
- You can use that “charted territory” as “a roadmap for your own career”

As Art

Edward:

- teaching “as art” Project recognizes this; schools do not

Steven:

- do you/society see teacher “as a factory worker or as an artist?”—sees as artist and this is the difference between school based CPD and NWP CPD

Malcolm:

- writing has “been the thread” that connects “all subjects and pedagogy”—I “weave it through all I do”
- NWP sees teaching as “a science AND an art”

As Gift

Edward:

- “the gift of the Project”/Mentor had given “the gift of the Project”

As Force

Edward:

- as “amazing force”

Michele:

- as a “driving force” and “being driven”

Malcolm:

- NWP as a “liberating force”

As Invitation

Steven:

- “invited to present; invited into the fold”

Michele:

- "as invitation"

Malcolm

- "as invitation"

Miscellaneous:

Roger:

- as "master course in teaching"—like "reading teachers"

Edward:

- "my current writing group is like a vestigial tail"
- making him a "professional whole"
- writing his snapshot was "like trying to tackle an octopus…slippery"
- teaching contract course as "an addiction" (not a metaphor?)
- Project as "a weirdo cult"—discounts this—(not a metaphor?)
- "So much of what you encounter as a teacher is the tail wagging the dog, right? And the Project says, no, let's look at the dog, you know, let's rip the tail off if we can." Re: school way vs Project way – teacher autonomy
- re: writing stepping stones and snapshot is tough because "writing your history of the Project is like writing your history of grief or of love or of childhood"
- re: vulnerability in Project: "WP is a place of no bullshit"
- "I am a product of the WP"
- "it is essentially my entire professional life"

Steven:

- NWP as a "foil to the cookie-cutter junk" in reference to no packaged programming, unlike the school system CPD
- sees "writers as troublemakers" and this is a good thing
- his involvement in the NWP as a "chain reaction"—one thing leading to the next
- NWP as a "two-way street" (giving and given); "not an echo chamber"

- writing for self as a “game-changer” for writing instruction

Malcolm:

- at school: “an island to myself”
- education as the “great equalizer”—thought before…
- must write to teach writing: “You can’t very well teach piano if you do not play piano.”
- on feeling compelled to write additional snapshot story—as “unfinished business”; as more of a “laundry list”; as research Project/my role as researcher as “gave me a push from the nest”
- school way vs. Project way
- NWP as “interconnectivity”

Edward’s Direct Metaphor:

- “I am the Writing Project.”
- “My point being that the Project is huge. It is hard to separate the Project from who I am as a teacher, or what I do every day…What is the influence of the Project except to say one word: everything.”

Appendix R

Interview Summaries

After participants revised their snapshot stories, I met with each of them to discuss their writing, their stepping stone lists and experiences, and the focus group event. I told each participant the interview would last 30 to 45 minutes, and I would let them know when we were at the 30-minute mark to see if they wanted to continue and then again at the 45-minute mark, if we were still talking. As I checked in with each participant at these established times, they all wanted to continue discussion, resulting in all interviews lasting at least 60 minutes. In the following paragraphs, I share summary overviews of each participant's follow-up interview. Data from these interviews are also highlighted in the findings and conclusions sections of this dissertation.

My first scheduled follow-up interview was with Edward. He immediately apologized for switching from the draft he wrote in our focus group to submitting an entirely new piece. He stated he simply couldn't find "one illustrative moment" because there were so many moments that "meshed the Project into what my life was." Our 70-minute conversation encompassed meaning-making of his many Project experiences, the personal and the professional and also where they overlapped. In this interview, as is seen in his snapshot story, Edward revealed his deep respect for the Project and its ability to "save careers."

Elizabeth and I met for an hour and we discussed her approach to the stepping stones list, one that involved her putting on her "professional hat," to her choice to write about a troubling moment in the Writing Project rather than the many wonderful experiences on her stepping stones list, including the starting of a successful Project site where she co-directs. The interview scanned such topics as how the Project creates a safe

space for vulnerable writing and sharing as well as what she sees as the "magic" and "transformational" powers of the Project experience.

My next interview was with Steven who commented that the stepping stone list was fairly easy to write as the Project had provided "watershed moments" and a deep sense of community building that was richer than any he found at schools where he was teaching. He needed more than his school community could provide and publishing, conferences, and the many offerings of the Writing Project gave him those professional moments. Our hour-long conversation drifted to the Project's ability to remind teachers that teaching is "craft" and it always provided ways to share what is "engaging to me and engaging to my kids." Finding that engaging, professional community was core to the meaning the Project had for him.

Michele and I met for a bit over an hour. We started by talking about her difficulty in narrowing her stepping stone list because there were so many things she had done with the Project to grow as a writer, as a professional, and as a person. Her assertion that her own professional development often occurred while she was the one providing professional development in the Project was echoed by others in the study. Her return again and again to the Project was all about "being drawn back to the people I have made connections with." Like so many of the participants, Michele articulated the professional gains while highlighting the personal growth and relationships she had found in the Project.

Malcolm said he enjoyed the chance to reflect on his involvement with the Project and when re-reading his stepping stones list, he felt "very lucky, very charmed." As he reflected on all of the work, he admitted that it looked busy on top on the very

"demanding job of teaching," and he asked aloud: "Why would you do all of this stuff?" He answered himself, and contributed to the research questions I also was asking, by saying, "It's all worked together…all that stuff has rejuvenated me and pays dividends in the classroom with fifth graders and vice versa." Malcolm explained why he had included a second snapshot writing. He felt his first writing really centered in on a moment, but he felt it left a bit of "unfinished business" and he needed to share more about the Project. Ultimately, he hoped his second snapshot story revealed where he discovered "the realization that the Writing Project can, in fact, make your life exponentially better as a teacher." We spent the next hour discussing all of the ways, both big and small, that the Project had done so for him.

My last and longest interview, lasting an hour and twenty minutes, was with Roger. He was surprised by the number of things on his stepping stones list. Even though he was often the one providing the Project professional development he felt that doing so was also his own professional development as it was "helping him to be a better teacher." He contrasted this to the "stuff he had to check off" for his county's requirements. The Project's CPD was just more worthwhile in his opinion. Our conversation often centered on the importance of the people in the Project and wanting to stay connected to them, as had happened in all of the other interviews. He had even kept feedback notes from Project colleagues in his bag and looked at them for inspiration on tough teaching days. Even though it has been 18 years since his ISI and he has moved several states away, he was still finding encouragement from his Project colleagues.

Appendix S

How NWP CPD Reflects RCT's "Five Good Things"

The participants often exuded *zest*. They presented energy-filled metaphors (i.e., "irrational fandom," "force," etc.) and described the passion they had for writing, teaching writing, and in feeling rejuvenated by the work of the Project. Their zest for teaching and for wanting to contribute to the profession at large was palpable at times. This was most evident when they described the many ways the Project had impacted various facets of their lives.

The participants described a new-found *clarity* in their association with NWP continued professional development. Participants mentioned being able to support their practice with theory they had discovered in the Project and felt like they were able to defend their pedagogical decisions to colleagues, administrations, parents, and students. They mentioned the recursive cycle of theory to practice and practice to theory that brought clarity to their classroom. Several participants mentioned the wealth of knowledge they had learned through NWP CPD and how, comparatively, it was worth so much more than all other CPD they had been involved in at the school or district level. The participants described new-found confidence about their teaching abilities as well as a sense of being authentic as a writer and a writing teacher. I believe the transformational testimony so often described by these participants as well as in other NWP studies hinges on this concept of clarity (Bratcher & Stroble, 1994; Kaplan, 2008; Locke, Whitehead, & Cawkwell, 2011; Pasternak, Rigoni, & Roberts, 2012; Whitney, 2008). To know what you are doing and why you are doing it feels transformational in a field that often mandates curriculum and practices with little teacher input.

Closely related to this increase in clarity, the participants also described their sense of *worth* improving in response to NWP CPD. Malcolm stated: "For the first time in the NWP, teachers sometimes feel like they're a professional, that their opinion matters, that what they think is valuable, that they have something to share." This quote was mirrored in the speech of other participants who saw one of the main principles of the NWP, that teachers are the best teachers of teachers, as a public statement of the worth of teachers, seeing them as the experts in their chosen profession. In addition, NWP CPD provided various avenues to pursue larger professional contributions, increasing self-worth. Many participants described pride and satisfaction when reviewing their stepping stones as it was an opportunity to reflect on their contributions to the Project, to their school sites, and to the educational profession as a whole.

The fourth "good thing" that reflects growth-fostering relationships is exhibiting *creativity*. Several of the participants made a distinction between the creativity that was encouraged and nurtured in the NWP and the regimented structure of school sites. Edward described the professional development at his school as discouraging creativity in the classroom. He said, "…they see you as a vessel. I think they think that if they fill you up with the stuff, it will trickle down to the students." He views this type of "trickle down" professional development as a "denial of teaching as an artform…and a denial of the teacher as human being." The inference here is that the NWP does see the humanness and creativity in teachers whereas the school system does not. Steven saw this difference as well. He said, "Are you [a teacher] just some of kind of factory worker? I would want to quit that job, too, but when you think of the Writing Project, what it does again, it reminds us it [teaching] is a craft…" The NWP assures, nurtures, and affirms teachers'

creativity. That leads the TCs in the Project to grow in dynamic ways. The Teacher-Consultants wanted their systems to acknowledge teaching as both an art and a science, something NWP CPD honored.

The final "good thing" that reflects growth-fostering relationships are present is the desire for more connection. Clearly the participants described zest, clarity, worth, and creativity nurtured through the culture of connection in the NWP. They sustained their extensive involvement with the NWP continued professional development as they were seeking meaningful growth. The NWP was an organization they could return to again and again, where they would find both friends and colleagues who would encourage them to evolve as teachers, as writers, as professionals, and as people. The data revealed these five good things, often disclosed in powerful meaning-filled metaphors, indicators of the growth-fostering relationships found in the NWP.

Appendix T

Stepping Stone Lists—Written in Focus Group Sessions

(Confidentiality Changes Made and Confirmed with Participants)

Michele's Stepping Stones (not chronological; please note – as collected from participant)

1. I participated in the ISI (2004).
2. Was asked to be on staff with K (2005)—even more rewarding?
3. Started teaching credit course in local district—3 or 4 times? (2006–-2010???)
4. Sitting on the board —Friday afternoons on campus—my name showing up on the list of roles without being asked
5. How I came to lead the conference for 10 years—driving Jim Burke around
6. The first conference of what was to become a national organization—supported by Project, organization grew out of it (led by Teacher-Consultants)
7. Trouble with new Project director (missing our past director!)
8. Trouble with replacement of that director (missing our past director!)
9. The joy of my first school year after the ISI—how transformative it was
10. Feeling less than after initial rejection for ISI—being surrounded by amazing writers
11. Stealing a line—lifelong friendships
12. Participating in Progoff workshops
13. Instituting Project In-service at my school!

Steven's Stepping Stones (not chronological; please note – as collected from participant)

1. I participated in the ISI.
2. Meeting TCs in a bar after a hiatus from the Project.

3. Hanging out with Dave and Martin in Baltimore.
4. Taking Brandon's in-service course.
5. Working with a writing group in Brandon's in-service course.
6. Inviting Brandon and Dave to talk to a local school district to talk to ELAAC committee.
7. Presenting at Nathan's in-service course.
8. Presenting at my local site's annual conference.
9. Serving on the Advisory Board.
10. Presenting to a local district as a TC.

Malcolm's Stepping Stones (not chronological; please note – as collected from participant)

1. I attended the ISI in 2002…I was reluctant but everything that I thought I knew about teaching and writing got turned upside down and the only way I could make sense of this was to write.
2. Designed continuity for local Writing Project 2002–2003…connected TCs from various years but also invited TCs to bring a guest and introduce them to the Writing Project.
3. Taught first Writing Project In-Service Course in 2005…I love contributing to our profession in this way. I have facilitated this course around 15 times since then in four different districts.
4. Became a National Board Certified Teacher in 2003 (year after the ISI)…I learned to summarize, analyze, and reflect in the Writing Project and this was necessary in the NBCT process; also all the writing that I did the previous

summer empowered me to write a lot during this process and nearly all of my lessons and professional contributions cited in the NBCT process were directly related to my work with the Writing Project.

5. Turned every other staff meeting into a best practices sharing session with teachers sharing something that worked similar to Writing Project albeit in abbreviated 10-minutes.
6. Former co-director of local project site in charge of professional development…designed, recruited, collaborated and delivered various writing in-services for two local school districts.
7. Had several articles and poetry published in our state Journal of the Writing Project…had one article picked up and published by National.
8. Presented at my local site's annual conference numerous times, been the keynote speaker on Writing Across the Curriculum twice and standards-based writing once at major conferences. Presented on writing well over 100 times at local, state, and regional conferences.
9. Was always skeptical when people said, "The Project changed my life," but after 15 or so years working with the Project, a teacher articulated this to me in a summer institute that I was co-directing, which made me believe this statement.
10. Working at a respected East Coast private university in a Writing Program since 2017…this would not have happened without having worked with the Writing Project on many things including professional development and student writers with another Teacher Consultant who would go on to direct this program.

11. Co-directed five ISIs and worked three Student Summer Institutes and numerous Writers Workshops for 5th through 12th graders.
12. Tried unsuccessfully to balance the needs/wants of the old Project people with those of the new; supported former directors with their own personal crises; worked behind the scenes de-escalating various conflicts due to specific challenges the local Project has endured these past couple years.
13. Wrote an as of yet unpublished book…working on book number two.

Elizabeth's Stepping Stones (not chronological; please note – as collected from participant)

2004—ISI

2004—Local site director chose me for Continuity

2014—SI in the Valley with LT, a respected Teacher-Consultant

2015—Satellite site becomes an official NWP site

2012—Taught first Project contract course located at my Middle School

2012—Introduced Donalyn Miller at our site's local conference

2017—Offer Year Round ISI

2015—Opened a Writing Center at my middle school with student tutors from a non-profit that developed at our local site

2010—Local site I started with goes under the first time

2020—No ISI due to the virus

Roger's Stepping Stones (not chronological; please note – as collected from participant)

- I attended first SI in 2002

- B's poem and note "An Horatian Notion" passed along to my students [I meant future SI TC's when I was faculty, not the students I teach]
- SI faculty in 2010 when my daughters were babies
- "Don't apologize, just read the crap"
- Writing group member/friend who was gay (GSA) [the parenthetical was a note to myself thinking about how knowing him later helped me become Gay Straight Alliance adviser at my current school]
- Writing group member/friend who was disabled
- MF's passing out envelopes to send writing out. Still have it; still feel guilt
- Starting SI at a satellite site with SF. I'm good at playing second fiddle to a strong female lead.
- Advanced SI—feeling like a fraud; true of first SI as well
- B making clear research needed to be included.
- Writing group meetings at O's house
- Presenting at a contract course—feeling like a fraud
- Calling people to present
- Sharing writing
- Speaking up in front of people, being open
- Bad writing group member who would always explain and defend
- "Does that make sense?"
- Read-arounds and notes
- The director asking me to lead those [read-arounds] and how he said I was really good at it

- P and LJ
- LJ saying how good I was at giving feedback on lessons

Edward's Stepping Stones (not chronological; please note – as collected from participant)

1. I did the ISI.
2. First Project presentation to teacher in a local Project in-service course—no feedback, lost…then other presentations…
3. In the restroom at a board meeting—the director at next urinal asks me to be on staff for ISI
4. Meeting with first writing group at Le Madeline
5. Publishing in local site's journal—no time for war stories?
6. The board retreat at a local hotel—feeling like a professional
7. Keynote address at our site's annual conference in the midst of my divorce
8. Putting the local site's 25th anniversary slide show together—fitting myself into the history of the organization
9. Running a Student Summer Institute for disadvantaged youth—feeling as if the theory met the practice
10. The last site meeting—knowing it will likely be the last Project anything I do…feeling nauseous as I walked to my car in the parking deck