

# Foregrounding Preservice Teacher Identity in Teacher Education

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**ABSTRACT:** The article examines, through comparative case study method, how secondary-language-arts preservice student teachers' identities were constructed by spacetime configurations and what those identities meant to the individuals in the study. It reflects on the findings from two of the preservice secondary arts teachers for the study in two differently structured teacher education programs, and it looks at how those teaching identities were influenced by spatial and temporal configurations, which constructed a particular identity during the spacetime of the study.

Identity matters because it, whatever it is, shapes or is an aspect of how humans make sense of the world and their experiences in it.

—McCarthy and Moje (2002, p. 228)



Education is not an isolated profession, nor is it immune to changes in policy at the international, national, state, and local levels; as such, teachers' identities are vulnerable to shifts, along with the profession. As a result of the shifting nature of our field and the multiple contexts in which teachers engage, teachers' identities will be reconstituted during the spacetime that the identity is being coconstructed. Because of this complexity and the imminent whimsicality of change, it is difficult to understand how current competing forces are affecting the preservice teacher. Preservice teacher identity is an area that has largely been neglected as a germane topic in teacher education, and as a result, it has been insufficiently researched (Britzman, 1991; Danielewicz, 2001; Vinz, 1996). Yet Lee and Yarger (1996) point out that "there are more than 2 million teachers in the nation's schools. More than 1,200 higher education institutions [that] offer teacher preparation programs, producing 100,000 new teachers each year" (Kennedy, 1991, p. 16). These numbers represent a dichotomy, as well as a challenge and an opportunity, in teacher education to investigate the identity of the preservice teacher. Danielewicz (2001) says that teacher education programs should foster teacher identity development to the highest degree possible, and with the increasing numbers of student teachers being trained each year, teacher edu-

cation has a moral responsibility and an obligation to understand the complexities of the matrix (Miller, 2005, forthcoming) that illuminates preservice teacher identity.

For educational research to have efficacy in other contexts, it should push outside the confines of an educational axis to challenge dominant binary paradigms. As research makes meaning of preservice teacher identity in a multitude of spaces, practitioners will be better able to serve the needs of preservice teachers and support them in understanding themselves as part of a larger matrix and how their identities are being coconstructed. Such an awareness has the potential for transferability in supporting how their classroom students make sense of their own identities, and it can empower individuals to negotiate their identities both toward and against the many coparticipants that matrix their lives. This research evolves out of a concern that teacher education needs to (1) focus on the coconstruction of the individual identity of the preservice teacher and (2) be proactive in the nurturance and cultivation of teacher identity as teachers move in and out of spaces during different times.

When we look at all of the participants that are coconstructing the identity of the teacher, it is important to step out of binary<sup>1</sup> thought because to teach and discuss teacher identity in binary ways reinforces a binary conception of teacher identity and a status quo mentality in education. Likewise, to conduct research on preservice teacher identity through the lenses of education and its jargon narrows our understanding about the nature of preservice teacher identity and limits our vision of the field. If teacher education is to challenge and even disrupt status quo conceptions about education and challenge hegemonic paradigms, then research must challenge the semipermeable and transient borders that frame education and attempt to view preservice teacher identity in spaces that exist outside of an educational axis.

## Who Is a Preservice Teacher?

Teachers' identities are being coconstructed and reconstructed by a rapidly changing sociopolitical geography<sup>2</sup> that is affected by the space and time during which a teaching identity is coming to be. The identity of a teacher is the identity of the individual as it is highlighted by its relationship to the school space and as it is identified as such based on the definitions and expectations of what it means to be a teacher in a school. A preservice teacher identity is similar to a teacher identity with the exception that the individual is taking on the demands of what it is to be a teacher and the individual is marginally situated in two worlds—that of the inchoate educator who is making meaning of what a teacher is and does and that of student (Britzman, 1991). Preservice student teachers, unlike in-service teachers, are immediately confronted with how their own past knowledge and experience and the construction of the self by their teacher preparatory program bump up against that of new and

traditional teaching pedagogy and teaching practices. As a preservice teacher, an identity is coming to be in several spaces at once: the school, the teacher preparatory program, and the other communities of learning that are apprenticing the inchoate teacher. It is therefore necessary that teacher education foreground the coconstruction of the preservice teacher identity to assist the individual in co-opting his or her own subjectivity so that the individual becomes part of his or her own teacher identity development. Making preservice teachers aware of their own teacher identity coconstruction challenges dominant binary paradigms in society and opens up possibilities that can push these teachers toward action and agency. In so doing, we fill their toolboxes with tools to be “deconstructive” in their own teacher identity coconstructions so that they can be proactive in their own teacher identity coconstructions, and in turn, we empower them to be conscientious about the conditions that they are creating that are constructing their students’ identities.

To accomplish the feat of studying preservice teacher identity, to push teacher education outside of the confines of an educational axis, and to challenge dominant paradigms that reinforce hegemony, I conducted a study that intentionally broke out of dominant structures and exposed the polemic struggle between binary thinking in Soja’s (1996) discussion of *firstspace* (real or actual space), “concrete materiality of spatial forms, on things that can be empirically mapped” (p. 10), and *secondspace* (imagined space), “conceived in ideas about space, in thoughtful re-presentations of human spatiality in mental and cognitive forms” (p. 10), as they intersected with concepts of *thirdspace*, the amalgam of both the “real and imagined” journeys or the “thirding” of spatial awareness and imagination (p. 11). Both firstspace and secondspace thinking and research narrows and limits our understanding about preservice teacher identity. Thirdspace, however, is the “creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends beyond them in scope, substance and meaning” (p. 11). Conceptualizing findings through a thirdspace lens liberates us from binary constructs and enables us to view teacher identity coconstruction through new ways of imagining.

The identity of the preservice teacher is framed by the matrix that is coconstructing the individual during the space and time, or *spacetime* (Nespor, 1997, p. xi), that a preservice teacher is coming to be (see Figure 1). By spacetime, I reference the spatial (space), a place that “brings them [specified factors constructing identity] all together and substitutes itself for each factor separating and enveloping it” (Soja, 1996, p. 45). Space references the literal, physical layout of the factors (e.g., social groups, communities that apprentice a teacher, institutions, media, policy, and research) and the places in which an identity comes to mean. By temporal (time), I reference the actual time in which the identity is being formed, such as January–April 2005. A spacetime relationship is hence based on the premise that time and space are

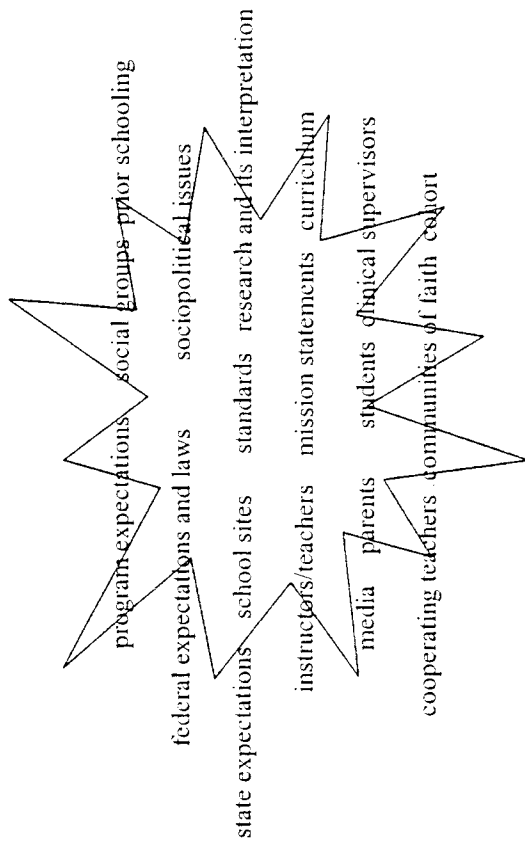


Figure 1. Example of a spacetime web/matrix constructing a preservice teacher's identity.

fluid and therefore constantly changing. The boundedness then of identity by the rationality of spacetime suggests that teacher identity is fluid and constantly shifting. By studying teachers' identities and by asking teachers what their identities mean to them, we can gain insight about the spacetime geography and specified configurations that are constructing a teacher during that specific spacetime.

The guiding research question for this study is, how do the teacher identities of five preservice teachers develop—or come to “mean”—in the context of two differently structured teacher education programs? The question ebbed from my dissertation, which was a qualitative comparative case study that addressed how secondary-language-arts preservice student teachers' identities were constructed by spacetime configurations and that examined what those identities meant to the individuals in the study. From the participants in my study, we are transported into their understandings of how their preservice teachers have come to be and what that means to each of them. Such understanding first unpacks and then illuminates the experiences of preservice teacher identities and then bridges the gap from the transition of preservice teaching to in-service teaching positions. The diverse findings from this study highlight how these preservice teachers' identities were constructed, and they suggest that identity coconstruction is a subjective experience. Although this study investigated English preservice identity, it has implications for other disciplines in teacher education. This study deepens our awareness about the geography that binds and constructs

preservice secondary-language-arts teacher identities and how these teachers made meaning of their own teaching identity coconstructions.

### Preservice Teacher Identity Through a Spacetime Lens

The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation. (Bhabha, as quoted in Soja, 1996, p. 14)

For this study I hybridized and intersected theoretical perspectives of teacher identity, intentionally crossing boundaries, and I drew on and appropriated language from spatial and critical geography studies to ground my research in its critical use of language. This study, through its unique conceptualization of teacher identity coconstruction and discourse, seeks to continue the burgeoning discussion of spacetime as it intersects with teacher education to broaden the field of teacher education. With that, this study took a unique turn, a *spatial turn* (Robertson & Dale, 2005; Soja, 2004), that directs us toward the importance of looking at preservice teacher identity coconstruction in imaginative, spatial, and innovative ways and allows us to analyze teacher identity from several new perspectives.

In hybridizing theoretical frameworks, I drew from anthropological studies, critical discourse analysis, critical race theory studies, critical theory, psychological studies, sociocultural studies, and liberatory pedagogy; yet I primarily focused on teacher identity construction from critical literacy, feminist studies, and spatiality and hybridity theories. Commonalities shared by these fields make meaning of how identities come to be constructed through transacting with and within various social spaces and through marginalization from various social spaces (Leander, 2002; Lefebvre, 1991). These studies also informed my understanding of how teacher identities were stabilized and destabilized.<sup>3</sup>

In my survey of the literature for this research, I found several voids. Teacher identity construction within the field of teacher preparation has been insufficiently researched, and it is therefore not surprising that there are limited studies on preservice teacher identity. Although Britzman (1991), Danielewicz (2001), Grossman (1990), and Vinz (1996) have contributed to the research on the social construction of both in-service and preservice student teacher identities, the breadth of research on preservice teacher identity construction continues to be minimal. In an attempt to expand our conception of preservice teacher identity in teacher preparation research and to push our field forward by expanding our borders to other theoretical fields outside of education, I visited the literature with a transdisciplinary focus, which “cuts across all perspectives and modes of thought” (Soja, 1996, p. 3), and I challenged the ideology that the past is spatially and temporally frag-

mented. The related spacetime discourse that is imbibed within this study contributes to a near absence of studies in the literature about spacetime as it relates to English-teacher identity. Few studies, if at all, have looked at the spatiality and temporality of preservice student teacher identities (Britzman, 1991; Nespor, 1997).

This study pushed the boundaries of traditional dualities of thinking that are situated in hegemony and situated findings that brought meaning making into nonbinary conceptions of preservice teacher identity coconstruction. For this study, preservice teachers were not viewed as objects to be studied but rather as ontological participants that could enhance a transdisciplinary conceptualization of how their identities were being constructed both spatially and temporally. Meaning for this study was conceptualized through a postmodern lens, which underscores that meaning and ideas are not black and white but which rather allows us to view concepts from a space outside of the object being viewed. Therefore, meaning and identity could be found in relation to rather than within an object. This study extends and expands the conversation and even creates the research on how preservice secondary-language-arts student teacher identities are spatially and temporally geographically “meant” by studying the transient notion of borders surrounding specified spacetime configurations.

### Spacetime Methods and Data Analysis

The spatial turn for this study continues and extends into the methods and data analysis.<sup>4</sup> Spacetime notions bordered the context that grounded this entire study and provided a unique lens of analyzing preservice secondary-language-arts identities. Spacetime can be understood by the premise that time and space are fluid and are therefore constantly changing. Spatial theorists have their own ways of inscribing the term *spacetime*, which further accentuates its mutability. I choose to inscribe the term by eliminating the hyphen, which is often found separating the term *space from time*. My choice to eliminate the hyphen mirrors my desire to marry the terms and to show that the terms concurrently influence each other and cannot be separated. Furthermore, the elimination of the hyphen renders a reminder that space and time occur simultaneously, and it attempts to challenge binary concepts that space and time are fragmented.

The study was bound by a large research university in the Southwest in which two programs were studied, the Satellite Partnership Program and the Secondary Language Arts Cohort. A multisite design contributes to “maximize diversity” so that it can be applied to other situations and research (Merriam, 2001, p. 211). I examined both the Satellite Partnership Program and Secondary Language Arts Cohort sites because they had different educational orientations. The Secondary Language Arts Cohort is disciplinary, and the

Satellite Partnership Program is nondisciplinary. These disciplinary orientations elicited differences between how student teachers identified themselves as teachers in their specified fields. The participants for this study were unique and purposefully chosen from each of the two differently structured teacher education programs. The participants were selected because they were teaching secondary language arts and they varied ethnically on gender, age, class, sexual orientation, and background interests.

Data were collected over 4.5 months, during which preservice teachers were observed and interviewed in two contexts: secondary English university classes and their teaching placements. Although data collection varied, identity artifacts revealed unique findings that had key implications. Identity artifacts are how interactants mediate (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998) and stabilize a particular identity at a given point in time through an "instrument (material, tool, embodied space, text, discourse, etc.) that mediates identity-shaping activity" (Leander, 2002, p. 201). Participants were informed about the concept of an identity artifact and self-selected their own.

Data collection for this study included audiotaped and videotaped semi-structured and unstructured group and individual interviews, examination of material artifacts, identity artifacts, participant's log and reflexive journal, participant observations and spatial mapping (in classroom as teacher and as student), and a researcher's log. Data were analyzed through critical discourse analysis (Bakhtin 1981, 1986; Foucault, 1986; Rogers, 2004) and conversational analysis (Wetherell, Taylor, & Yates, 2001) and viewed through feminist and spacetime lenses. Both critical discourse analysis and conversational analysis align with feminism and spacetime because they are critical of how the epistemologies that are grounded in hegemony play out in schools and they are concerned with understanding how power is involved in language and social relations to facilitate research for change and the emancipation of individual social relations in contemporary social life. Data analysis was ongoing and recursive and was achieved by using constant-comparative methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miller, 2005, forthcoming).

Applying critical discourse analysis and conversational analysis and viewing data through feminist and spacetime lenses, I looked for unified summative descriptions across cases and for themes, or typologies that "conceptualize the data for all cases" (Merriam, 2001, p. 195). Once the within-case data were analyzed, a cross-case analysis of the data was conducted. Simultaneous to all data analysis, to create the portraits for the study, I applied data collection techniques from Miles and Huberman (1994). As I coded transcripts from participants, the analysis was ongoing and iterative. I then looked for pattern codes by looking for "recurrent phrases or common threads" (p. 149) and observed, named, and verified patterns. Once this phase was completed, I constructed emerging themes. Although this analysis enabled me to create the portraits, it provided a window to look for themes that could be extracted and analyzed along with other data from the study. Data were represented

through portraiture and narrative form (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997; Ritchie & Wilson, 2000) to reveal their authentic stories (and how they varied). Ochs and Capps (1996) suggest that narratives speak the story of the self as it mediates with the world and that the two are inseparable. The interchangeability of the presentation of data through both portraiture and narrative challenges the deterministic binary nature of research by honoring the fractal, atomistic nonarrangements and relationships dominated by uncertainty and unpredictability (Baudrillard, 2001).

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of this study and to expand the lenses through which I crystallized my data, I applied Richardson's notion of crystallization (Jamesick, 1998). Viewing data through multiple lenses allows us to see our data "more deeply" (Richardson, 2000, p. 934), and it is a way of examining data from numerous perspectives. Because I intended to represent my data through mixed genres, postmodernists suggest that data should be crystallized and not triangulated as "we recognize that there are far more than three sides" from which to approach the world (p. 934).

Findings congealed along two metataxonomies for within-case and cross-case analyses: constructed through critique and constructed through *windowing* (Miller, 2005).<sup>5</sup> The taxonomy of constructed through critique evolved from the preservice teachers' experiences as they critiqued an aspect of their teacher preparation experience. This critique included but was not limited to the teacher practices or beliefs of veteran teachers, their cooperating teachers, or administrators. The taxonomy of constructed through windowing evolved from the idea that a window is something we can see through and, at a certain point in the day, either reflects back an image or is something that leads to images outside. The taxonomy of windowing for preservice teachers illustrated that they saw in others something that they appropriated into their teacher identities or aspects of what they hoped to eventually emulate but which were beyond their reach at the moment. When we apply the idea of a window to the context of this study, we see that when participants saw in others aspects of ideals they wanted to instantly embody because they were capable of such an act during a spacetime, such as admiring one's ability to engage students or possessing the ability to deflect an argument, then that acts as a reflection. When participants knew that they hoped to eventually embody something but, because of their fledgling status, did not embody it during this spacetime, such as a depth and breadth of knowledge on a text or understanding the interplay of literary allusions from text to text, that acts as a future projection. Hence, this projection manifests in thirdspace as the "creation of another mode of thinking about space that draws upon the material and mental spaces of the traditional dualism but extends beyond them in scope, substance and meaning" (Soja, 1996, p. 11).

Within the larger metataxonomies including critique and windowing, five thematic areas emerged: meaning; value systems; expectations about the profession; communities of learning that apprentice the teacher; and policy,

research, its interpretation, and its impact on communities of learning. At this point, I narrow this description of the five case studies to only the stories of "Diving In" and "Free Spirit" and focus briefly on how their identities were constructed through communities of learning that apprenticed the teacher and juxtapose the findings through the larger taxonomies of constructed through critique and constructed through windowing to illustrate the presence of teacher identity coconstruction in thirdspace. I refer to the participants with the metaphors that emerged from within their portraits.

### Room 102

Diving In was an intern in the Satellite Partnership Program, a highly competitive, postbaccalaureate, nondisciplinary teacher education program that prepares teachers to earn their teacher's licensure at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Diving In spent 14 months, summer to summer, completing her secondary-language-arts licensure. Expectations for licensure included course work, weekly seminar, and assuming full responsibilities for an entire academic year in Room 102. Her placement was in a school that was consistently on or near probation and which had a notorious reputation for gang violence and teacher attacks. Her teaching partner had been relocated to a different school to fill a district need. At Mountainview High School, her teaching assignment was to teach three 9th-grade full-inclusion classes in the freshman academy, without being special education certified. Mountainview is a school that is situated in a lower-socioeconomic rural section of town and has a predominantly Hispanic and Mexican population of students. Over the past 4 years, her school had been on or near probation from the Public Education Office for having substandard math and reading scores on standardized statewide exams and consequently not meeting the adequate yearly progress under No Child Left Behind. Her clinical supervisor unanimously approved of her teaching solo because of her outstanding teaching performance thus far, and without a cooperating teacher, Diving In did just that—she dove in.

### Gifted Bad Kid

Free Spirit was a member of the Secondary Language Arts Cohort, which prepares undergraduates, postbaccalaureates, and graduate students who are seeking advanced degrees in the English language arts and/or an English teacher's licensure at the middle and high school levels. He did not take the typical route taken by his cohort, because he had dropped out of the Secondary Language Arts Cohort halfway through because of internal conflicts and issues with his cooperating teacher and clinical supervisor. His sojourn away from the program and his return frames his story. Free Spirit spent one and a half academic years earning his licensure while he took university

courses, attended a weekly seminar, pre-student-taught with a teaching partner, and then later student-taught. For his student teaching, he taught three sophomore language arts classes at Carlos Martinez High School, a ruraly situated school that received mostly Hispanic and Native American students from nearby reservations. His students came from a lower-socioeconomic bracket and were exposed to excessive alcoholism, poverty, and drugs. However, most of his students were meeting the expected skills for grade level, and his school, unlike Diving In's, had not faced probation from the Public Education Office and was making adequate yearly progress under No Child Left Behind. Free Spirit's once-rebellious self, now quite gifted with words and an inviting disposition, was a solid match for his teaching placement.

## Spacetime Constructing the A-Identity Learning Constructing the A-Identity

Several communities of learning were concurrently apprenticing Diving In and Free Spirit in the study. A community of learning is likened to a community of practice. Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that teacher identities are constructed through communities of practice:

The activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning. These systems of relations arise out of and are reproduced and developed within social communities, which are in part systems of relations among persons. The person is defined by as well as defines these relations. Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations. To ignore this aspect of learning is to overlook the fact that learning involves the construction of identities. (p. 53)

Likewise, the preservice secondary-language-arts student teacher is constructed through observation and intercontextual experiences (Leander, 2001) with veteran teachers, professors, cooperating teachers, clinical supervisors, the cohort, and images in the media and from prior knowledge and observation of former teachers.

Preservice teachers' identities were dialogically constructed (Gee, 1996) through the grooming process that occurred in their teacher education courses and field placements, especially in those courses that contributed to constructing their English-teacher identities. Because the programs approach disciplinary content differently, the participants' teacher identities were constructed quite differently. Danilewicz (2001) writes, "Coursework can be useful in both aspects of the identification process. In addition to content and methods, academic courses can provide the elbow room students need to discover and develop their individual abilities and personal interests" (p. 48). As preservice teachers engaged in their *figured worlds*—which are "historical phenomena to which we are recruited or into which

we enter, which themselves develop through the works of their participants, "socially organized and reproduced," and "socially instanced and located in times and places" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 41)—they began to take on and assume an English-teacher identity. Cree (2002) refers to the notion of belonging to, participating in, or having access to a community as an affiliation, or *affinity identity*, an "A-Identity." He says,

Being recognized as a certain "kind of person," in a given context, is what I mean here by "identity." In this sense of the term, all people have multiple identities connected not to their "internal states" but to their performances in society. (p. 99)

For Diving In and Free Spirit, their communities of learning helped to (re)stabilize their teaching identities, and they helped them locate themselves in the school space.

### Constructed Through Critique: Communities of Learning That Apprentice the Teacher

There were several communities that contributed to the matrices for both Diving In's and Free Spirit's preservice teacher identities. For Diving In, such communities included her family, career change colleagues, former teachers, her cohort, the instructors in her program, her clinical supervisor, the individuals at Mountainview High School, her students, and her peers. Free Spirit's matrix included the needs of the students' communities, career change, colleagues, prior work experience, his friends, prior schooling, current teachers, current teaching placement, his cohort, and (during two different times and spaces) his clinical supervisors, his students, and his university professors. For both participants, as they separately participated in their communities of learning, they shared some element of dissatisfaction with what was playing a part in constructing their A-identities. I describe the overall issues for each of them from the findings as they were analyzed both within case and cross case.

For Diving In, the dissonance between herself and her school was evident because without a teaching partner and without strong support from the administration, she felt confined to her classroom. However, having a stable relationship with her clinical supervisor enabled her to explore other relationships within the school network because it promoted inner confidence. A lack of a cooperating teaching forced her to reach out and be resourceful in the school. Her relationship with her students and her concern about their home lives motivated her to create lessons that were relevant to their needs. The dissonance experienced by Diving In took on meaning in the context of first-space (i.e., the classroom and school); however, she had to imagine and consider ways to help her retain her focus in the school for which she was frustrated and ill-supported. Such imaginings can be conceptualized through

secondspace and thirdspace thinking. For instance, she was critical of her administration's perceived lack of follow-through in supporting the freshman academy teachers and for not providing her the support she needed to work with her special-needs students. She was unsure of how to let administrators know about her critique because they were in a position of power over her and she felt threatened by the hierarchy. She expressed through interviews that she was fearful about her teacher identity destabilizing. She was forced to silence her frustration within the school space, but in her mind and through conversations with others, she was overtly critical of the school. Diving In had a network of support that included her clinical supervisor, cohort, and course work, which buffered her teacher identity from being subsumed by the laxness in her school space. Such support provided a *heterotopia*, a "real" place where there is a "sort of mixed, joint experience" or a "counter-site" occupied and created by those who contest the dominant sites (Foucault, 1986, p. 24), where together they could freely discuss concerns, imagine ways to resolve problems, and consider the types of schools they would prefer to teach in, in the future.

For Free Spirit, the space between the university and Carlos Martinez High was more evident because he was learning about liberatory teaching pedagogy and discourse that clashed with his cooperating teacher's view of teaching and his perception of dated pedagogy. This clash was heavily influenced by the university vision of teaching students to have agency through constructivist practices. Free Spirit struggled the entire semester under the tutelage of the cooperating teacher; he was criticized for teaching over his students' heads and was told that, perhaps, high school was the wrong level for him. Though unsure about his future teaching, he proved to himself that he could subvert the dominant opinion of himself and fulfill a commitment that he made to himself about completing his teaching program, which eclipsed the importance of what others thought of his teaching.

He believed that it was his responsibility to create a curricular bridge between students' sociocultural needs and those of the schools, and he recognized that his teacher identity was affected by the sociocultural, emotional, academic, and personal needs of classroom students. He felt a responsibility to understand how the sociocultural needs of his students are connected to school so that he could assist his students in critically thinking about their lives and their education. He also believed that it was his responsibility to do whatever it was that could make him an effective communicator and teacher with his students. Because his students were predominantly Native American, teaching meant to him, not forcing them to emulate his discourse pattern, but observing their discourse patterns and building lessons around that. Teaching also meant that he selected texts that mirrored their cultural backgrounds, and the projects his students participated in were linked to home and community, such as oral storytelling or writing personal narratives. He felt critical of teachers who did not meet students where they were in their lives and

who imposed their own curricular and academic agenda. He saw himself in the role of a community service worker, one whose acts are based on others' needs. He believed that institutional change could only occur by empowering the people from a grassroots level, and he was deeply dedicated to discussing covering what it was that would motivate his students. Still idealistic in his thinking and yet trying to fully actualize his ideas in firstspace teaching, Free Spirit is committed to maturing in the profession.

Because of his cooperating teacher's omnipresence in the classroom, he had a small network in the school because he mostly relied on the cooperating teacher. As he observed his cooperating teacher and other veteran teachers, he negotiated his teacher identity against what he saw, and he observed how that conflicted with his belief system. His university network, which included his cohort, professors, and clinical supervisor, formed a heterotopia for him, affirmed his teacher identity, and helped to stabilize the kind of teacher that he wanted to be. His fragile teacher identity (re)stabilized because of the support that he received from his cohort, professors, and myself, as his clinical supervisor.

### Constructed Through Windowing: Communities of Learning That Apprentice the Teacher

Windowing, once again, is the notion that someone sees something in a space or in an individual that can be appropriated into the teacher identity in the immediate spacetime or projected into the periphery for future emulation. For both Diving In and Free Spirit, their observations of veteran teachers helped them negotiate and reconfigure the kinds of teachers that they wanted to be. Whether participants aligned with the pedagogical beliefs of the veteran teacher, all persons who were observed acted as a mirror or as a window through which they could envision the kinds of the teachers they wanted to become. The observations, because they were bordered by the expectations of the program, framed their lenses through which they viewed veteran teachers. Such lenses helped participants first discriminate, then appropriate, and later embody particular ideals that aligned with their own belief systems and appropriate them into their teacher identities. The imaginings of their future teacher identities were laced with the values and images that aligned with their own background values as they negotiated between their experiences in the field, in the university classroom, in society, and within themselves. Observing veteran teachers helped them envision their maturation and comfort levels in the classroom. Though their thinking was only imaginative, veteran teachers acted as a window through which participants could envision how they might create future classroom spaces or embody teacher traits that they lacked at this point, such as confidence and stability in their teaching identities. Although neither of the participants could imagine what their teaching lives might look like next year, they imagined that they would feel

more confident with curriculum materials and that they might be in placements where they felt more comfortable than they did this year. They recognized that their teaching identities were fluid and would shift and reconfigure depending on where they might be teaching next year. They wished that the problems they faced this year would vanish next year, and they hoped that they would have more time to focus on curriculum and less on schoolwide problems. In time, they had confidence that what they could not fully embody during this spacetime would later solidify.

For both participants, their classroom students were windows through which the teachers both looked and imagined how their teacher identities would grow as conceptualized by thirdspace thinking. Understanding the needs of their students was a large piece of this thinking. They realized that the student populations would differ by site and that they would have to adjust aspects of their teacher identities to meet students' needs, thus making their teacher identities fluid. It seemed to both of them that students would greatly benefit from a teacher who embedded himself or herself within a community and learned all there is about the needs of the students. Then the transaction between student, teacher, and lesson can be an authentic place of departure for them as future teachers.

For Free Spirit a few findings emerged that differed from those of Diving In. For instance, Free Spirit had a stressful relationship with his cooperating teacher, clinical supervisor, and teaching partner during the first spacetime he entered the program. These relationships helped him negotiate against the kind of teacher he wanted to be. Because they found his thinking obscure, his sense of humor odd, and his teaching practices unorthodox and because he lacked a heterotopia during that time, his teaching identity destabilized and he dropped from the program. When he came back to the program the next year during a different spacetime and had amenable relationships with his cooperating teacher and clinical supervisor (which happened to be me), neither of us condemned his personality, and to the contrary, we nurtured him because he could connect with, inspire, and motivate students, and for our program, that was the most important aspect of being in the classroom. As he was affirmed this time around, his teaching identity stabilized, although he constantly questioned whether he belonged in teaching. The relationships with those in power over him played the vital role in reinscribing him in the school space, and consequently, he was more confident about engaging in thirdspace imagining when he felt confident in his *I-identity* (Gee, 2002), the identity bound by the institution.

### Spacetime on the Horizon

Teacher education is a field that is often placed at the center of competing agendas and takes the brunt of immediate expectations to foster change in



teachers and schools. To not address the issues affecting our field is to disservice those we are constructing to teach in schools. By working with teachers and listening to their stories, we can begin to unpack the conditions that teacher educators have established in their teacher preparation courses. As we better understand their experiences, we can begin to shift our pedagogical and theoretical perspectives so that they meet the needs of an ephemeral populace. What we teach and how we teach arm teachers with their own pedagogical and theoretical canon in their classrooms, and as times change, we need to be thoughtful about what we teach because it informs how, why, and what teachers teach.

An intention of this study has been to foreground the importance of understanding preservice English-teacher identity coconstruction and to urge researchers to consider framing future research by reconceptualizing preservice teacher identity through a spacetime lens. As our research expands, so too will our field expand and so too will the identities of our teachers that we are coconstructing. As a result of the shifting nature of our field and the multiple contexts in which teachers engage, teachers' identities will be reconstituted during the spacetime that their identities are being coconstructed. As spacetime enters into the discourse surrounding teacher education even more and becomes germane to it and as more transdisciplinary studies are conducted, we will see our field push into other theoretical frameworks and become part of the enlarging matrix surrounding teachers during any spacetime.

### Suggestions for Future Spacetime Studies

Given the conclusions from my research, I offer five suggestions that may help to inform our own practice and the burgeoning agenda in preservice teacher identity coconstruction. If we delocalize preservice teacher identity coconstruction; relocate teachers' identities subjectively in a networked matrix; and study the stabilization, destabilization, and reestablishment process, we can expand our conversations around the kinds of interactions and conversations we are having in our teacher education programs, and we can create new spaces to reconsider the conditions that we are creating in which our preservice teachers are coming to mean. As we reconsider our teachers as delocalized technological *actants* (Latour, 1996) who can transport literacy practices across time and space and because our field has such power over constructing the identities of the individuals whom they teach and those who will be taught by those teachers, it becomes all the more critical that we teach our students how to co-opt their own subjectivities and recognize their own agency in how their teacher identities are coconstructed. This radical act is a challenge to dominant paradigms that reinforce one's passive place and space in the classroom and, hence, society at large. By teaching empowerment in

the classroom, we provide a window into what one can do to create change outside of the classroom. Space and time and literacy are then transported through the very actions of the individual learner.

First, we need to make meaning of preservice teacher identity coconstruction by foregrounding the networked matrix of atomistic relationships as an environment that encompasses teacher identities and as a space where teachers are contextually situated. It is from within the matrix that we can unpack what is constructing preservice teachers' identities and from there begin to reconsider what conditions we are creating in teacher education that foster and cultivate preservice teacher identity reflection and coconstruction.

Next, our research agenda needs to continue to challenge dominant paradigms in society that have subverted diverse and marginalized perspectives that may counter status quo norms. Such research must be transdisciplinary and guide us to both symbolic and literal border crossings that elicit nonbinary thinking and thirdspace imaginings and open up new possibilities of making meaning of teacher identities. Rose (1993) not only calls for new spaces that challenge dominant paradigms but also sees thirdspace as a space that can open doors toward liberation. Such spaces do not emulate hegemonic spaces; rather, they are all inclusive, multilayered, multidimensional, where the "same" and the "other" can come together. If we apply the larger metaxonomies that emerged from this study, "constructed through critique" and "constructed through windowing," to other transdisciplinary studies, we can further our understandings about preservice teacher identity coconstruction during a spacetime. Research must speak to the realities of all.

Third, we must forefront the inclusion of teacher identity in our teacher preparation courses. Because the classroom space can be the ultimate space of change, helping students understand their own subjectivities and how their teacher identities are constructed can lead to the possibility of agency and selfhood. When individuals are empowered to understand their own identity coconstructions, they are empowered with the ability to negotiate them. Teacher educators can actualize this by introducing the concept of critique and windowing and by inviting students to enter into the space of what it means for them to be a teacher. Student teachers would greatly benefit from having a space in which they could discuss, reflect, negotiate, and be encouraged to envision their teacher identities. Envisioning can lead to motivation and eventual actualization. Course work that is thirdspace oriented, that encourages students to laminate pedagogy and theory from course work onto veteran teacher observations through reflexive praxis in discourse with teacher educators, can lead student teachers to construct their identities in negotiation toward and against what they observe in veteran teachers. Students can also create narrative writings, reflexive logs, discussions, art, and