A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY EXPLORING THE IMPACT
OF EXPERIENCED TEACHERS' STORIES ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

Kristi Johnson Smith

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctorate of Education in the School of Education.

Chapel Hill
2010

Approved by

Advisor: Barbara Day, Ph.D.
Reader: Denise Bowling, Ed.D.
Reader: Wallace Hannum, Ph.D.
Reader: Edward Neal, Ph.D.
Reader: Xue Lan Rong, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

KRISTI JOHNSON SMITH: A Qualitative Case Study Exploring the Impact
of Experienced Teachers' Stories on Pre-service Teachers
(Under the direction of Dr. Barbara Day)

This qualitative study explores the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers. Specifically, it examines what stories pre-service teachers hear and remember, if/how those stories impact thoughts or actions, and what factors influence impact.

Analyzing pre-service teachers' reactions to stories and utilizing their direct feedback on a proposed pathway, the researcher generated a flowchart that details the impact of stories, pathways to impact, and factors influencing movement along those pathways for these participants.

The impacts included: (1) increased narrator influence, (2) reinforcement of original beliefs and pre-existing plans/actions, (3) encouragement to begin acting on original beliefs, (4) challenge of original beliefs and change in plans/actions, (5) challenge of original beliefs and partial change in plans/actions, (6) challenge of original beliefs, but no change in plans/actions, and (7) no impact.

Pathways to impact included listening, reflection, determination of moral, acceptance/rejection of moral, affirmation/doubt of original beliefs and degrees of change/no change.

Factors influencing movement along pathways included characteristics of the narrator, the listener, and the story. Detailed descriptions of factors are provided. Movement along the pathways was complex and included pathways that produced impact (a) indirectly by increasing a narrator's influence and (b) after a delay, if a later classroom experience triggered recall of a story, re-evaluation of its applicability, and a change in thoughts or actions.

Analysis of study results and literature resulted in the following conclusions: (1) Pre-service participants' reactions to stories were individualized, highlighting the importance of soliciting feedback from pre-service teachers about what they need in order to learn from a story. (2) Social elements, including interactions with narrators and experiences student teaching, influence impact. Teacher educators should pay attention to how these social elements shape the way a pre-service teacher engages, or refuses to engage, with a story. (3) Teacher educators must carefully consider the purpose of storytelling. Literature suggests the goal is inspiring thoughtful action and recommends (a) sharing the story, (b) encouraging listener-made meaning (McDonald, 2009), and (c) encouraging application of meaning to new contexts by modeling "reflect[ion]-in-action" and by providing application opportunities during more independent student teaching experiences (Miller, 1990, p. 121).

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. My husband Tim has been an amazing source of inspiration, support, encouragement and love. Tim and my children – Ella, Sienna, and one due in a few months - are my constant joys, celebrating every milestone of my academic work while reminding me that the most important pages I have filled this year are the ones in our family photo album.

My mother Joan, and my late father, Lloyd are the ones who taught me how to love this beautiful family and how to love learning. They have filled every role, from caregiver to cheerleader, in incredible and wonderful ways.

My siblings - Lloyd, Todd, and Ashley - along with their spouses - Holly, Betsy, and Brian – are more than family. They are lifelong friends and sources of constant inspiration and encouragement.

My mother-in-law and father-in-law, Ann and Tim, and my sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Shannon and Greg, have truly embraced me as a daughter and sister and have supported me in so many ways.

I dedicate this dissertation to them, as well as to my extended family and all of the wonderful friends who have offered so much encouragement. I praise God for the blessing of all of these individuals in my life, and for the gift of a career field that I love.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Chapter

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

Table

---

[1] This figure is also reproduced on page 76.

LIST OF FIGURES

---

[2] This figure is also reproduced on the following pages: 69, 87, 106, 124, 140, 154, 161, 169, 176, 184, 264

[3] This figure is also reproduced on the following pages: 103, 123, 138, 153, 160, 168, 196, 266

# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction and Questions

It is appropriate that a dissertation about teachers' stories should begin with one. The setting was an auditorium in Texas, where group of prospective teachers (including myself) had just completed a summer of pre-service teacher education.  A speaker had been invited to congratulate us and wish us well in our new teaching jobs. She began by asking how we felt, and everyone responded with overwhelming enthusiasm. We felt energized! We were becoming teachers! We were optimistic, determined and eager to start changing the world!  I expected the speaker to ride our wave of emotion. Instead, she smiled, waited for the noise to die down and delivered two messages.  The first foreshadowed the struggles we would face during our first year of teaching.  "I wish I could bottle up some of your energy now and store it for a few months," she told us. "If I could, I would mail it to you – in November" (Smith, 2005). [4]

After elaborating on the challenges the year might bring and encouraging us to find inspiration and assistance in a variety of places, she moved on to her second message.  That message was about the power of stories.  She noted that our pre-service program had focused on preparing us to teach in faraway schools that had been labeled as "underserved" by the educational community.  She suggested that the while seeking support from friends and family

---

[4] Sections of this paragraph are reproductions of the story shared by the author in a weblog for new teachers.

back home, we might be tempted to tell stories about our schools and our students. She cautioned us to be careful. Those stories could shape our audience's perceptions about where we were working and about our pupils. That had implications for the people represented in our stories, and implications for the people who heard the stories we shared.

I have reflected on both messages during my years as a teacher. The first message was reinforced immediately upon entering the classroom – teaching is hard, and was especially hard for me during my early years as an educator. I needed guidance and support. The second message – that teachers must be cautious about what stories they share and with whom – has triggered a variety of thoughts during my career. As a first year teacher in a new town, I carefully considered what I revealed to others' about my students, our classroom and the larger community. Later, as the author of a weblog for pre-service and new teachers, I was cautious about the messages I conveyed through the stories I shared. Later, at the outset of this dissertation, my thoughts wandered back to the speech in that Texas auditorium. That speaker had connected the needs of pre-service teachers and story sharing in one way – telling a room full of pre-service teachers that they should be careful about the stories they shared while seeking needed support. This study explored an alternate angle. It asked pre-service teachers how they had been impacted, and if any of their needs were met, by the stories they heard.

Specifically, this research explored the ways in which pre-service teachers were impacted by hearing stories shared by experienced teachers. It began by asking the following questions: (a) What is the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers' thoughts, and do those thoughts translate into actions during their student teaching experience or plans for action in their own future classrooms? and (b) What is the impact of hearing select stories in a formal setting with guided reflection versus the impact of hearing various stories in other settings?

Although these questions shifted somewhat over the course of the study, as data inspired new and adjusted inquiries in ways noted in chapters four and five, these original questions laid the groundwork for much of the research.

These questions, as they were originally written, stemmed from the author's personal experience with stories, as well as from a review of the literature. The personal component, and the atypical use of a narrative "I" during this introduction, demand and receive more explanation during the methods section of this work. In short, that section argues, with support from the literature, that to elicit stories from others, a researcher must be willing to share his or her own background and stories. That section also notes the approach utilized by the researcher, namely that of analyzing the impact of stories as that impact was perceived by the pre-service teachers. These perceptions were explored via interview and focus group sessions that together created a methodology most appropriately identified as a qualitative case study.

As noted above, the original research questions also stemmed from a review of the literature on story sharing. That review, detailed in chapter two, explores the following arenas: (a) the types of evidence that must be examined during a study of story sharing, (b) the power of stories in general, (c) the current role and impact of story sharing in educating professionals in fields other than education, (d) the current role and impact of story sharing in educating new teachers, and (e) the potential role and impact of story sharing in training pre-service teachers.

The literature review also explores two areas that should be considered here, at the outset of the research. Those areas include (a) an exploration of key terms, namely the terms "story," "reflection," "pre-service teacher," "experienced teacher," and "story sharing," and (b) evidence that this work has significance, as noted by a number of sources that argue story sharing may be underutilized in pre-service teacher education.

# Exploring Key Terms

As noted above, this research attempted to answer the following question: In what ways are pre-service teachers impacted by hearing stories shared by experienced teachers? This research considered the effect on thoughts and actions during the student teaching experience and explored the impact of stories heard during formal learning activities that included guided reflection, as well as stories heard in less structured settings such as informal school conversations. Within this question, and while considering these areas, a number of terms had to be explored.

## *Exploring the terms 'story' and 'reflection'*

The methodology for this research, detailed in chapter three, was qualitative. It involved formally exposing pre-service teachers to select stories from experienced teachers and asking pre-service teachers about stories experienced teachers shared with them in other settings. While the former element of research provided an opportunity to apply a strict definition of "story" to filter narratives, the latter element remained open to whatever information participants provided. The implications for this research were as follows: When selecting stories to share with pre-service teachers, the researcher utilized narratives that met the definition outlined in the following paragraphs. However, when listening to pre-service teachers describe other stories they heard, any narrative they shared was given attention..

Haven (2007), while considering the term "story," reveals that while most dictionaries use "virtually the same wording in their primary definition . . . a narrative account of a real or imagined event or events" (p. 17), there is a lack of consensus among scholars and practitioners

about what constitutes a story (p. 11).  According to the dictionary definition, the words that

opened the introduction to this research constitute a story; those words were narrative and they

did describe certain events.  However, to provide more pointed insights, this research requires a

more specific definition of "a story" and attempts to identify the particular types of stories under

consideration.

Haven (2007) offers insight, arguing that a story is "a specific narrative structure" (p. 9).

He insists that a "story is *not* the information, the content" (Ibid. p. 15).  Instead, a story is a way

of *structuring* information, a system of informational elements" that must be included in any

narrative that is identified as a story (Ibid. p. 15; italics in original).  He identifies the five

essential informational elements as character, intent, actions, struggles and details.

Characters in a story offer readers a perspective within the story, as well as help readers

find their own "meaning and relevance" by activating "character banks of prior knowledge and

experience" (Haven, 2007, pp. 75-76).  Intent describes "what story characters are after and

why" (Ibid. p. 76).  Actions detail "what characters *do* to achieve their goals."  Struggles are

"obstacles that block a character from reaching a goal."  Finally, details about each of these areas

help create the "mental imagery" used to "envision and evaluate the story" (Ibid. p. 76).

Together, these elements constitute the definition of "story" articulated by Haven and used

throughout this study.  A story is "a character-based narration of a character's struggles to

overcome obstacles and reach an important goal" (Ibid. p. 79).

Many different types of stories fall within this definition, requiring further specifics about

the type of stories that received particular attention during this study.  In short, the focus was on

stories that offered both events and reflection.  Bruner describes this type of story as one that

constructs " "two landscapes simultaneously – the outer landscape of action and the inner one of

thought and intention" (as cited in McEwan and Egan, 1995. p. xi).  Phillion (2005, p. 6)

reinforces the power of this type of story, suggesting that "a narrative approach to teacher

education is based on the idea that we make meaning through reflection."  Thus, the story must

focus "on the experience as it is lived by the person" as well as "the way a person makes

meaning of the experience" (Ibid).  For the purpose of this research, reflection was considered

"thoughtful assessment"(Hatton, 2005, p. 130).  This is significant, as reflection has the potential

to occur both within narratives, by the narrator, and when narratives are shared, by the receiver.

Finally, this research focused on stories that offered action in, and reflection on, a

particular type of experience.  This type of experience was identified by many different names in

the literature, including an "aha" experience and a "lightbulb" moment (Wallace, 1996, p. 52).

These were the moments of educator epiphany that struck teachers who learned something "on-

the job" that, for whatever reason, eluded them during pre-service teacher education.  While the

insights born of these moments could have been be triggered by many factors, including

exposure to a new work environment, many stem from mistakes teachers make early in their

careers.  These moments were of particular interest, since it was questioned whether sharing the

story of mistakes with pre-service teachers might prevent them from making the same errors

(Danin & Bacon, 1999, p. 205).  Examples of such moments were provided by the collection of

Foxfire interviews (Hatton, 2005), during which several esteemed educators responded to

questions that included:

- "When teaching young kids, was there a moment during that time that changed
  the way you interacted with students and affected your teaching from then on?"
  (Ibid., p. 30)

- "Do you remember a significant learning experience you had as a teacher?"
  (Ibid., p. 45) and

• "Do you remember mistakes you made as a teacher?  Can you tell us if and how
   a mistake made a difference in your thinking about teaching?" (Ibid., p. 68)

These, and other questions, descriptors and examples were used to elicit a particular type of

stories from experienced teachers.  While that process and the criteria for deciding whose stories

were shared with new teachers receive more attention during the methods section of this work, it

is worth providing one example here to illustrate the type of story that serves as a focus of this

research.  It is also worth noting that this story was shared with the experienced teachers who

participated in the study.  The purpose of this sharing was to provide an example of the type of

story they could share with pre-service participants.  (The prompts given to experienced teachers

are detailed in chapter three: methodology and are also included as Appendix B.)

The story came from a Foxfire interview with Nel Noddings.  While responding to a

question about mistakes made as a teacher, Noddings revealed the story detailed below.

Question: "Do you remember mistakes you made as a teacher?  Can you
tell us if and how a mistake made a difference in your thinking about teaching?"

Noddings: "I still grieve over one from my beginning years as a math
teacher . . . I was a very strict grader; I was very fair and always helped kids and
all that, but I was a strict grader.  I remember this kid who got a 13 on a major
test, and she flunked the course.  The mother came in to plead, and the principal
backed me all the way.  He said afterward that if I hadn't been such a strong
teacher, he wouldn't have backed me.  So here's this poor kid who flunked the
class.  Later, I thought, 'This is not helpful'.  Anyone who knows just basic
arithmetic knows you can't recover from a 13.  You put a 13 in with two or three
other grades and divide by three or four, and you've got a horrible grade, and
there's no recovery from it.  So a couple of years later when I really thought about
that, I decided that I would never do that again."
   "So after that, I told the kids in all my math classes that they all start at 50 –
it's not a good grade, but that's where you start – and you can only go upward
from there.  After that, I used a method of cumulative grading so kids could see
how they were improving.  I never again gave a grade as low as 13.  I learned
from that experience.  And closely associated with never giving a grade under 50
was the notion of continuous progress - that at least in a subject like math, which
is sequential, if kids don't know one batch of material, they really can't master the
next.  Watching that over a period of time, I finally decided that the thing to do
was to have them take tests over again until they had mastered one thing before

going on to the next.  In a subject like math, it makes ultimate sense to me.  If you want people to learn, you don't penalize them for their mistakes but you help them learn it.  Kids would say to me, 'How many times can we take the test?'  And I would say, 'As many times as are available in a marking period,' because the idea is to learn, not to be defeated by it" (Hatton, 2005, pp. 68-69).

This story shared a moment of on-the-job educator insight, revealing both events and reflection.  It also contained the elements of story outlined in this study's definition: character, intent, action, struggle and detail.  It is this type of story that the research encouraged experienced teachers to share with pre-service teachers for the purpose of evaluating the impact on the pre-service group.

To summarize, this research focused on stories that describe moments when teachers gained an on-the-job insight.  Particular attention was given to the "aha" moments that stemmed from recognition of an "oh no" mistake.  Stories utilized in the research were character-based, and detailed both the events and the thoughts of the teacher involved.  Each experienced teacher was encouraged to share stories that included reflection on his or her goals, the struggles faced in an attempt to reach those goals, and the lessons learned along the way.

*Exploring the terms 'pre-service teacher' and 'experienced teacher'*

The research focused on the sharing of such stories with pre-service teachers by experienced teachers.  For this purpose of this research, a pre-service teacher was defined as an individual who is training to become a high school teacher, but has not yet experienced lead-teaching in a K-12, undergraduate or graduate classroom (What is...?, 1999)  An experienced teacher was technically defined as anyone with K-12, undergraduate, or graduate teaching experience.  This broad definition allowed consideration of stories that pre-service teachers hear from a variety of educators, ranging from those who experienced "oh no" or "aha" moments that led them to leave the profession early in their careers to those who worked primarily as

8

professors in a university setting.  In addition, utilizing a broad definition of the term

"experienced teachers" allowed pre-service teachers to share stories that they heard from

individual educators who were identified as teachers, but whose precise credentials and

experiences were not known. Finally, within this study, the pre-service and experienced teachers

are situated within social studies content area.  Potential implications of that are explored in the

chapter two literature review.


*Exploring the term 'story sharing'*

During this research, story sharing was defined as communicating a narrative that contains

the elements of a story, whether that narrative was revealed orally or in writing.  This definition

offers a contrast with the term "storytelling" which most use to describe a "performance"

(Berthelot, 1996) or oral delivery (Haven, 2007, p. 120).  It is worth noting that not all authors

make this distinction.  Haven uses the terms "writer/teller" and the terms "reader/listener"

interchangeably, explaining that he did not want to subject his audience "to the tedium of

including" all the terms in each sentence (Haven, 2007, pp. ix-x).  He note that after conducting

an exhaustive review of the literature, he "found only two quantitative studies that compared the

effects of different ways of delivering a story" (Ibid., pp. 119-121).  While "both conclude that

storytelling (orally telling the story) is the most effective means of placing story information into

student memory…stories and story structure (no matter how the story is delivered) can increase

memory and improve content recall" (Ibid.). While the method of delivering a story may have

implications for its ultimate impact on the receiver, and whether the stories considered during

this research are written or spoken was noted, comparing the impact of presentation styles was

not the focus of this study.  The focus was on how a particular story impacted a particular pre-

service teacher, regardless of how that story was initially received.


*Summarizing the definitions utilized in this research*

Table 1 summarizes the definitions that were used for key terms during this research.


*Table 1: Defining Key Terms*

| Key Term | Stipulated Definition |
|---|---|
| Story | • "a character-based narration of a character's struggles to overcome obstacles and reach an important goal" (Haven, 2007, p. 79)<br><br>• Note:  This research includes sharing stories with pre-service participants and listening to stories shared by pre-service participants.  The following details about each group of stories should be noted:<br><br>   -  The stories shared *with* pre-service participants were screened to ensure that they met the stipulated definition and that they constitute the type of narrative detailed in the previous section – namely, a story that describes a moment of educator epiphany and includes both action and reflection.<br><br>   -  On the other hand, the stories shared *by* pre-service participants included many types of narratives. |
| Reflection | "thoughtful assessment" (Hatton, 2005, p. 130). |
| Pre-service teacher | an individual who is training to become a high school teacher, but has not yet experienced lead-teaching in a K-12, undergraduate or graduate classroom (What is...?, 1999) |
| Experienced teacher | anyone with K-12, undergraduate, or graduate teaching experience |
| Story sharing | communicating a narrative that contains the elements of a story, whether that narrative is revealed orally or in writing |


## Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is that it offers insight into a potential method of pre-

service teacher education.  This insight could be used to inform decisions about how pre-service

programs or curricula are designed.  Currently, the literature abounds with assertions that story

sharing is underutilized in teacher education  Preskill and Jacobvitz (2001, p. 2) highlight the issue, revealing that:

> Until very recently, few educators have viewed teaching narratives as a source of instruction and enlightenment for aspiring and veteran teachers.  Often, these stories have been dismissed as 'merely entertainment, comic relief in the high drama of academic discourse' (Trimmer, 1997, p. x)….Even among teacher educators who are most committed to using accounts of actual teaching experiences to enrich and complement educational theory, little attention has been paid to teachers' personal narratives (Carter & Doyle, 1996).

Several authors offer an explanation for this neglect.  Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 3) suggest that even though "adults, like children, are natural storytellers . . . they have often learned to suppress their urge to tell stories as a way of knowing because of the theory of knowledge based on 'objectivity and generalizability' that is so dominant in the Western world." McEwan and Egan (1995, p. xii) reinforce this idea and apply it specifically to the field of education, insisting that "in all areas of human life, but especially in education…a pervasive nonnarrative and behaviorist chill has prevailed."

Together, these authors argue that story sharing could provide a counterweight to these tendencies. Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 9) believe that analytic knowledge could be enhanced by "narrative knowing."  McEwan and Egan (1995, p. xiii) insist that "stories… have a vital role to play in helping us to understand the curriculum, the practices of teachers, the processes of learning, the rational resolution of educational issues, and the matter of practicing how to teach in informed and sensitive ways."  Nelson (1993, p. 5) asserts that "unless the experience of teaching is considered from teachers' perspectives, teaching becomes an abstraction."  In short, the world of quantified data that greets pre-service teachers as they make decisions about how to structure their classrooms could be complemented by a world of stories that further informs the decisions they make.

Other authors suggest an additional reason for examining story sharing, insisting that such examinations are a logical step for those who value teachers' knowledge and voice. Schubert (1991, p. 211) highlights the idea that every year, valuable knowledge disappears as teachers' retire without sharing their insights. While writing about teacher lore, defined as "the study of knowledge, ideas, perspectives and understandings of teachers…[that] constitutes an attempt to learn what teachers learn from their experience," he writes that:

> It is curious that researchers can marvel at a fine study that logs 15,000 hours of investigation by researchers in classrooms (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimotr, Ouston & Smith, 1979) but essentially disregard over 30 years of inquiry by career teachers. It occurred to us that if teachers do build implicit theories (as indicated by Clandinin, 1986; Elbaz, 1983; Janesick, 1977; Munby, 1986; Schubert, 1982), it seems worthwhile to study the character and content of such theories rather than let them quietly descend into obscurity as these teachers retire (Schubert, 1991, p. 211).

Thus, if one believes in the knowledge created by teachers through experience, it is worth asking experienced teachers to share that knowledge with the next generation of educators. As Schubert (1999, p. 223) points out, "narratives of teachers and dialogues with them" can accomplish this. Phillion (2005, p. 2), suggests how, explaining that narratives

> allow access to the heart and soul of teaching. As students read and reflect on these detailed accounts of teachers' experiences, they can begin to imagine who they will be as teachers, how they will relate to students and parents, and how they will live their classroom life. I find this aspect of reading teacher narratives important for all students, but particularly so for beginning pre-service teachers…I also value narratives because through reading them we have access to different forms of knowledge than that of the more formal knowledge of research literature and textbooks. This narrative knowledge, derived from personal and professional experience, from face-to-face encounters with students, from years spent in schools and classrooms, is multifaceted and multidimensional. It is not easily 'transmitted' to someone else; it seems best communicated through stories and narratives. This experiential knowledge is termed 'personal, practical knowledge' in teacher education (Phillion, 2005, p. 2 citing Connelly & Clandinin, 1988)

This text is important, for it begins with a description of how pre-service teachers might learn (i.e. through exposure to narratives), and then suggests that this method could impact what pre-service teachers can learn (i.e. a new type of narrative or "personal, practical" knowledge). Despite these possibilities, Nelson (1993, p. 5) reveals that "it is still acknowledged that teachers' voices are muted and their perspective overlooked in the base of knowledge about teaching."

In short, the literature reveals that many teacher narratives exist as untapped sources of new knowledge. Many argue that recognizing these sources, and introducing them to pre-service teachers, has the potential to impact how and what those pre-service teachers learn. This is significant because of its implications for the structure of pre-service teacher education and for future educators that could benefit from that structure. In the words of Sandra Day Hatton (2005, p. 4) as she addressed educators reading a collection of teacher narratives, if stories can shape a teacher's thoughts, then those stories "matter – both in your life and in the lives of your students." Therein lies the significance of this study: if stories told during teacher education could impact new teachers and their students, then that impact must be explored.

# CHAPTER II

# A REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

## Introduction

Chapter one identified this qualitative case study as an exploration of the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers, as measured by the perceptions of individuals in the pre-service group. That chapter also discussed relevant terms, using the literature to define "story," "reflection," "pre-service teacher," "experienced teacher," and "story sharing." Finally, the first chapter provided evidence of this study's significance, noting arguments that story sharing may be underutilized in pre-service teacher education and reviewing sources that assert personal, practical knowledge can be learned by receiving a teacher's narrative.

Chapter two reviews the literature on story sharing by exploring the following arenas: (a) the types of evidence that must be examined during a study of story sharing (b) the power of stories in general (c) the current role and impact of story sharing in educating professionals in fields other than education (d) the current role and impact of story sharing in educating new educators and (e) the current and potential role and impact of story sharing in educating pre-service teachers. This will set the stage for an exploration of this study's methodology in chapter three.

**The Types of Evidence That Must Be Examined During a Study of Story Sharing**

The literature abounds with anecdotal and scientific evidence about the power of stories. Both types of evidence will be considered in this chapter as it explores the impact of stories in education and other professional arenas. The decision to include anecdotal evidence in this review stems from the idea that even though "the plural of anecdote is not data" (Begley, 2008), an abundance of anecdotes may indicate a trend worth exploring. Haven (2007, p. 87) discussed this in his study of the power of stories, writing that "a great mass of individually impressive anecdotes from a variety of fields that all come to the same conclusion, that all demonstrate the same value through stories, cannot be easily dismissed." The conclusion to which he refers is that there is power in stories, and that stories can be used to improve leadership, communication and teaching. In this chapter, anecdotal evidence includes examples of companies that attribute progress to the use of story sharing in their training seminars, as well as educators that feel stories have enhanced their professional development and improved their classrooms.

Like anecdotal evidence, scientific evidence will appear throughout this chapter, as studies of story sharing are discussed. However, it is important to review one scientific argument at the outset. That is the assertion that humans "remember stories (and information in stories) better and longer than the same information presented in any other narrative form"(Haven, 2007, p. 4). In an extensive review of cognitive research, Haven reveals that this occurs through a variety of mechanisms including enhanced emotional engagement (p. 71), increased mental reference points (p. 72), and greater activation of prior knowledge banks which improves comprehension and meaning making (p. 119). These and other factors "create a higher probability that something will be placed into memory and a greater probability that it will be readily retrieved from memory" (Ibid., p. 121).

In short, the anecdotal and scientific evidence presented in this chapter argue that story sharing can have a remarkable impact on an individual's memory, comprehension, and ultimately on that individual's thoughts and behavior. The following sections detail that argument. They begin with a description of the power of stories in general and then turn to the ways in which story sharing has impacted a variety of professional fields.

## The Power of Stories in General

The literature clearly supports a belief in the power of stories. While there are important ideas about limits to the impact and application of stories, a variety of sources lend support to the idea that stories affect the people who hear them. These sources have led to this study's guiding hypothesis that hearing experienced teachers' stories can impact a pre-service teacher.

The one-sided nature of the literature is best described by Haven (2007, p. 7) who reveals that in an extensive review of the literature including

> over 100,000 pages of research from fifteen fields that, in some way, touch on how the human mind receives, processes and responds to stories…includ[ing] 350 books and qualitiative and quantitative studies…[and] over 70 articles that have reviewed and evaluated other studies including analysis of over 1,500 studies and descriptive articles…[as well as] personal accounts of over 1,300 practitioners (mostly teachers) who have made extensive use of stories in their work….each and every one of these thousands of independent sources agrees with the premise that stories work, that they are effective and efficient. I could not find one shred of evidence to suggest that stories *aren't* effective vehicles to teach, to inspire, to inform, to educate" (italics in original).

The lack of debate about the power of stories is telling. They have an impact. Thus, the questions considered here are, according to the literature, 'what is that impact?' and 'where are its limits?'

In the quote above, Haven (2007, p. 7) suggested that stories have the power "to teach, to inspire, to inform, to educate." In a more pointed review of the research, Haven (pp. 90-122) also found that stories led to consistent improvement in the following areas: comprehension, logical thinking and general (cross-curriculum) learning, creative meaning from narrative, motivation to learn (and to pay attention), building a sense of community and involvement, literacy and language mastery, writing, and memory. Other authors have added to this list. While considering the role of stories in educating medical professionals, Davidson (2004, p. 185) argued that storytelling is "effectively used" to "foster reflection and promote critical thinking." From the world of business, McKee revealed the power of stories to persuade, citing their ability to unite "an idea with an emotion" and asserting that "the best way to do that is by telling a compelling story" (Fryer, 2003, p. 52). Jackson (1995, p. 9) offers insight from the perspective of an educator, describing the power of stories to shape identity. He reveals that stories are designed to "*transform*, as opposed to *inform*" listeners (italics in original). Finally, Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 280), offer a reminder that "stories are powerful research tools. They provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems. They banish the indifference often generated by samples, treatments, and faceless subjects."

All of these ideas are relevant, as comprehension, meaning-making, memory, reflection, critical thinking, and other aforementioned effects can enhance engagement and learning. Yet there are even more powerful potential areas of impact. These areas emerge when one reviews the literature on the power of stories with the specific challenges of pre-service teacher education in mind. For example, when Davidson (2004, p. 185), and Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 279) allude to stories' power to bridge theory and practice, it is especially noteworthy because Waghorn and Stevens (1996, p. 70) have revealed that an ongoing problem in "pre-service

teacher education programs" is "the gap between the student teachers' theoretical beliefs and their practical experiences." Thus, this power of stories is especially significant, for if stories can help bridge a gap between theory and practice, they have potential to assist pre-service programs that are attempting to accomplish that goal.

The allusions to this power to bridge theory and practice come in Davidson's (2004, p. 185) assertion that stories help students think of "situations in 'real life terms'." Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 279) reinforce the idea of using stories to bring reality into theoretical conversations when they reveal that "stories can help us to understand by making the abstract concrete and accessible." Part of this power to bring reality into theoretical conversations comes from the ways in which stories contextualize information. Narrative accounts by experienced teachers allow pre-service teachers to see inside the classroom (Witherell and Noddings, 1991, p. 79) and inside the heads and hearts of veteran educators (Phillion, 2005, p. 3).

Another particularly relevant power of stories is their ability to evoke empathy. This power is significant because, in the words of Shuman (2005, p. 8), "empathy puts in place the possibility that, through the luxury of storytelling, others can indirectly experience that person's suffering for their personal or collective enlightenment without enduring those tragedies." Again, a review of the literature reveals that pre-service teachers could benefit from such advance enlightenment. Many educators admit that they "learned about teaching from trial and error"(Schriever, 1999, p. 83). Perhaps if educators shared the stories of such learning with the next generation of teachers, that group could avoid similar "trials and errors" in their classrooms. In other words, if stories promote empathetic awareness in listeners, they might be used to help pre-service teachers place themselves in an imagined classroom, learning some pedagogical or professional lessons that help them prepare to teach an actual class. Phillion (2005, p. 9)

reinforces this idea, suggesting that narrative "works hand in hand with imagination," allowing pre-service teachers to imagine themselves in realistic classroom situations.

Thus, the power of stories is established in the literature, and at least two of those powers are particularly relevant to this study of pre-service teachers. The power to bridge theory and practice earns our attention by addressing an area of expressed concern in pre-service teacher education programs. The power to elicit empathy that leads to 'enlightenment' without reliving another's 'tragedies' has inspired this study's focus on the impact of stories that detail experienced teachers' 'oh no' and 'aha' moments.

Still, despite the literature's assertions of these and other story sharing powers, there are limits that must be realized. Steiner (2005, p. 2902) reminds listeners that "each story is only provisionally informative until it is corroborated by repetition and confirmed by other sources of evidence." For educators, this suggests that lessons derived from a classroom story must not be swallowed wholesale until subjected to the test of experience or analyzed with an eye toward accepted educational theory. Steiner (2005, p. 2902) also suggests one danger of using stories, informing his audience that "misunderstandings" can "arise when the listener uses a story in a way that differs from the intent of the narrator." Again, this is an important reminder for teachers, who must examine the original context and the narrator's perspective before applying a story's message in their own classrooms. Finally, Haven articulates a final limit to the use of stories, emphasizing that they can only be told by those willing to invest substantial resources in the telling. He reveals that crafting stories requires "more verbiage, more time, and more developmental effort" than other forms of presentation (Haven, 2007, p. 73). While he insists that "the unique properties of story structure increase the rate of retention of key program information so that learning per unit time actually *increases*," one must still acknowledge the up

front investment of time and effort that narrating an effective story requires (Ibid., p. 87; italics in original).

### The Current Role and Impact of Story Sharing In
### Educating Professionals in Fields Other Than Education

Story sharing has been used as a pedagogical tool in a variety of professional arenas including medicine, policymaking, business, and even athletics. This section is devoted to reviewing the use and impact of story sharing in these professions. Subsequent sections will explore how story sharing is used in the field of education. Together, these sections will reveal that story sharing has a positive impact on educating professionals in many fields and has the potential to be used more consistently, directly and effectively to train pre-service teachers.

***Story Sharing in Medicine*:**

Story sharing is used in medicine to educate both doctors and nurses. One authority on story sharing by doctors is Dr. Rita Charon, who coined the term "Narrative Medicine" to "connote a medicine practiced with narrative competence and marked with an understanding of these highly complex narrative situations among doctors, patients, colleagues, and the public" (Denning, 2004). Charon (2004, p. 862) defines narrative competence as "the set of skills required to recognize, absorb, interpret, and be moved by the stories one hears or reads" and suggests that story sharing can "inspire physicians with a deeper sense of their own vocation and can educate them in essential clinical and humanistic skills." It is the power to educate that is most relevant to this review. That power to educate is recognized by an increasing number of medical schools and medical centers who use storytelling to encourage students to see situations

from the patient's perspective and to teach students and physicians what is known about sickness (Denning, 2004).

That power to educate is also recognized by those educating nurses. This is effectively revealed by Davidson (2004, p. 184), who conducted a study to explore the impact of a health course "where storytelling served as one of the primary teaching and learning tools." Within the course, students were encouraged to share stories of their own medical experiences and learn from stories shared by their peers. After the course, ten students engaged in focus groups conversations where they revealed that during the class, "topics became easier to understand when the group shared stories and ideas"(Ibid., p.187). Those students also felt that "the use of stories, unlike traditional didactic lectures, delivered the material on several different levels . . . provid[ing] an intellectual component that delivered concrete, quantifiable information" and conveying "emotionally charged information that challenged students from a psychosocial-cultural perspective"(Ibid., p. 186). One student found herself "thinking about the stories and reliving them throughout the week between classes" and ultimately discovered that they "made you look into yourself." She also saw an effect on her classmates, describing the impact as "hearts changing with stories before our eyes" (Ibid., p. 187).

At this point, whether that change of hearts led to a change in behavior among those nursing students remains an open question. One limitation of Davidson's study is that its only data source was student perceptions immediately following the course. Davidson (2004, p. 188) acknowledges this, writing that "future evaluation of storytelling as a teaching and learning strategy should also involve observation of students' retention of knowledge, manner with clients, and performance of skills." This insight will be revisited during the methods section of

the present study, which will attempt to go beyond immediate student perceptions into a measurement of later thoughts and self-reported behavior.

*Story Sharing in Policymaking*:

In the realm of policymaking, stories are used to educate decision makers. This "education" often takes the form of persuading or illustrating concepts for those with the power to effect change (Steiner, 2005, p. 2902). A review of the literature surrounding stories used for these purposes offers a reminder of both the power and the responsibility that comes with sharing a story.

First, consider the power and responsibility that comes with using a story to persuade. Steiner (2005, p. 2902) reveals the power of stories in medical policymaking, asserting that "stories are likely to be more persuasive than either a statistical summary of research evidence." However, he also cautions that stories can be misleading, stating that:

> Compelling stories often contain an element of the unexpected. Listeners may mistakenly assume that a story reflects a common experience, when in fact the very conditions that motivated the narrator to tell his or her story make it unrepresentative of the many who do not think to tell their tale (Steiner, 2005, p. 2903)

Thus, those involved in story sharing must be cautious about how stories are interpreted and applied. In the words of Steiner (p. 2903), "policy decisions should represent the concerns of the population affected by those decisions, not just those of the narrators of particularly inspiring or persuasive stories." In attempt to avoid the pitfalls of listening to only the unique stories, policymakers must learn to "recognize representative stories when they hear them, and must learn to retell these stories well" (Ibid.). This allows them, once persuaded, to convince constituents of the merits of their chosen course.

The same concerns arise when one uses a story to illustrate a concept for policymakers. While part of the power of a story is that it individualizes the abstract, "illustrat[ing] general issues through specific instances" (Steiner, 2005, p. 2902), this individualization is dangerous when policymakers forget that "no single story can be fully representative of a population" (p. 2903). The aforementioned antidote, learning to recognize representative stories, is joined here by a second means of avoiding the pitfall: identifying "multiple stories to illustrate the main themes and important variations on those themes in the distribution of relevant stories" (Ibid.).

The relevance to the current study lies in the idea that stories can be used to educate. The literature reveals the power of stories to teach policymakers about a position and to persuade them to advocate for a cause. Furthermore, examining story sharing in the realm of policymaking offers insight into potential dangers of teaching with narratives. When using stories to educate a particular audience, one must take steps to ensure that the audience understands how representative a particular story is. Finally, the realm of policymaking suggests another important question to consider as this study is conducted. That question is whether stories, with their power to persuade, are by their very nature, moralizing. Does the simple telling of a story imply an agenda along with an instructional message? Does sharing a story mean one has a value he or she wants to promote? To a degree, perhaps. However, Porcino (1991, p. 11) reminds readers that stories can be presented as a "catalyst" for listeners "to explore, choose, and act on their own values." Thus, while stories are used as persuasive tools in the realm of policymaking, there could be an alternate role for stories in other professional fields.

*Story Sharing in Business*:

In the world of business, stories are used to persuade investors, attract customers and educate current and future employees. Again, it the educative element that is most relevant to

the current discussion.  In an interview with an author for Harvard Business Review, McKee describes one way businesses can use stories to promote desired behavior among workers, suggesting that sharing the tale of one dedicated employee could result in "redoubled effort from all the employees who heard" (Freyer, 2003, p. 55).   Haven (2007, p. 85) reinforces the idea that stories can be motivating and also suggests that they can be used in business to facilitate understanding, provide examples, instill values, and establish expectations during training.

These assertions are best supported by Haven's description of how story sharing was used during one company's corporate staff development.  The company, Lands' End, had a corporate philosophy that was: "Guaranteed.  Period.."  One of their goals during training was "to get all employees both to understand and to adopt this attitude."  As Haven writes:

> They finally settled on a system that worked: stories.  Lands' Ends trainers shared stories about employees who have taken the authority to do whatever is necessary to make customers happy (Haven, 2007, p. 85).

As an example, Haven quotes Jackie Johnson-Gaygill, who revealed that:

> When new employees hear the story of Nora Halverson who sent her husband's cuff links off to a customer because the ordered ones were on back order, they understand the extra effort our people are expected to extend to serve our customers.  They learn it more deeply than a lecture or mandate could ever achieve (Haven, 2007, p. 85).

Ultimately, this and other narratives proved so effective that Lands' End created a booklet of stories used to educate their employees about the corporate mantra.  In the words of Haven (p. 85), "the stories have not only increased commitment to Lands' Ends philosophy, they have enhanced a sense of belonging" and teamwork among the company's staff.

Thus, story sharing is used by some businesses to educate employees who are entering the workplace.  But what about students who are preparing for the "real world" in business schools? An examination of their curricula quickly takes one into the world of case studies. Of course, one

must distinguish between stories, as they have been defined in this review, and case studies which are defined by Denny as "intensive and complete examinations of a facet, an issue, or perhaps the events of a geographic setting over time" (as cited in Goodson and Walker, 1995, p. 186).  According to Denny, case studies aspire to a greater level of "completeness" than most stories (Ibid.). Still, there is an overlap between some elements of case study and the components of a story – namely the objectives, strategies, results and the opportunity to reflect on a real world experiences (Schweitzer, nd).  That overlap suggests that stories, like case studies, have the potential to educate students in business and other professional schools.

*Story Sharing in Athletics:*

The world of athletics offers a final example of how story sharing is used in educating professionals.  Specifically, those in charge of the National Basketball Association's (NBA's) Rookie Training Program (RTP) have recognized the power of stories to inform and instruct new players.  To provide a brief descriptor, the RTP is a "six-day seminar and workshop program" that all new players are required to attend.  Its purpose is to provide "first-hand knowledge of what to expect as a player in the NBA" (*Orientation*, 2003).  The program was started because former players recognized that "a program such as this was necessary to help players avoid some of the mistakes that those before them had fallen victim to" (Ibid.).  It is currently run by NBA personnel, former players and experts in relevant fields, and stories are one of the pedagogical tools used to prepare 'rookies' for their demanding professional and public roles.

To provide an example of story sharing in this environment, consider one speaker during the program.  As a "former mobster who used players' gambling debts to entrap them," he shared the tale of one athlete whose identity was stolen during online gambling.  Rookies at the training

program learned about how a professional gambler had "threatened to use that information to commit fraud in the player's name," and that learning ingrained a valuable lesson. In the words of one observer, "those are the kinds of stories that grab a young athlete's attention" (Beck, 2007).

A rookie's attention is also held by experienced players who share stories for the purpose of preparing new players for professional life. During the training camp, retired players participate on a "legends panel" designed to reveal the "challenges and situations that come along with living the NBA lifestyle" (Bargil, 2005). In the words of Rory Sparrow, a NBA veteran and Senior Director of Player Development, "no other speakers could have the same effect – these are the guys that can say really say they walked in those rookies' shoes" (Ibid.). Sparrow elaborated on that effect, revealing that many new players leave the panel "feeling empowered, ready to take on the challenges of the league and prepared to make important decisions that will soon face them" (Ibid.). The impact of this panel is particularly relevant to the current discussion, since it reveals the power of stories shared by experienced professionals for the purpose of educating pre-service individuals. It also addresses the particular type of story that is the focus of this research – the story of an "aha" moment born of an "oh no" mistake.

### Conclusion:

A number of key concepts have been revealed through the examination of story sharing in training professionals in fields other than education. Medicine reveals that professionals can engage intellectually and emotionally with a story, ultimately using the experience to gain "essential clinical and humanistic skills" (Charon, 2004, p. 862). Policymaking reveals the power of stories to persuade, and reminds those sharing stories that they must choose stories that

are representative of "main themes and important variations"(Steiner, 2005, p. 2903).  The world

of business demonstrates the power of stories to motivate, facilitate understanding, provide

examples, instill values, establish expectations, and introduce real world situations.  Athletics

reveals the power of listening to, and learning from, the stories of veterans' mistakes.

Together, these fields also offer a number of ideas for the contexts in which one might

share stories.  From classroom conversations to written booklets to panels of veterans, these

professions suggest a number of ways stories can be presented.  It is worth considering these

ideas as the next sections examine how stories are used in the field of education, and how they

might be used more effectively to help prepare pre-service teachers.

**The Current Role and Impact of Story Sharing in Educating New Teachers**

When considering the current role and impact of experienced teachers' stories in teacher

education, one must consider what stories exist, how often they are shared, who hears them, and

what effect they have.  Several authors answer the first question by emphasizing the prevalence

of experienced teacher narratives.  Graham (1995, p. 195) reveals that "teachers are inveterate

tellers of stories" and cites Maxine Greene's observation that "the sounds of storytelling are

everywhere today" in schools.  Shank (2006, p. 713) reveals that "storytelling among teachers is

. . . commonplace," reminding readers that Judith Warren Little (1990, in Shank, 2006, p. 713)

called it an "omnipresent feature of teachers' worklives."  Gudmundsdottir (1995, p. 31) suggests

stories provide a preferred method for teachers seeking to share their knowledge, revealing that

"those who study what experienced teachers know about teaching and the world of classroom

inevitably find themselves listening to stories that teachers tell to explain the essence of what

they know."  Thus, there are stories to share, and there are teachers willing to share them.

However, the sharing of stories with new teachers is limited by several factors, including a lack of time.  Boreen and Niday (2003) quote one retired teacher, who regrets those limits, stating that:

> When I look back over my career, I suppose one regret is that I wasn't able to share more of what worked [for me in the classroom] and what didn't work with those just coming into the field.  I know that when I go to conferences, it was people telling their success stories that really got me excited about leaving the conference and going back home to work with my students.  We really never took the time to do that at my school; we used that favorite comment 'We're too busy'.  But I wish we had been more able to talk. (p. 190)

Despite this limit on sharing, Boreen and Niday suggest that at least one particular group of teachers – the mentors - must find the time to share with beginners.   Some do, and see positive effects.  This sharing and its impact are evidenced by Sullivan, a beginning teacher, who writes that when her mentor "shar[es] relevant stories from her own teaching experience" it "sheds light on the issues that I raise and helps me put problems in perspective" (Boreen & Niday, 2003, p. 211).

Sullivan's mentor shared these stories during weekly meetings, while other mentors find opportunities at different points during the year. Sacred Heart Cathedral Prepatory holds monthly seminars, during which "new teachers hear veterans' stories with interest and learn from them, especially when teachers share experiences about their own growth as educators" (Heidkamp & Shapiro, 1999, pp. 40-46).  The FIRST (Framework for Inducting, Retaining, and Supporting Teachers) induction program in Louisiana begins each year with sessions where former teachers model strategies and "enjoy sharing our most successful accomplishments, our most embarrassing moments, and our most heartwarming experiences in the classroom" (Breaux, 1999, p. 35).  During those sessions, second year teachers also weigh in, offering stories of their "personal first-year experiences" with those new to the school (Ibid., p. 36).  These, and other,

examples suggest that story sharing is utilized effectively in several induction programs. This is a manifestation of a common belief: that effective programs must recognize the knowledge possessed by experienced teachers and "structures a process for passing on this knowledge to beginning teachers in a systematic rather than a haphazard way" (Brooks, 1999, p. 57).

But these are descriptions of new teachers' experiences, which means the stories are being shared at a time when they are days away from their first lead teaching position, or are the midst of a hectic first year. There are benefits to this timing; certainly new teachers who are currently confronting challenges can ask highly relevant questions, making the stories they elicit more applicable to their evolving needs. However, if education leaders can anticipate the needs of new teachers, as Halford (1999, p. 15) argues they can in many arenas, it follows that some stories could be shared during pre-service education, when novices have more time and support to help process them. Perhaps they could be shared even prior to the student teaching portion of pre-service education, so that students could attempt to implement what they learn from the stories while under the supervision of a veteran educator.

Some schools of education have attempted this. Virginia Tech, for example, offered a course entitled "Secondary Mathematics with Technology" that was intentionally designed to create opportunities for prospective and veteran educators to connect prior to student teaching. As those connections were established, "the practicing teachers…recognized this opportunity to share their experiences and to provide, as one said, a 'dose of reality' to the class discussions" (Frykholm & Meyer, 1999, p. 151). This sharing did have an impact, especially once pre-service teachers realized that they would be working with these teachers in their actual classrooms. In the words of one pre-service teacher, when one practicing teacher

> told me that she thought that I was going to be her student teacher….I was
> more inclined to listen to her stories about her school experiences because these

were the students that I very likely would be teaching in the spring. Plus, I was definitely trying to make a good impression on her! (Frykholm & Meyer, 1999, p. 151)

Still, courses like this are the exception. As Seifert (2005) writes, "cohort programs" are becoming common in teacher education. This usually keeps pre-service teachers in closed classes together and limits opportunities for pre-service and experienced teachers to meet as co-learners.

Of course, schools of education do provide other opportunities for pre-service and experienced teachers to interact prior to student teaching. Many pre-service teachers are required to complete observations in experienced teachers' classrooms. They also interact with professors who are, and provide channels to, veteran educators. But what stories are being told to these pre-service teachers, and what impact are those stories having? Those questions are considered in the next section, which addresses the current and potential role of story sharing in the education of pre-service teachers.

## The Current and Potential Role and Impact
## of Story Sharing in Educating Pre-service Teachers

Thus far, the literature has revealed that story sharing has an educational impact in a variety of professional arenas. Individuals who are learning about medicine, policy, business and athletics reveal the power of hearing stories from experienced colleagues. New teachers reveal the positive impact of listening to the stories shared by mentors and veteran staff.

This study seeks to explore whether similar effects are present when the listeners are pre-service teachers. There are different perspectives on this in the literature. Those perspectives are explored in this section, which begins by detailing a study that found story sharing did *not* have an impact during early pre-service education. The section then examines an alternate view

- that story sharing does have a positive impact on pre-service teachers, especially when key elements are in place.

First, consider findings of Szabo, which suggest that story sharing may *not* be effective in the early stages of educating pre-service teachers. Szabo (2006, p. 7) conducted a qualitative study comparing the impact of written teacher stories on students with varying levels of teaching experience and found that the pre-service teachers "could not see the importance of these stories." They "believed these stories were contrived and…they felt they would not meet these situations in the classroom" (Ibid.). She suggests an explanation for these findings, writing that:

> One can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences. And, as these students are still looking at teaching from a student's point of view, there was no personal connection that evoked an emotional response because they had no background knowledge about teaching and no concrete knowledge of the workings and happenings within a classroom from a teacher point of view in order to construct meaningful knowledge (Ibid.)

Alternatively, Szabo found that the same stories promoted "reflective learning" and "professional growth" for experienced teachers in a graduate level course, since they were able to use their experience to "connect with the stories on a personal level" (Ibid.). In her reporting, Szavo insists that "further studies" need to be "done with teacher candidates" and suggests that early field experience may need to precede exposure to stories in order to provide "teacher candidates with the experiences necessary to build the complex schema required in order to understand and learn from teacher stories" (Ibid., pp. 7, 13).

Other sources offer an alternate view suggesting that pre-service teachers could be impacted by the stories they hear during pre-service education. Some of these sources have already been mentioned. Frykholm and Meyer (1999, p. 151) described how pre-service teachers would "take in all the information" when listening to the experiences of veteran teachers.

Phillion (2005, p. 2) revealed that receiving teacher narratives was "important for all students, but particularly so for beginning pre-service teachers" because it allowed them to imagine their future classroom lives.

McLean (1993, p. 265) offers additional insight, based on her exploration of how "stories of practice" shared during pre-service education at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) led to "the development of personal practical knowledge" among prospective educators. McLean interviewed these pre-service teachers after they had spent time in a teacher education program where the professors "shared a great many oral stories, usually in a relatively spontaneous manner and to illustrate a point" (Ibid.). The prospective teachers indicated that the stories created "personal connections" to the teller and the content, adding "intensity to the communication" (Ibid., p. 266). The prospective teachers also indicated that they valued what they termed the "horror stories" because those narratives were a "window on the sometimes difficult realities of teachers' lives" (Ibid.).

The professors at QUT eventually designed two courses that "reflected these discoveries about the value of stories of practice" (McLean, 1993, p. 266). The courses, offered as first and final semester courses of an undergraduate program, required prospective teachers to read teachers' stories, listen to stories shared by practicing teachers, and interview teachers to gain insight into both educational issues and the practicing teachers' own narratives. The feedback from end-of-course evaluations was positive, indicating that the contact with practicing teachers had revealed that there was "no one correct way of teaching," had led to "questioning and examination" that helped the prospective teachers "form some ideas about teaching; what it is and how I might fit into it," and had provided insight into the real classroom life (Ibid., p. 267).

Phillion (2005) reinforces these ideas and suggests other ways stories could impact pre-service teachers.  While describing narratives' "developing history in teacher education," she reveals that more teacher educators are beginning to use narrative

> to bring life to topics that otherwise might seem distant to students and unrelated to their lives….to build understanding that our personal experiences impact what we believe about teaching and how we engage in practice…to inspire their students to believe that teachers can and do make a difference in the lives of their students…. to connect students' experiences to those of children they will teach…to develop empathy with 'other people's children' (Delpit, 1995)….[and to] foster cross-cultural…and 'multicultural understanding'(p. 4).

Additionally, Phillion (p. 6) writes that narratives offer the pre-service population "practical advice on preparing for the job market, relating to administrators, and stories of surviving the first year."

Finally, Mathison and Pohan (2007) found that experienced teachers' stories also helped pre-service teachers build reflective skills related to professional interactions.  In their study, experienced teachers wrote about "a challenging professional interaction that had a profound impact on them" (Ibid., p. 64).  Pre-service teachers read select narratives, and were encouraged to ask questions about the interactions without voicing any criticism.  The questions were then used as "springboard[s] for discussion about the professional interactions described in each story." These discussions revealed that "future teachers were able to move beyond the specifics of the story to raise broader issues" (Ibid., p. 71) and understand "the multifaceted nature of the problems described in the stories"(Ibid., p. 72). According to Mathison and Pohan, these pre-service teachers also experienced increased "motivation to learn more about ways to (1) prevent negative professional interactions and (2) effectively approach negative interactions they will inevitably encounter during the course of their careers" (Ibid.).

Together, these potential effects of story sharing constitute an impressive list. However, even the most vocal advocates of the practice offer reminders that to impact a pre-service teacher, a story must be accompanied by additional elements. Specifically, the audience must invest in the story, and listeners must reflect.

First, consider audience investment. While some pre-service teachers may be engaged simply due to the nature of stories, a power of narrative noted in previous sections, others only invest under specific circumstances. The literature reveals three common prerequisites. First, some listeners require skill in the telling. Preskill (2001), who discusses "narratives as a source of instruction and enlightenment for aspiring and veteran teachers" (p. 2) insists that stories must be shared by those who have "special abilities to depict teaching in powerful and inspiring ways" (p. 1). Other listeners have a second requirement: knowledge of the teller's credibility. Akerson (2004), a professor who used stories in her methods course, emphasized this when writing about her "pre-service teachers' willingness to attend to course discussions." She noted that their investment relied on her status as "someone who has experience teaching at their grade level," a key source of narrator credibility (Ibid.). Finally, some listeners require that the narrative be connected directly to their personal plans, establishing relevance. Recall the Virginia Tech student that became "more inclined to listen to [an experienced teacher's] stories about her school experiences because these were the students that I very likely would be teaching in the spring" (Frykholm & Meyer, 1999, p. 151).

These ideas offer an explanation for Szabo's (2006) findings against the impact of stories in pre-service teacher education. Recall that the pre-service teachers in her study believed that "these stories were contrived," undermining narrative credibility (Ibid., p. 7). In addition, the pre-service teachers "felt they would not meet these situations in the classroom," eliminating

personal relevance as a motive to engage (Ibid.).  Without these elements, audience investment

and thus the potential for impact on that pre-service audience, declines.

In addition to insisting on audience investment, several sources suggest that pre-service

teachers must reflect on the narratives to experience an impact.  Phillion (2005, p. 6) speaks to

this most directly in her aforementioned assertion that "a narrative approach to teacher education

is based on the idea that we make meaning through reflection."   She insists that stories be used

as "springboards for conversations" and other reflective activities that include writing

educational philosophies, preparing reflective journals, sharing stories of personal educational

experiences and responding to "discussion questions" that "provide the opportunity for students

and teachers to engage in lively debate over the issues" raised by the stories (Ibid., pp. 6-8).

Preskill (2001, p. 183) also highlights the importance of reflection when he suggests that

narratives should allow pre-service teachers to "think about how they would respond" to a

student or situation before engaging in a "real-life test in their own classrooms."

Of course, this "real-life test" is where the impact becomes most important, raising the

question of whether, for pre-service teachers, stories inspire reflection that ultimately leads to

action.  This pathway is suggested by authors writing about students in general.  For example,

Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 8) write that "the power of narrative and dialogue as

contributors to reflective awareness in teachers and students is that they provide opportunities for

deepened relations with others and serve as springboards for ethical action."  Weber (1993)

suggests that this pathway could also operate in pre-service teachers.  She does this by offering

herself as an example, describing how the teacher narratives she read during her own pre-service

education affected her.  She reveals that:

> Some of these narratives spoke far more directly to my own
> pedagogical concerns as a future teacher than did the dry and often inept

> lectures and texts of my formal university courses.  Not only did those stories inspire and engage me, they made me ponder my own actions in a different light (Weber, 1993, p. 73).

Still the question of impact on actions remains.  Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, p. 230), writing about "connecting stories of inspiring teachers to coursework in teacher education" reveal their hopes that the stories they shared with pre-service teachers "would be internalized and would help guide decision making in the classroom" (Ibid.).  However, they only discuss the pre-service participants' immediate reactions to the stories.  Furthermore, while continuing to assert their belief in the power of the stories, they acknowledge that one of the three groups with whom they initially shared stories had "no reaction" (Ibid., p. 237).  They attribute this to the group being "stressed out" (Ibid., p. 237) or uninterested because the secondary school story did not relate directly to their elementary school interests (Ibid., p. 244).  It is worth noting that this explanation provides an additional reference to the idea that establishing a teller's credibility, particularly with regards to grade-level experience, could increase the likelihood of a story's impact.

*A particular cohort of pre-service teachers:  social studies*

This study focused on the perspectives of four pre-service participants within a specific content-area cohort:  a cohort of pre-service social studies and history teachers.  This is an important detail to consider, as one might assume that a pre-service teacher in the social sciences or language arts would have a greater affinity for, and ultimately be more impacted by, stories.  A consideration of this idea requires attention to two arenas: (1) the similarities among, and differences between, pre-service teachers in different content areas, (2) whether these similarities

and differences are significant in a study that already has limited generalizability due the small number of overall participants.

First, consider the nature of different content areas as they are presented in the literature. Stodolsky (1998), in "The Subject Matters," compares math and social studies instruction. Because she is focused on elementary school, where the same teachers work across content areas, she does not specifically address the differences among secondary school teachers who choose to specialize in one over the other. However, she does note that content areas vary in terms of their "goals and objectives, degree of sequence and structure, underlying discipline, degree of definition, and prevalence of external testing" (Ibid, p. 4). In addition, the "skills, abilities, and attitudes students are expected to develop in math and social studies are quite distinct" (Ibid.). Kizlik (2010) suggests that wide "reading" is one of the skills required of those who want to become a "good social studies teacher." Thus, it is not a stretch to imagine that someone who enjoyed reading – of stories and otherwise – might be more drawn to this particular field of content.

Radencich and Barksdale Ladd (1998, p. 246) address pre-service teachers' affinities more directly, but do so while contrasting "reading/language arts" with other content areas. Still, their work is relevant since they are contrasting "reading/leading arts" with fields that are more "technical" and where "stories may not be a regular part of the diet." As Kizlik (2010) reminded us, reading is part of the social studies teacher's diet. If granted some latitude, one could infer that Radencich and Barksdale Ladd's (1998, p. 246) statement that reading/language arts teachers more "naturally see the power of story" could be on a sort of spectrum, where social studies teachers are located nearby in their appreciation of stories, which those in more "technical fields" exist in a spot on the spectrum that is further away.

Despite these inferred differences between pre-service teachers in different content areas, there are sources that reinforce the similarities among members of these groups. Ferguson (1989, p. 7) completed an "inquiry profile" of pre-service teachers in several content areas, surveying "132 secondary education majors in social studies, English, math and science." This profile identified the primary "modes of thought" of pre-service teachers and found "no great differences among social studies majors and those in other subject fields" (Ibid., p. 1). There were, however, "differences between higher and lower achieving social studies majors," highlighting that at least in this arena, there was more diversity among pre-service social studies teachers than between pre-service social studies teachers and pre-service teachers in other groups (Ibid.).

To be clear, as it stands, there is no definite answer in the literature about whether one's focus on social studies necessarily indicates a higher affinity for stories. There are sources from which one can infer this. However, Ferguson reminds readers not to draw any line too darkly between social studies teachers and teachers in other content areas.

The second point to be addressed in this section is perhaps more important, as it reminds readers of this study that the results should not be generalized beyond participants. This study does not attempt to discover the impact of stories on pre-service teachers as a group, nor does it attempt to examine the impact on social studies teachers at large. Instead, this study attempts to explore the impact of – and factors in – the hearing of stories by these four pre-service social studies teachers. It is hoped that by exploring their experience with stories, impacts and factors can be identified for use in future surveys and studies to determine the presence of these elements in larger populations. However, that is a potential future extension of the study, and not the purpose of the present work.

## Theoretical Framework

As this review of the literature reveals, this study was influenced by the ideas of many. Its value was suggested by authors that believe story sharing is underutilized in teacher education. As presented in previous sections, Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 9, 3) and McEwan and Egan (1995) suggested story sharing as a type of "narrative knowledge" that could complement, and sometimes counter, the type of 'analytic knowledge' that has become "dominant" in education. Schubert (1991, p. 211) expressed concern about the amount of this knowledge that leaves schools each year when experienced teachers retire without sharing their "teacher lore." Phillion (2005, p. 2) explained that these narratives have the power to provide pre-service teachers access to "the heart and soul of teaching" and to imagine "who they will be as teachers, how they will relate to students and parents, and how they will live their classroom life."

This review also cited authors' ideas about the potential impact of stories. Haven (2007) found that among general audiences, stories improve comprehension, enhance meaning-making, develop literacy, and create a sense of community. Others examining the impact of stories in medicine and business, citing their ability to improve skills (Denning 2004), persuade (McKee in Fryer 2003), and facilitate understanding (Haven, 2007). Within the world of education, Jackson (1995) asserts a story's ability to shape identity. Finally, with regard to pre-service teachers, Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 279) suggest that stories can make the "abstract concrete and accessible."

At a basic level, all of these impacts constitute types of learning, and the literature does explore potential ways in which stories facilitate that learning. Stories may enhance learning

because they improve memory (Haven, 2007), evoke empathy (Shuman, 2005), inspire emotion (McKee in Fryer, 2003) and create personal connections (Szabo, 2006).  Still, in order for these mechanisms to operate, and for stories to educate, the listener must invest and reflect.  These two elements have been explored during this review of the literature.  To restate them quickly, the early review of the literature revealed that factors that contribute to audience investment include skilled storytelling (Preskill, 2001), narrator credibility, and relevance (Akerson 2004).  Reflective activities can be written or oral, and it has been postulated that these activities are part of a pathway from narrative through reflection to action (Preskill, 2001; Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005).

Together, all of these ideas contributed to the initial theoretical framework for this study.  Stated briefly, the study was originally based on the possibility that as individuals invest in a story, they could listen to it, reflect on it, learn from it, and use it to inform their plans for - and execution of - actions.  Steps in this pathway were suggested by the authors noted in this, and other sections, of the literature review.  An overall view of the pathway proposed at the outset of the study is provided in figure 1.

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
(based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)
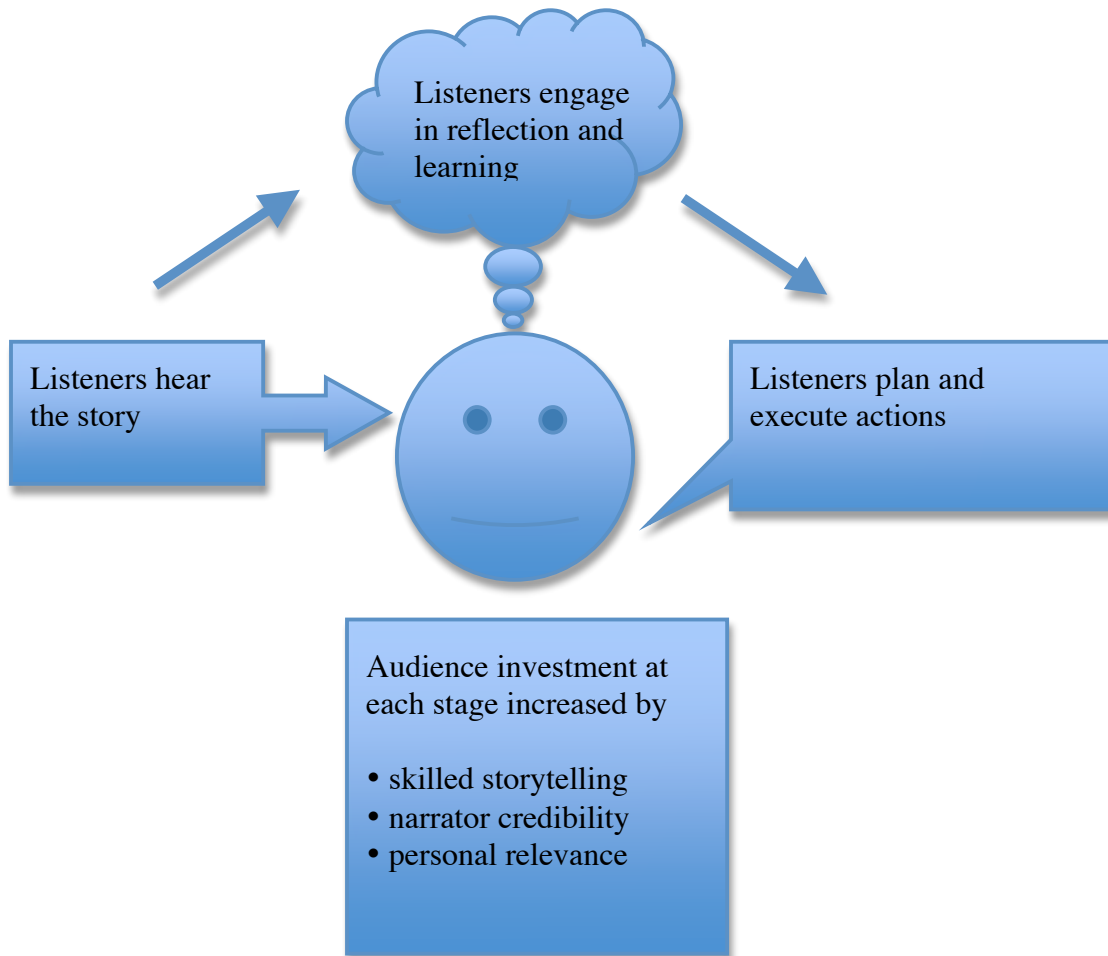


This figure provided a general overview of a possible pathway as it was perceived at the outset

of the study. However, it is important to note that it did not address one other idea explored by

this study. That was the idea that the context in which a story is told, and the type of reflection

that was practiced, could affect the impact a story had on its audience. McDrury and Alterio

(2003, p. 50) explore these ideas, suggesting several characteristics of story sharing that can

influence an audience's learning. Those characteristics include the setting (formal vs. informal),

listeners (one vs. many), and story (spontaneous vs. pre-determined). The current study set out to explore these and other elements as pre-service participants responded to questions about stories they heard in many settings.

## Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature on story sharing in the training practices of many professional fields. That review has revealed the power of narrative to educate and suggested the guiding hypothesis utilized at the outset of this study: that hearing experienced teachers' stories can impact a pre-service teacher. Still, at the outset of this study, the alternate perspective was present, and at least one rationale was offered for why story sharing might not work with the pre-service population, particularly when shared prior to student teaching. These considerations reinforced the idea that data need to be collected carefully and considered as objectively as possible and led to the methodology discussed in chapter three.

# CHAPTER III

# METHODOLOGY

## Introduction

As revealed in chapters one and two, the original purpose of this study was to explore the ways in which pre-service teachers were impacted by hearing stories shared by experienced teachers. The study specifically set out to consider (a) the impact on the thoughts of pre-service teachers and whether those thoughts translate into either action during their student-teaching experience or plans for action in their own future classrooms and (b) the impact of hearing select stories in a formal setting with guided reflection versus the impact of hearing various stories in other settings. Although these questions shifted somewhat over the course of the study, as data inspired new and adjusted inquiries in ways noted in chapters four and five, these original questions laid the groundwork for much of the research and methodology.

The initial conceptual framework for this study was based on a review of the literature, which suggested both a guiding hypothesis and methodology for the work. The guiding hypothesis was that hearing experienced teachers' stories would have an impact on pre-service teachers. This hypothesis stemmed from (a) evidence of stories' impact on trainees in other professional arenas (b) evidence of impact on other populations (such as new teachers) in education and (c) indicators that pre-service teachers would experience an impact when experienced teachers' stories are shared. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there

were also counter-indicators, reinforcing the need for careful data collection and analysis. The study's methodology is qualitative and is detailed throughout this chapter.

## Design of Study

According to Glesne (2006, p. 1), "qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal narratives and the ways in which they intersect." That is exactly what this project set out to do: hear pre-service teachers' narratives as they discuss the impact of experienced teachers' stories. Ultimately, this project is about the perceptions, plans and actions of the pre-service teachers. A qualitative approach provides an opportunity to explore those elements by listening as the pre-service teachers describe them in their own words. This attention to participants' voices leads to data that are rich and reflective of the participants' actual experiences, insights and concerns (*Why Qualitative*, 2006).

Although a possible extension of this project would be to determine if sharing experienced teachers' stories with pre-service teachers could assist those pre-service teachers as they establish themselves in schools – a determination that would involve more quantitative measures of new teacher satisfaction, retention and effectiveness– the current project is more limited in scope. This research was designed to discover what the stories are and what early reactions those narratives elicit when shared with pre-service teachers. Insight into these questions is best gained through conversation and requires work that is "pragmatic, interpretive and grounded in the lived experiences of people" – three hallmarks of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 2)

More specifically, the study is a qualitative case study exploring the perspectives of four pre-service participants. At various points, its interview strategies were influenced by phenomenological and ethnographic approaches, but neither term is appropriate to describe

44

the complete work. An example of phenomenological influence exists in the interview

questions phrased to elicit the participant's description of an experience (Sorrell & Redmond,

1995, pp. 1116, 1120-1121), e.g. "Please describe the experience of hearing those stories."

An example of the ethnographic influence is provided by questions that sought a cultural

context for those experiences (Ibid., pp. 1116-1119), e.g., "Do other elements of your teacher

training influence who you listen to or how you hear the stories?" Still, the emphasis on

participants' interpretations (rather than strict descriptions) precludes this study from being

categorizes as phenomenological, while the interest in participants' perceptions of culture

(rather than a holistic description of culture based on longer-term observation) prevents the

identification of the work as an ethnography. In short, the study involved tracking the

perceptions and self-reported behaviors of four pre-service teachers during nine months of

their pre-service education, and this type of work is best described as a qualitative case-study.

Data were gathered according to the methods and for the purposes outlined in Table 2.

*Table 2: Methods and Purposes of Data Collection*

| Stage | Time | Method of Data Collection | Purpose of Data Collection |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | Month 1 (7/14-21) | Interview | Establishing pre-service participants' baseline experiences with and beliefs about story sharing |
| B | Month 3 (9/23) | • Written reflection immediately after story sharing by experienced teacher panel<br>----------------------------------------<br>• Recording/Transcript of Focus Group Reflection<br>----------------------------------------<br>• Written reflection after story sharing and focus group reflection | • Gauging initial impact of formal story sharing on individual pre-service teachers<br>------------------------------------<br>• Assessing group reflection on story sharing<br>------------------------------------<br>• Assessing the impact of formal story sharing on individual pre-service teachers after organized group reflection |
| C | Month 5-6 (11/11-12/1) | Interview | Identifying pre-service teachers' other experiences with stories during the semester |
| D | Month 8-9 (2/26-3/5) | Interview | Identifying the impact of stories on pre-service teachers' plans and actions |

Details about each element of data collection are provided in the section of this chapter devoted to "data collection, data recording and data analysis strategies." That section also detailsa portion of the study that is autoethnographic and explores the ways in which the collection and interpretation of data could be influenced by researcher role.

## Participants and Location of Research

*Pre-service participants:*

This study focused on pre-service social studies teachers who were preparing to work in high schools. Pre-service participants were recruited by asking individuals in a local social studies teacher education program to participate in a study that required them to "respond to questions about the impact of their pre-service training." In an effort to recruit pre-service teachers who were representative of a range of perspectives on story sharing as a professional development tool, the initial solicitation did not reveal that story sharing was a focus of the study. The concern was that such a solicitation might attract a disproportionate number of pre-service teachers who reacted more positively to stories and could taint the qualitative data.

As mentioned previously, the pre-service participants were recruited from a local social studies teacher education program. That program, located in a southeastern university, is a program allowing college graduates to earn their Masters in the Art of Teaching (MAT). All thirteen pre-service social studies teachers originally in the program returned the initial solicitation survey. Of these, seven were eligible to participate in the study. Ineligible individuals included those who were not "pre-service teachers" as defined by the study, those who were not planning to apply for teaching jobs in state after graduation (eliminating the

point of connection with narrators recommended by the literature), and those who indicated they would not consider participating in the study.

The next stage of recruitment was accomplished by sending an e-mail that provided more detail about the study and asking if eligible individuals would be willing to participate. This communication detailed the commitments and compensations associated with the study and revealed that "the study seeks to understand how pre-service teachers are affected by the stories they hear from experienced teachers."

Of the seven eligible participants, only two were female. Seeking gender diversity (two males and two females) in the study meant both females were asked to participate. Both agreed.

Of the five eligible male participants, four were asked to participate via the e-mail described above. The fifth was eliminated because he had the same graduate degree (a J.D.) as one of the only female participants, and the study sought diversity in professional background. Of the four who were asked to participate, two agreed, one never responded (despite two attempts at contact) and one declined to participate.

These steps resulted in the identification of four participants: two male and two female. Ensuring racial diversity was not possible, as all eligible participants identified themselves as "white" except for one who did not respond to that section of the survey.

*Experienced teacher participants:*

It was anticipated that these pre-service teachers would likely hear stories from experienced teachers in a variety of contexts during the timeframe of the study. Potential sources included experienced teachers they would encounter in their graduate classes, in the

schools where they conduct fall observations or even in social settings. Only once source of stories was controlled: the panel of experienced teachers who shared select stories with pre-service teachers early in the study.

Potential panel participants were identified by the researcher by asking a variety of educators including professors, administrators, and teachers to recommend high school social studies teachers who "would be willing to share stories and/or anecdotes from their careers in education for the purpose of assisting pre-service teachers." Recommenders were encouraged to suggest participants based on the criterion for audience investment. Recall the three prerequisites established by the literature, which asserted that pre-service teachers are more likely to listen to experienced teachers who are (a) skilled storytellers (Preskill, 2001, p. 2) (b) credible, particularly with regards to experience teaching in the grade level that interests the pre-service audience (i.e. high school) (Akerson, 2004), and (c) representative of some personal relevance for the audience, either by having a relationship with the audience (i.e. being a potential mentor) or by having experience with the audience's future students (i.e. working in a school where pre-service teachers might someday teach) (Frykholm & Meyer, 1999, p. 151). In an effort to satisfy these criteria, recommenders were asked to focus on experienced teachers who had experience telling stories, were currently teaching high school and were working in- state, where many local pre-service teachers would be applying for jobs. Although it was possible that some panel participants could be candidates for mentorships with the pre-service teachers (due to the close relationship between the university and many local schools), this was not be a selection criterion, as the school's mentor selection process occurred after the time when participants were recruited. A final requirement of the experienced teachers was that they express a willingness to "invest

substantial resources in the telling" (Haven, 2007, p. 73). Among those resources was time, required to both prepare the narrative and to share it with pre-service teachers.

Ultimately, twelve experienced social studies teachers were asked to participate in the study and to consider participating on the experienced teacher panel. Six never responded, two declined and four agreed to participate. Those four were interviewed to determine which three would participate on the panel. Initially, the intention was to select three final panelists by reviewing their stories for structure and substance; those panelists whose stories best met the criteria identified in chapters one and two would be asked to serve on the panel. However, all four of the panelists had stories that met the criteria stated in those chapters, and all four did ultimately participate on the panel. Recall those criteria from chapter one, which stated that:

> This research will focus on stories that describe moments when teachers gained an on-the-job insight. Particular attention will be given to the "aha" moments that stemmed from recognition of an "oh no" mistake. Stories utilized in the research will be character-based, and will detail both the events and the thoughts of the teacher involved. That teacher's reflections will describe his or her goals, the struggles faced in an attempt to reach those goals, and the lessons learned along the way.

Also recall that chapter two provided additional ideas for selecting stories, suggesting that pre-service teachers are most likely to benefit from stories that could help them bridge theory and practice, and stories that could help them avoid mistakes by sharing experiences that evoke empathy and understanding. Since all four panelists had stories that met these criteria and exhibited these characteristics, all were asked to serve on the panel. All of them agreed. Details of how they worked with the researcher to prepare for the panel, and on how that panel was organized, are included in a later section of this methodology chapter.

The experienced teacher panelists included one male from a local suburban high school who, by the time of the panel presentation, had been identified as a mentor for one of the pre-service participants.  Other panelists included a male and two females, all from different, more urban schools.

*An added participant: one MAT professor:*

During the study, as data from the four pre-service teachers were collected, it became apparent that in order to provide context, more information was needed about the MAT program.  This information was gathered by obtaining consent from, and interviewing, one additional participant – a professor in, and former coordinator of, the MAT program.

*Location of Research:*

To preserve the anonymity of the communities, sources are not included in this small section. They include websites posted by the university, the local school districts, and each local chamber of commerce.

As stated previously, pre-service participants were recruited from a from a local social studies teacher education program.  That program, located in a southeastern University, is a program allowing college graduates to earn their Masters in the Art of Teaching (MAT).  The basic structure of the program is as follows:

*Table 3: Structure of the MAT Program*

| Stage of Teacher Education | Required Coursework for pre-service social studies teachers |
|---|---|
| Summer | Introduction to Teaching; Introduction to Schools |
| Fall | Learner and Learning I; Contexts of Education; Practica (Observations in Schools); Methods and Materials for Teaching Social Studies I; Content Area Elective |
| Spring | Learner and Learning II; Practica (Student Teaching); Methods and Materials for Teaching Social Studies II; Teaching Secondary School Students with Disabilities |
| Summer | Advanced Pedagogy; Curriculum Leadership |

Practica for students in this program take place in one of two districts. Pre-service participants distinguished between these districts by labeling one "suburban" and one "urban" or "inner-city." Details about practica assignments in the two districts, and about the districts in general, are included below.

Three of the pre-service participants in the study completed their practica in a district all participants described as "suburban." This district has the state's highest districtwide scores on the SAT, one of the state's highest per pupil expenditures, and the state's lowest dropout rate. Over forty percent of the teachers in the district hold a master's or doctorate degree and the teacher turnover rate is under nine percent. The two communities that feed into the schools in this district have a combine population of around 74,000; the average home cost is approximately $340,000; and the university from which pre-service participants were recruited is located in one of these communities.

One of the pre-service participants completed her practica in a district all participants described as "urban" or "inner-city." The district presents itself as a district currently prioritizing "raising achievement for all students" and as a district intent upon "improvement." Areas of focus include reducing teacher turnover, which in a recent year

was over nineteen percent, the seventh highest in the state. Annual per pupil expenditure is approximately $1500 less than in the aforementioned, neighboring district. The county chamber of commerce associated with this district emphasizes the community's ties to a high profile private university located in the county, its identity as a thriving medical center, and a place rich in history and community activities. The population of the county is around 267,000 and the average home cost is approximately $159,000.

Experienced teacher participants were recruited from both of these districts. Ultimately, members of the panel included one teacher from the "suburban" district and three teachers from the "urban" district.

**Researcher Entry, Access, Role and Reciprocity**

As a former secondary school teacher and current graduate student, the researcher had several ties to educators. These ties served as channels into networks of teachers who constituted a prospective pool of experienced teacher participants. These teachers were informed as to the nature of the study (see Appendix A) and asked to participate. Initial interviews were conducted to determine their eligibility based on the criteria noted above. Although the original plan was to engage potential participants in an initial interview, then ask those with relevant stories and allowing schedules to engage in a second session to prepare for the panel, this plan was altered during the course of the study. Of the four experienced teachers that engaged in the initial interview, all four demonstrated an immediate ability and willingness to participate on the panel and allowed an extension of the time of that initial interview to include preparation for that panel. The second interview, initially planned as an opportunity to prepare for the panel, was replaced with an e-mail

exchange with each participant.  Everyone, including the researcher, felt this was sufficient

preparation. All four experienced teachers who engaged in an interview did ultimately

participate on the panel.  As compensation for his or her time, each teacher was offered a

snack during the initial interview and a thirty dollar gift certificate after their participation on

the panel.

Pre-service teachers were recruited from a local school of education.  Entry was

gained through the support of a professor who has agreed to allow two key elements of the

project to take place in her class.  First, she allowed the initial survey to be conducted in her

orientation session for the teacher education program, providing the researcher with an

opportunity to identify four pre-service participants according to criteria detailed in the

section on 'data collection' by 'initial survey'.  Second, she agreed to allow the panel of

experienced teachers to share their stories during her class time, exposing the participants (as

well as their classmates) to the key variable in this research.  The four pre-service teachers

who participated in the study were offered compensation for their time, which consisted of

three thirty minute interviews (in addition to the class-time spent filling out the survey and

experiencing and reflecting on the experienced teacher panel).  Snacks were provided during

interviews, and participants were compensated at the rate of ten dollars per interview once all

three interviews were complete.

The "favors and commitments" offered above in the form of snacks, certificates and

monetary compensation are one type of reciprocity, utilized in this study in hopes of gaining

entry.  However, Glazer (1982 quoted in Glesne, 2006, p. 142) extends the definition of

reciprocity to include "the building of a sense of mutual identification and feeling of

community." This secondary type of reciprocity has the potential to move a researcher from entry to access, and it requires a consideration of researcher role.

The role of the researcher in this study was multifaceted. First, during the one-on-one interviews with experienced teachers, the researcher occupied both the role of empathetic colleague and autoethnographer who shared her own "oh no" and "aha" stories and the role of engaged researcher who probed participants for more reflection and detail. Fontana and Frey (2000, pp. 658-659) emphasize the link between this type of emotional role reciprocity and the depth of data collected when they cite Oakley's idea that "in interviewing there is 'no intimacy without reciprocity'" and suggest that a more intimate connection to participants "provides a greater spectrum of responses and greater insight into the lives of respondents." In addition, throughout the study, the researcher also attempted to gain access by emphasizing that the goal was to use information gathered to assist pre-service teachers as they prepare to teach in secondary schools.

## Ethics

Christians (2000, pp. 138-140) emphasizes four considerations that "all scholarly associations" include in their own codes of ethics: informed consent, deception, privacy/confidentiality, and accuracy. Here, the first two will be addressed quickly, since they are rather straightforward with regard to this project. Informed consent was secured from all participants. Experienced teachers understood the project in its entirety from their earliest encounter with solicitation. Pre-service teachers heard only a vague description of the study during solicitation (for reasons described earlier in the "participants" section of this proposal), but were be provided with a more in-depth description prior to any actual

interviews. Only respondents who grant fully informed consent were asked to participate. There was no deception during the study.

The issues of privacy/confidentiality and accuracy are more complex. Although the experienced teachers present "their" narratives voluntarily and were encouraged to mask or alter names and details to protect individuals referenced in the narrative, there is always a question of who actually "owns" the narrative, whose consent needs to be gathered before that narrative is shared, and which person's version of the narrative is closest to the truth. Numerous authors have recognized these ethical concerns. Shuman (2005, p. 4), for example, insists that listeners "recognize stories as belonging to someone other than the teller." Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 759), writing specifically about the ethical responsibility of autoethnographers, insist that individuals referenced in the stories "deserve the same consideration as your participants who have given you permission."

This concern is heightened when pre-service participants are asked to reveal what stories they have heard during the course of their teacher education. In order to protect the sources of these stories, pre-service teachers were allowed to mask or alter names and details of the sources and stories if they chose to do so. Additionally, the researcher altered information during reporting, protecting sources and indirect participants while still preserving the message and nature of the stories.

In addition to addressing these ethical responsibilities, Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 745) also address the topic of truth, reminding listeners that "stories rearrange, redescribe, invent, omit and revise. They can be wrong in numerous ways – tone, detail, substance, etc." Although they insist that this "attribute of storytelling" does not "threaten the project of personal narrative" (a topic discussed later during the data analysis portion of the

methodology), it does pose ethical concerns. An inaccurate representation, even one cloaked by the label of "someone else's perspective," catapults us into the realm of slander -  a realm where ethical and legal issues intersect.

These ethical concerns were considered throughout the study. Although the researcher was prepared to take steps to alleviate these concerns, these were ultimately deemed unnecessary. For example, the researcher was prepared to (a) obtain permission from the narrator to share the story with other individuals referenced in the story, then seek those individuals' consent to share the story with a larger audience, or (b) forego the sharing of certain stories, if they "jeopardiz[ed] individuals and [fed] perverse social representations" (Fine, et al. 2000, p. 117, citing McCarthy, et al., 1997) , these steps were ultimately unnecessary due to the relatively benign nature of the stories.

## Data Collection, Data Recording and Data Analysis Strategies

Data collection, recording and analysis are considered here together since, as Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 155) assert, "in qualitative studies, data collection and analysis typically go hand in hand to build a coherent interpretation." Within this discussion, three main types of data are considered:  autoethnographic data, individual interview data and group interview (e.g. focus group) data. It is worth noting at the outset that the main methods of recording data were tape recording conversations (with permission) and noting non-audial observations and impressions. Portions of the recordings were transcribed to facilitate analysis. Finally, a more accurate interpretation of data was facilitated by the conversations with participants during the interviews, where they had an opportunity to offer clarifications or corrections if the researcher misunderstood or misinterpreted their views.

*Autoethnographic Data:*

Autoethnography is "a genre of writing and research that connects the personal to the cultural, placing the self within a social context" (Reed-Danahay, 1997 cited in Holt, 2003). These texts are generally "written in the first person and feature dialogue, emotion, and self-consciousness as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, cited in Holt, 2003). This study is part autoethnography, in that the researcher shares the stories of her own 'oh no' and 'aha' moments with both participants in the study and with readers of the final report. One purpose of this sharing is to build relationships with these groups. In the words of Ellis and Bochner (2002, p. 741), this allows the author to

> become 'I', readers become 'you', subjects become 'us'. Participants are encouraged to participate in a personal relationship with the author/researcher, to be treated as co-researchers, to share authority, and to author their own lives in their own voices.

Additionally, sharing the story of her own 'oh no' and 'aha' moments with participants provided them with an example of what constitutes a "story" as defined by this particular project. Experienced teachers benefitted from this, as it enhanced their understanding of the type of story they were being asked to share. The following story was shared by the researcher with experienced teachers in an attempt to enhance that understanding.

> "James, as soon as you pick up that pencil, we'll continue with class."
> I said it with authority and with the best of intentions. James needed to take notes. That required having a pencil in his hand. Instead, he had dropped his pencil — eraser down — on the floor. Apparently, he wanted to see how high his big pink eraser would make that small pencil bounce.
> "James, did you hear me? I said as soon as you pick up that pencil, we'll continue with class."

Well, James never did pick up that pencil. Instead, he resisted, and that resistance turned into agitation. Eventually, the situation escalated to the point that I had to get another adult to escort him out of class.

James was not a model student that day. He had not been paying attention. He had distracted other students who were trying to learn. But what had I done? The truth was, while attempting to manage his behavior, I had created a horrible moment. I had focused the entire class on our situation, and framed that situation in such a way that one of us was going to come away looking powerless and unworthy of respect. I had issued an ultimatum. Class would not continue while that pencil was lying there. James refused to lose face by retrieving it. And the only way I could pick it up while maintaining any sense of authority was by first having James removed from the class.

It was a learning moment for me — one of many that forced me to reconsider my approach managing the classroom. In that moment, I learned to issue choices, not ultimatums. ("James, either begin taking notes, so I can see that you're paying attention, or you'll need to write two pages summarizing our discussion for homework so I know what you've learned.") I learned to make the right choices easier for my students by keeping the rest of the class focused on what we they were learning instead of what James decides to do. ("Alright everyone, take a look at this artifact…") And I learned that when appropriate, I could use positive manipulation to address minor missteps. ("Oh James! You dropped your pencil! Let me get that for you. I don't want one bit of your brilliance lost because you weren't able to write it down!" )

How I wish that I had tried any of these other approaches . . . (Smith, 2005, James and the Giant Pencil.)

In addition to providing an example of the type of story experienced teachers were being encouraged to share, including this story in the prompts for experienced teachers allowed the researcher to place herself in a vulnerable position, much as she asked her participants to do. This advanced the goal of comraderie and more open communication with experienced teacher participants.

*Individual Interview Data:*

Ellis & Bochner (2000, p. 755) establish a link between autoethnography and interviews when they consider whether sharing one's story with participants contaminates the data provided by those participants. Although Ellis and Bochner never fully resolve this

issue, the pilot study for the present project revealed that sharing a personal story was an effective means of establishing rapport with participants and identifying the types of stories the experienced teacher participants were being asked to share. In other words, data were elicited by the personal revelation. Since the purpose of the interview with the experienced teachers was simply to elicit their stories, and the risk of an experienced altering a story based on information given in the story about James shared previously (and in Appendix B) was low, that story was included as a prompt for experience teachers.

Still, any report of the data must acknowledge that, in the words of Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 663), interview data are "negotiated text[s]." These authors remind us that "researchers are not invisible, neutral entities; rather, they are part of the interactions they seek to study and influence those interactions." The goal of the present researcher is to minimize that influence, thereby maximizing the range of perspectives participants are willing to reveal.

An additional means of maximizing a participant's willingness to speak is to "determine a setting in which this is possible" (Creswell, J. cited in Moorefield-Lang, 2006). In an effort to establish this environment, pre-service and experienced teacher participants were given the opportunity to interview outside locations where they might feel threatened by the potential for someone to overhear a story. Participants were consulted about where they felt most comfortable conducting interviews and were always provided with the option of speaking away from the schools with which they are affiliated. Also, as mentioned in the section devoted to ethics, participants were offered the option of masking or altering details to protect individuals referenced in the narratives.

Finally, analysis of the stories was conducted both by the researcher and by the pre-service teachers with whom the stories are shared. The researcher's role was to identify the types of stories shared with pre-service teachers, listen as pre-service teachers described the stories and their impact, and then analyze what pre-service teachers revealed with an eye toward any themes that might emerge from the data. The analysis conducted by pre-service teachers was conducted via written response, in a focus group and during individual interviews. That work is described in the sections below.

### *Initial Data Gathered by Survey and Interview (Stage A):*

Experienced teacher participants were selected according to the criteria detailed in the "Participants" section. That section also noted the reasons for requesting information about their type of teaching experience, location of employment and experiences with storytelling. Here, it is important to describe the process used to elicit the stories from experienced teachers. In short, after the initial identification of experienced teacher participants, the researcher established the type of stories that are the focus of the research by detailing the definition of story used in the study and by sharing sample stories. These, and other, interview prompts were provided to participants prior to the actual interview (see Appendix B), in an effort to "facilitate rapport" and "so that they can come prepared with meaningful narratives" (Sorrell & Redmond, 1995) (see Appendix B). Participants then worked with the researcher to shape the narrative in preparation for sharing it with pre-service teachers. A sample prompt, inspired by questions encountered in the literature review, includes "Please describe 'a significant learning experience you had as a teacher?'" (Hatton, 2005, p. 45). Other prompts are noted in Appendix B.

Pre-service teachers were surveyed early the project to identify potential participants. This survey (included as Appendix D) solicited demographic information that allowed the researcher to seek diversity among the pre-service participants. As noted in an earlier section, the survey also gauged individuals' interest in participating by asking pre-service teachers if they would be willing to participate in a study that requires them to "respond to questions about the impact of their pre-service training." Finally, the survey solicited information regarding prior teaching experience to ensure that each participant was in fact a "pre-service teacher" as the term is defined by this study. Following these steps resulted in pre-service participants that were willing to engage in the process and who could offer a range of perspectives on story sharing. Of course, the number of pre-service participants was still small enough to limit the generalizability of any findings, an issue that is discussed further in the section on limitations in chapter five.

Once pre-service participants were selected based on the criterion noted above, they were interviewed to elicit baseline data (stage A). The interview questions (included as Appendix F) were designed to provide insight into the participants' thoughts about teaching and their experience with story sharing. Sample questions include: "What motivated you to become a teacher?," "Have any experienced teachers shared stories about their teaching, or about their lives as teachers with you at any point?," and "What was your experience in hearing those stories?."

### Data Gathered to Measure Same-Day Responses to the Experienced Teacher Panel (Stage B):

An appropriate introduction to this section requires detail about the experienced teacher panel. As previously noted, the panel consisted of four experienced teachers. Each shared

several stories with the researcher during individual interviews prior to the panel. After hearing all of the potential stories, the researcher recognized a theme among the majority of those stories: "getting to know your students." Conversation with these teachers continued via e-mail. During these conversations, the researcher highlighted stories that best met the study's criteria for narratives, asked experienced teachers to share those stories, and received assurance from all panelists that the theme was appropriate and that they were comfortable telling their stories to illustrate it. Prior to the actual panel presentation, each panelist received a reminder of which stories they were being asked to share and were encouraged to highlight any themes they believed would benefit pre-service social studies teachers, in addition to the theme of "getting to know your students." For three of the panelists, the story reminders consisted of a brief description of the story that included several quotes from their interviews. The fourth panelist, who struggled some with order of events in her telling of the story during an initial interview, was provided with a quote heavy narrative that she had the opportunity to review prior to the panel. During the panel, each experienced teacher spoke their story in their own, new words, adding to the authenticity of the spoken narrative. Their stories are included as appendices G through O.

More details about the actual panel presentation are provided in Table 4.

*Table 4: Panel Presentation*

| Experienced Teachers - in order of stories told | School Type | Story Title | Prepared Story or Spontaneous | For stories reviewed in advance with the researcher, this was the suggested connection to the theme of "getting to know your students" |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mr. A | urban | "Autism Outburst" | Prepared | Knowing the students as individuals and building relationships helps with (1) classroom management and (2) student investment in the teacher and the class |
| Ms. B | urban | "Warm Up" | Prepared | Knowing the students helps teachers design the classroom and the instruction to meet student needs |
| Mr. D | suburban | "Letter from a student" | Not prepared with researcher, but experienced teacher thought about sharing it in advance and brought in the letter in case there was an opportunity | |
| Ms. C | urban | "Assumptions and Assignments" | Prepared | Knowing the students influences the way this teacher designed her curriculum |
| Mr. D | suburban | "Looking for my father" | Prepared | Get to know the students, but remember that you are not one of them |
| Mr. D | suburban | "Quoting curse words – the Vietnam draft" | Prepared | Get to know the students, but remember that you are not one of them |
| Mr. D | urban | "Teaching an ESL class" | Prepared | Get to know the students; they realize when you do not understand them (here literally not knowing the language, but also in a larger sense) |
| Ms. B | urban | "The protest" | Prepared | Pay attention to who your students are and how you are structuring your classroom to bring out the best in all of them |
| Mr. D | suburban | "Saving face" | Spontaneous | |

The researcher served as a facilitator of the panel, providing a brief introduction to

each panelist, introducing the theme of the panel, calling on panelists to tell their stories,

politely redirecting panelists back to the stories on one occasion when they digressed into a more lengthy discussion of group work, encouraging the sharing of additional stories if panelists felt inspired to do so, offering the audience an opportunity to ask questions (no pre-service study participants did), and then concluding the session.

It is worth noting that the panel presentation took place during a session of the social studies methods course, where the four pre-service participants were in the company of other members of the social studies cohort.  After the panel presentation, the bulk of the class remained in the room to reflect with their regular professor, while the four pre-service participants moved into a separate room to engage in reflection facilitated by the researcher.

During this reflection, three sets of data were collected to gauge pre-service teachers' initial reactions to the stories shared by the experienced teacher panel: (1) individual pre-service teachers' written responses, noted immediately following the panel (2) a recording of the four pre-service teachers' focus group conversation about the panel and (3) individual pre-service teachers' written responses, noted immediately following the group conversation. Each of these data sets is described below.

The first written response was designed to elicit the impact of the panel on the individual pre-service teacher before structured focus group conversation occurs.  The prompts for this reflection, included as Appendix P, were designed to elicit information about emotional and intellectual reactions.  For instance, one question reads "Are you glad you heard these stories?  Why or why not?"  Another asks, "Do you believe you will remember any of these stories a few weeks from now?"  A third asks "Did you learn anything from these stories?  If so, what?."  And finally, "What, if any, impact does this story have on you

as you determine how you will design and manage your classroom?  If the story altered your plans in some way, please note what part of your plan has been altered and why."

The focus group conversation was structured to encourage conversational reflection on the stories.  This approach was based on the Phillion's (2005, p. 6) aforementioned idea that "a narrative approach to teacher education is based on the idea that we make meaning through reflection" and his suggestion that stories be used as "springboards for conversations."  The conversation began when the teachers were asked to discuss the following question:  "What is your reaction to the sharing of these stories."  This open ended question (which is also noted in Appendix Q) is asked in the spirit of Piotrkoskwi (1978, pp. 295-296) who suggests "beginning with open-ended questions, which imposed as little structure as possible on the course of the interview, and then using the topics on [a] list for further 'pinpointing'."  Topics on the researcher's list will include "intellectual response/insight gained?," "emotional response/positive or negative?" and "perception of author."

The literature also suggests additional reflective prompts.  Steiner's (2005, p. 2902) suggestion that the impact of stories is limited until they are "confirmed by other sources of evidence" inspired a question about whether the story is in accordance with the pre-service participants' previous beliefs or experiences.  His concern with the narrator's perspective required a question about whether the context and view of the storyteller are perceived by the pre-service teachers as relevant to their future classroom lives.

The focus group conversation was followed by a second written prompt designed to assess the impact of story sharing on the individual pre-service teachers after they had participated in organized group reflection.  Specifically, the pre-service teachers were asked

65

to respond to the following question (which is also noted in Appendix R):  "How has participating in the group conversation affected your response to the stories?  Please note any change in your thoughts about the stories, the likelihood you will remember the stories, or the impact the stories will have on the plans you make or actions you take as a teacher."

As stated earlier, each of the three sets of data was analyzed to gauge pre-service teachers' initial reactions to the stories shared by the experienced teacher panel.  Since these data sets were gathered before, during, and after the structured group reflection, the early impact of that reflection was also assessed.

### Data Gathered in Subsequent Interviews:

After the initial data collection in July 2009 (i.e. the survey to identify pre-service participants and the interview to establish their baseline beliefs) and the post-panel data collection in September 2009 (i.e. the immediate written response, focus group transcript and post-focus group writing), there were two follow-up interviews with the pre-service teachers. One occurred in November or December 2009, depending on each participant's individual schedule.  The other took place in February or March 2010.  It is worth noting that three of these participants' interviews took place in early March, approximately six weeks into their student teaching experience.  The exception was one participant who could only interview in February (due to the anticipated birth of his first child in March), approximately five weeks into the student teaching experience.[5]  The purpose and format of each interview is described below.

_____

[5] The MAT program required that each student teaching experience be a minimum of six weeks long, although some pre-service teachers and their mentors elected to continue the experience for up to twelve weeks.

66

The purpose of the November/December 2009 (stage C) interview was to determine the extent of the pre-service teachers' exposure to other experienced teachers' stories since the baseline assessment in July. During the time between the July and November/December data collection (i.e. during the fall term of the pre-service teachers' program), there was ample time for exposure to experienced teachers' stories. The fall schedule for this cohort of pre-service teachers involved coursework (which included guest speakers and professors who shared stories) and school observations (which required interactions with experienced teachers in schools). During the November/December 2009 interview, pre-service teachers were asked what stories they had heard, why they believe those stories were shared, whether any type of formal reflection occurred and to describe their overall reaction to the sharing. These questions, along with other questions that were added to that interview after reviewing earlier data, are included in Appendix S. Once this interview was completed, the combined data included pre-service teacher reflections on three types of story sharing experience: (1) formal story sharing (using data collected after the experienced teacher panel); (2) formal story sharing with structured reflection (using data collected after the experienced teacher panel and focus group conversation); and (3) informal story sharing (using data collected from pre-service teachers who report informal conversations with experienced teachers during the fall term).

The final (stage D) interview occurred in February or March 2010, a date that found the pre-service teachers five to six weeks into their student-teaching experience. The purpose of the March interview was to determine which, if any of, the reflections noted above had translated into (1) action during their weeks of student teaching, or (2) plans for action in their future classrooms. The rationale for assessing both actions and plans is that student-

teachers are sometimes prevented from enacting their own plans while student-teaching under advisors with alternate visions, but still express determination to act when hired as a lead teacher (Rotanz, 1997). Questions designed to measure whether stories had influenced the pre-service teachers' actions or plans to act included the following: (1) What has had the most impact on your actions in your current classrooms or your plans for future classrooms? (2) What stories do you remember from the fall? (3) How often and when do you recall those stories? (4) Have those stories had any impact on your actions in your current classrooms or your plans for future classrooms? If so, which stories and what impact? (5) Do you believe there are reasons stories do or do not impact you? Do other elements of your teacher training influence who you listen to or how you hear the stories? How would you compare the impact of hearing select stories in a formal setting with guided reflection with the impact of hearing various stories in other settings? (6) Have you experienced any of the same "oh no" or "aha" moments that were detailed in the stories you heard in the fall? If so, please answer the following questions: (a) What did you learn in that moment? (b) Do you believe that learning could have occurred in any other way during your pre-service training? If so, how? And (c) Will you share the story of that moment with other teachers? Why or why not? (7) Think about the experience of hearing from a teacher panel and engaging in the structured reflection afterwards. How would you compare the impact of that experience with the impact of hearing stories in other settings? For example, in which setting are you more likely to listen to the story, engage in reflection and learning, or have actions influenced by the story? These questions, along with other questions that were added to that interview after reviewing earlier data, are listed in Appendix T.

Finally, the final interview provided one additional opportunity. After almost all other data were collected during the study, allowing pre-service participants to articulate their own views as fully as possible, they had an opportunity to critique the pathway suggested earlier in this work.[6] That pathway, noted earlier as figure 1, is reproduced below.

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
(based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)



_____
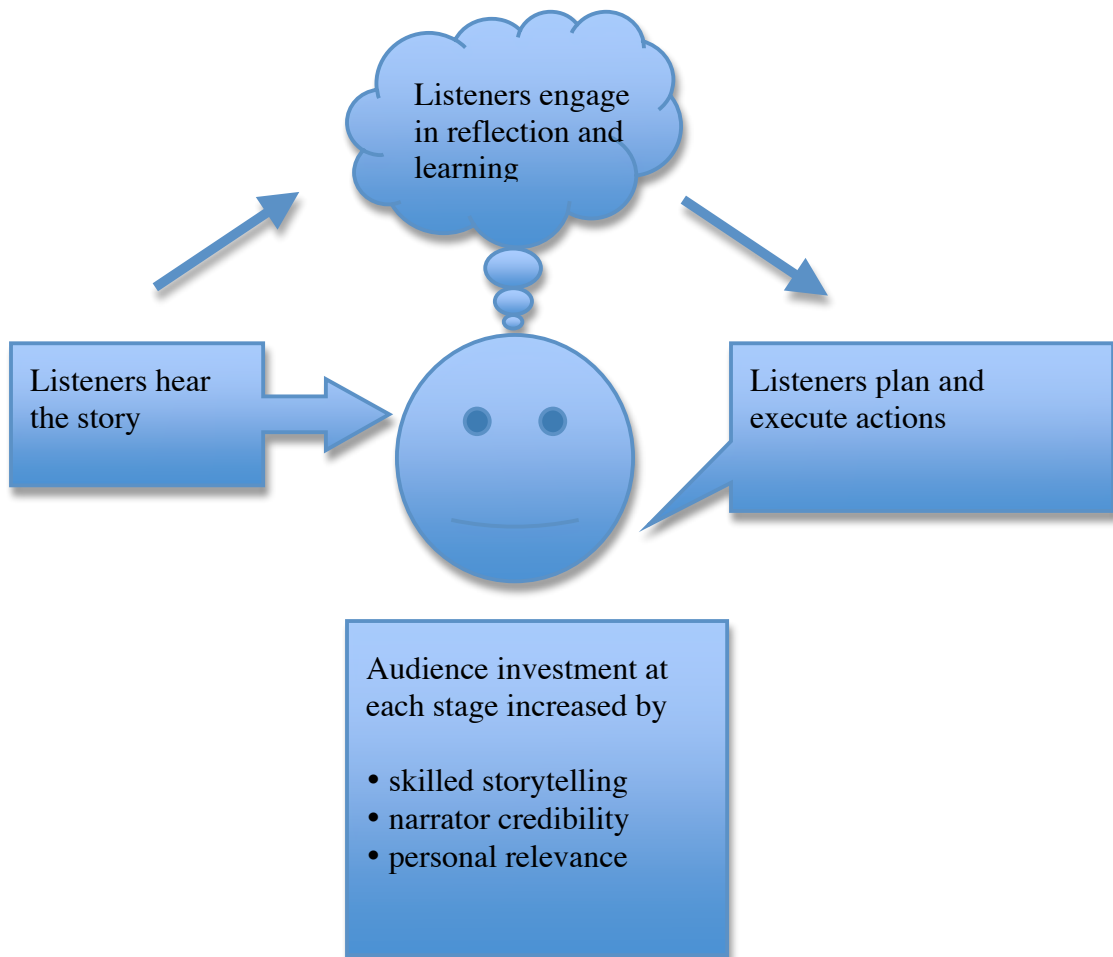
[6] The only data collected after this question was data elicited by the "tardy policy" question, which was postponed until the very end of the interview due to question length. That question is included in Appendix T as question 16.

After viewing the figure, pre-service participants were asked the following question: "Look at this figure. Is it an accurate representation of the impact that hearing experienced teachers' stories had on you? If it is *not* an accurate representation, what would you change?

***Summary of Data Collection and Analysis:***

The methods of data collection and analysis are summarized in Table 5.

*Table 5: Summary of Data Collection – Purpose and Methods*

| Date | Participants | Purpose of Collection and Analysis | Method of Data Collection |
|---|---|---|---|
| Spring-Summer 2009 | Self | Identifying personal stories to share with experienced teachers in order to establish a personal connection and provide examples | Auto-ethnography |
| | Four experienced teachers | • Identifying experienced teacher participants and stories to be shared<br>• Preparing for panel presentation with experienced teachers | Interview and follow-up via e-mail |
| July 2009 (referenced as stage A) | Cohort of pre-service teachers | Identifying pre-service participants | Survey |
| | Four pre-service teachers | Establishing pre-service participants' baseline experiences and beliefs | Interview |
| September 2009 (referenced as stage B) | Four pre-service teachers | Gauging initial impact of formal story sharing on individual pre-service teachers | Written reflection immediately after story sharing by experienced teacher panel |
| | Four pre-service teachers | Assessing group reflection on story sharing | Recording/Transcript of Focus Group Reflection |
| | Four pre-service teachers | Assessing the impact of formal story sharing on individual pre-service teachers after organized group reflection | Written reflection after story sharing and focus group reflection |
| Nov/Dec2009 (stage C) | Four pre-service teachers | Identifying pre-service teachers' other experiences with stories during the semester | Interview |
| Feb/ March 2010 (stage D) | Four pre-service teachers | Identifying the impact of stories on pre-service teachers' plans and actions | Interview |

**Specific Issues in Data Analysis: Truthfulness, Validity, Reliability and Generalizability**

*Truthfulness*

In the earlier section on ethics, the question of truthfulness was considered, and it was noted that while "stories rearrange, redescribe, invent, omit and revise, [and] can be wrong in numerous ways – tone, detail, substance, etc." they still do not "threaten the project of personal narrative" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 745). The rationale for this position is that

> a story is not a neutral attempt to mirror the facts of one's life; it does not seek to recover already constituted meanings (Hacking, 1995 cited in Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 745)….The meaning of prenarrative experience is constituted in its narrative expression….Narrative is both about living and part of it.

In other words, the story this research was interested in was the one a teacher wanted to share in that moment. Those stories were always "one selective story about what happened written from a particular point of view for a particular purpose" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 751). While this research would never knowingly focus on stories that are "misrepresentation[s] or misappropriation[s]" (Shuman, 2005, p. 1), the purpose of the study was not to verify accounts. As long as the ethical considerations detailed in an earlier section were upheld, and the substance of the story was determined to accurately reflect an experience one might actually encounter while "on the job," the main measure of a story's value was the meaning it held for its narrator and its audience.


*Validity, Generalizability and Reliability:*

It is worth noting the perspective Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 751) offer on the issues of validity, generalizability and reliability in any study that contains autoethnographic work.

They maintain that stories are valid when they "evoke in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible." A similar standard is applied to the question of whether one individual's story is generalizable. Again, these authors turn to the readers, maintaining that "a story's generalizability is constantly being tested by readers as they determine if it speaks to them about their experience or about the lives of others they know" (p. 751). Finally, these authors consider the reliability of an account by asking if the readers " gain a sense of emotional reliability" when engaging with the story (p. 749). In their own words:

> Do you sense a passage through emotional epiphany to some
> communicated truth, not resolution per se, but some transformation from an
> old self to a new one (Rhett, 1997 in Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 749)? Does
> the story enable you to understand and feel the experience it seeks to convey?

Ellis and Bochner (2000, p. 751) also insist that authors may do "reliability checks," taking the work back to others who are involved and "giv[ing] them a chance to comment, add materials, change their minds and offer their interpretations." Although the researcher was prepared to complete such checks if something in the data suggested they would be benecessary as the focus remained on the pre-service teachers' perception of the stories rather than the stories themselves.

These ideas underscore an important facet of this research. The work is based on narrative, and the ways in which narrative is shared and perceived. Validity, generalizability and reliability are important, but are largely situated in the eye of the beholder. In this case, the researcher will be observing the impressions of a group of "beholders" as they gauge the validity, generalizability, reliability, and ultimately the usefulness of the shared stories. Those "beholders" are the pre-service teachers who participate in this research, and the study

does not attempt to generalize findings beyond this group.  This issue is discussed further in the limitations section at the end of chapter five.

## Conclusion

The power of this research was in its potential to tap into the experience of veteran teachers and in its potential to identify a "user-friendly" medium through which that experience can be shared with pre-service teachers.  By eliciting experienced teachers' stories, and gauging the reaction of pre-service teachers who heard those and other narratives, this project attempted to identify the early impact of story sharing on a small group of pre-service teachers.  By examining this impact, it also attempted to explore the potential worth of possible (later and separate) extensions of this study including (a) an extension of the investigation to include an analysis of story sharing's longer-term implications and (b) an expansion of the study to determine if any findings are generalizable to a larger population. However, these considerations are for later.  Currently, attention turns to chapter four and a description of the present study's results.

**CHAPTER IV**

**RESULTS**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers. The study specifically set out to answer the following questions:

(a) What is the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers' thoughts, and do those thoughts translate into actions during their student teaching experience or plans for action in their own future classrooms? and

(b) What is the impact of hearing select stories in a formal setting with guided reflection versus the impact of hearing various stories in other settings?

However, as often happens over the course of qualitative research, the data soon began driving the questions. The ways in which this occurred and led to an adjustment, and broadening, of the questions are detailed at the beginning of Chapter 5: Analysis. For the purpose of recording results at this stage of reporting, it is simply important to note that the questions became:

(a) What stories do pre-service teachers hear, and do they remember them at any point after the telling?

(b) What is the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers' thoughts, actions during student teaching, and plans for action in their own future classrooms?

(c) What factors influence impact?

This chapter 4 –results – has an organization that reflects these new questions and is

structured as follows:

---

**Introduction**

**The Participants**

*Pre-service Participants*
*Experienced Teacher Participants*

**Results by Participant**

*Participant One: Adam*
<u>*Stage A (Interview)*</u>

<u>*Stage B (Panel and Focus Group)*</u>

<u>*Stage C (Interview)*</u>
    *Stories Heard*
    *Impact*
    *Factors Influencing Impact*

<u>*Stage D (Interview)*</u>
    *Stories Heard*
    *Impact*
    *Factors Influencing Impact*
    *Perception of Feedback Opportunities*

*Participant Two: Nathan*
*Participant Three: Amy*
*Participant Four: Laura*


**An Added Question: Perceived Opportunities for Feedback**

*Professor's Description*
*Pre-service Participants Perceptions*

---

As mentioned in chapter three, the study methodology involved interaction with four pre-service teachers at four points during their program. A summary of these interactions is included in the reproduction of Table 2 below, providing easy reference during review of the study results.

*Table 2: Methods and Purposes of Data Collection*

| Stage | Time | Method of Data Collection | Purpose of Data Collection |
|-------|------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| A | Month 1 (7/14-21) | Interview | Establishing pre-service participants' baseline experiences with and beliefs about story sharing |
| B | Month 3 (9/23) | • Written reflection immediately after story sharing by experienced teacher panel | • Gauging initial impact of formal story sharing on individual pre-service teachers |
| | | ------------------------------------- | ------------------------------------ |
| | | • Recording/Transcript of Focus Group Reflection | • Assessing group reflection on story sharing |
| | | ------------------------------------- | ------------------------------------ |
| | | • Written reflection after story sharing and focus group reflection | • Assessing the impact of formal story sharing on individual pre-service teachers after organized group reflection |
| C | Month 5-6 (11/11-12/1) | Interview | Identifying pre-service teachers' other experiences with stories during the semester |
| D | Month 8-9 (2/26-3/5) | Interview | Identifying the impact of stories on pre-service teachers' plans and actions |

**The Participants**

*Pre-service Participants*

As mentioned in the methodology section, four pre-service participants were recruited from a from a local social studies teacher education program, where they were working toward their Masters in the Art of Teaching. As part of this MAT program, they each completed practica at local high schools. Three of the pre-service participants – "Adam," "Nathan" and "Laura" completed their practica at a local high school all participants

described as "suburban."  One pre-service participant – "Amy" – completed her practica at a

local high school all particpants described as "urban" or "inner city."  More details on the

participants, the schools, and the local communities are included in both the "methodology"

and the "results by participant" sections of this dissertation.


*Experienced Teacher Participants:*

As mentioned in the methodology section, four experienced teachers served on a

panel where they shared their stories with pre-service teachers.  Three of these teachers

worked in the district identified as "urban"; one worked in the district identified as

"suburban."  More information about the teachers, the districts and the panel is included in

the methodology section of this work.  The stories the teachers shared are included as

appendix G through appendix O.  The experienced teacher panel, and the stories they shared,

are referenced frequently during this chapter.



**Results by Participant**


This section will introduce each pre-service participant and reveal his or her

perspective during each stage of data collection.  Please note that while these individual

sections are organized by interview (e.g. Adam's data are revealed for the stage A interview,

then B, C, and D), there is a summary of the data for each participant organized by category

(e.g. Adam's data about impact across all interviews) at the beginning of chapter 5.

***Participant One: Adam***

<u>*Stage A (Interview)*</u>

Adam is a white male in the 26-35 age range. He grew up in England, where he attended boarding school. He moved to the United States in 2004. His academic background includes a B.A. in History and an MBA. Professionally, he devoted over seven years to a career in real estate before deciding he "wanted to do something more fulfilling with my life." He currently serves as Chairman of the Board of an urban charter school while pursuing his MAT. His ultimate goals include becoming a teacher and a school principal in a more suburban environment. He is married to a teacher who completed her student teaching in an urban environment and now teaches at a local suburban school (distinct from any schools referenced in this study).

When asked about his baseline experience with stories, Adam revealed that although he did not remember specific narratives, his wife often shares stories from her classroom. He noted that "her stories have been inspirational to me because she doesn't view it as a job. She views it as just a way of life, and sometimes says, 'I can't believe…I'm getting paid to do this'." He also mentioned seeing stories in the media that ranged from negative news reports to positive films. From those negative news reports, he recalled general "horror stories" about how teachers are "looked down upon" as being "generally unenthusiastic, and burned out, and [have] complete apathy with the whole system, and they're just treading water." He found films to offer the other extreme, frequently portraying teachers as "comical" and "eccentric." He says the "films have had an influence on me . . . . I'd like to have a lot of fun in my class, but I don't want to be just a figure of comedy. That's not what I want to be."

78

Adam predicted that during his pre-service year, experienced teachers would tell him "a lot of stories" because "they'll think there's lots of things I need to learn." He anticipated "a range of positive and negative things" including "stories about what happens if you don't plan your lesson properly, stories of discipline issues, [and] good stories of kids who send you an e-mail three years after they graduate thanking you for your efforts in helping them get to college and go through college." He believed that "there may be an impact" of hearing these stories, but he "tend[s] to go by his own experience" rather than dwelling on the experiences of others.

On a personal level, Adam worried about the "culture shock" and "cultural differences" he could encounter while comparing American high schools to the boarding school he attended in England. He also expressed concern about where his program will assign him to do student teaching, revealing that he was "not sure I can handle going into the toughest school in this area straight away, and have to deal with everything at once."

Finally, when he imagined himself as a lead teacher, he envisioned his classroom embodying a "very two-way process." He revealed that he wants "to make it clear in the right way that I'm there to learn as well as they are." He continued, noting that "I'm not going to be the person who stands in front of the room saying, 'I know everything; you know nothing; you are the empty vessels'. That's not me. So, I know I have a lot to learn, but I think I have a lot to give."

*Stage B (Panel and Focus Group)*

By the beginning of Stage B, Adam had been assigned to complete weekly observations at a local suburban school and had discovered that he would complete also his student teaching at that institution.

Adam's initial response to the experienced teacher panel was revealed through an individually written reflection. During this reflection, Adam noted that he found the panel to be "an interesting and insightful experience" with "a good variety of stories." He was glad he heard the stories because it "makes the preparation to become a teacher more tangible." He believes he will remember the stories a few weeks from now because he "has a good memory, especially regarding things that are directly related to my current stage of life." From the story that struck him most (identified as the "saving face" story and included as appendix O), he learned that "you need to make sure that you don't push a child into a corner when disciplining them. They need an out. They need an opportunity to save face." This awareness reinforces his plans for designing or managing a classroom. Adam previously, and still, "plan[ned] to be myself in the classroom and rely on my personality to make meaningful connections with my students."

During the focus group conversation, Adam shared many of these thoughts with the group, again noting that he was particularly struck by the story that taught him that instead of cornering a student when disciplining them, a teacher should allow the student to "save face." Later in the conversation, Adam revealed that he had previous knowledge of the male experienced teacher who had shared that story. That teacher had recently been assigned as Adam's mentor, and Adam had already observed him once teaching a class. In Adam's words, "I watched him this morning, and he's a very, very good teacher. I can just tell I'm going to – there are going to be a lot more stories I can get out of him over time." When asked if his position as Adam's mentor inspired a different type of listening, Adam revealed that he had only met his mentor twice, "briefly, but…I maybe have just a very slight preference to him right now… just because I've talked to him and I've seen him, and now

I'm going to spend a lot of time [with] him." However in response to a question about whether he felt he could learn more from this teacher because he's working with the same population of students that Adam would eventually student teach, Adam stated "not necessarily. Wherever I teach I think this experience will help me." Also within the focus group conversation, Adam revealed that the stories "had not changed [his] perception" of his future classroom actions because while

> it may sound stubborn…I'm being driven by my personality and my character rather than the pedagogy, and…you can't change who you are. There are certain pedagogical techniques you can harness, but at the end of the day, you're being you in the classroom. So I'd like to think that I'm relying on my inner self to make connections and to create a learning environment.

Finally, during the second written reflection, Adam was asked if his response to the stories or plans for teaching were altered at all by the focus group reflection. In response, he revealed that his original responses and plans remained "the same."

*Stage C (Interview)*

*Stories Heard:*

During this interview, Adam mentioned that during the first five to six months of the MAT program, he heard stories from a few sources. From his position as the Chairman of the Board of a local, urban charter school, he heard stories from both student families and school administrators. Without providing specifics, Adam referenced a grandmother "who called me to stand up and complain about the cleanliness of the school" and a principal who shared stories about transportation and budget issues. When asked if he had heard any stories from experienced teachers, including teachers in the school where he was observing and professors on campus, he revealed that although he did "hear things now and again," he

could "not think of too many right off hand."  He revealed that the during the conversations

he had with experienced teachers,

> I always have to – I push – it's always initiated, well, it's often initiated
> through me.  My mentor teacher is good.  He does come over and speak to me
> and talk to me about certain points during class.  Normally I have to pry it out
> of teachers [unintelligible] because they've got so much going on at the time –
> in between class or after class or at lunch when they've got other things going
> on - it's hard during school time to get anything too meaningful out of a
> teacher. You don't have time.  I've tried to get [my mentor] out for coffee a
> couple of times after school.  I just haven't been able to do it.  I'd like to just
> meet him outside of the classroom, but I haven't been able to do it.

*Impact:*

During this interview, without prompting, Adam asked to amend his statement during

an earlier interview that he "was not really influenced that much by stories."  Instead, he

revealed, "some stories that are disaster stories might help me – might be lodged in my mind

about what not to do."  However, he emphasized that this did not represent a departure from

his belief that "I am relying on myself to determine what I do in the class."

In stage two of the study, during the focus group reflection, Adam had stated that a

story would not change his plans for teaching because those plans were driven by personality

and character rather than pedagogy.  In this interview, he was asked "Do you think that most

stories are intended to influence your pedagogy?  Are there any that are intended to influence

your character or personality?"  Adam responded that stories of things like "the Holocaust or

how World War I started" could "impact your cognitive development," but that was an

influence on "knowledge," not "behavior."  When asked if this new knowledge could, in turn

influence behavior (allowing stories an indirect impact on action), Adam responded:

> To a certain extent, I suppose.  I just – I'm always drawn back to the
> inherent character within a person.  And if that character of a person is more
> susceptible to being influenced by someone's horror story and how they think
> that's going to happen to them, or if [when] a kid throws a piece of paper, they

think of the story where the class disintegrated into chaos - Some people are like that, I suppose. It's just that I typically am not. I have a relatively discipline-oriented [upbringing]. I'm used to self-reliance, independence as it were, in making decisions.

Finally, when asked if he remembered any stories from the panel of experienced teachers, Adam again referenced the story of the teacher who refused allowed a child to "save face" during a disciplinary moment. When asked if he thought about this story as he worked to design his own classroom management system, he responded "Yeah. The way I would describe it is that it reinforces what I think I already – what I am capable of doing. I think I would do something like that as well…It was my style."

*Factors Influencing Impact:*

Adam addressed two potential factors influencing the impact of stories: (1) narrator credibility and (2) listener characteristics and experiences. With regards to narrator credibility he stated that although "hopefully any teacher can contribute something to a student teacher," his mentor was "well suited to me because we are quite similar." He also responded to a question about the importance of the narrator's type of school (urban vs. suburban), type of classes (AP vs. general education), and personality (similar or different) by stating that all those factors "are important" and that he would "tune in" more to someone who taught in a place, in a class, and had a style that aligned with his own plans and personality. Finally, he mentioned that his mentor, whose stories he best remembered, was "a gifted storyteller."

After mentioning the role of listener characteristics (e.g. stubbornness, personality) in stage B, Adam elaborated on the importance the idea of listener characteristics during this interview. This was noted in the previous section on impact, but is worth reiterating here,

since it highlights Adam's belief that the individual characters of different listeners can influence their response to a story. Recall his statement (see full quote in previous section) that some people are simply are "more susceptible to being influenced by someone's horror story" and will naturally "think of the story where the class disintegrated into chaos" when one of their own students throw paper in the floor. This emphasis on individual difference is significant.

Finally, while considering listener experiences, Adam was asked to comment on the importance of concluding storytelling with a period of formal reflection. He revealed that formal reflection "probably increases the focus a little bit," but found it "difficult to say" if the focus group reflection really made a difference in how he processed the story or what he thought about.

*Stage D (Interview)*

*Stories Heard:*

During this interview, Adam addressed the role of stories in his MAT program, revealing that he was required to "read them in our case studies and talk about situations," but that he could not recall many other instances of storytelling. To test the idea that a classroom situation might bring a story to mind, Adam was asked "If I were to tell you that you were going to have a student with autism in your class next year, would that trigger memory of any stories you heard?" Despite hearing a story about an autistic student and advice for helping that student during the experienced teacher panel (entitled "Autism Outburst" and included as appendix G), Adam had no recollection of the narrative or the counsel.

*Impact:*

When asked what had the most impact on his thoughts and actions during student teaching, and on his plans for future classrooms, Adam reiterated his belief that his character would be most influential factor. He revealed that other factors would include "pressure to deliver the content" quickly (leading him to replace group projects with lecture format), his experiences as a pupil, and his mentor teacher "to a certain extent."

Adam was also asked to review and comment on the debate about the impact of stories during pre-service teacher education. He read the following summary of opposing perspectives in the literature[7]:

*Figure 2: Question about debate in the literature*

> *There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*
>
> <u>*One perspective:*</u>
> *Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*
>
> <u>*Another perspective:*</u>
> *Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*
>
> *What do you think about those arguments? Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

---

[7] To prevent influence by the number of texts supporting each perspective, sources were not included in the draft given to pre-service participants.

After reading, Adam was asked, "What do you think about those arguments?  Do you think

stories can impact a pre-service teacher?"  In response, Adam revealed that he could "see

both sides of this argument.  Telling stories – it's good – there's some value, it just depends

on how much."  According to Adam, the type of story is a key factor in determining that

value. He revealed his view that:

> If stories can convey serious mistakes to avoid, that would be very
> important to do that.  I don't think these stories of Ron Clark are really
> beneficial for a student teacher to watch, because it is just setting teachers up
> for the ideal rags to riches story of teaching.  I just don't know – because
> that's not what everyday teaching is like – as least from what I can tell so far.
> So I'd be careful of not creating a Hollywood ending for teaching, because
> that would send the wrong message as far as I'm concerned.  But stories that
> explain real problems and scenarios that need to be avoided, then there would
> be some value to that.

When asked to comment on the accuracy of the potential pathway for stories' impact

postulated (but not expressed to participants) at the beginning of this study (see Figure 1),

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway*
(based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)

Listeners engage in reflection and learning

Listeners hear the story

Listeners plan and execute actions

Audience investment at each stage increased by

• skilled storytelling
• narrator credibility
• personal relevance
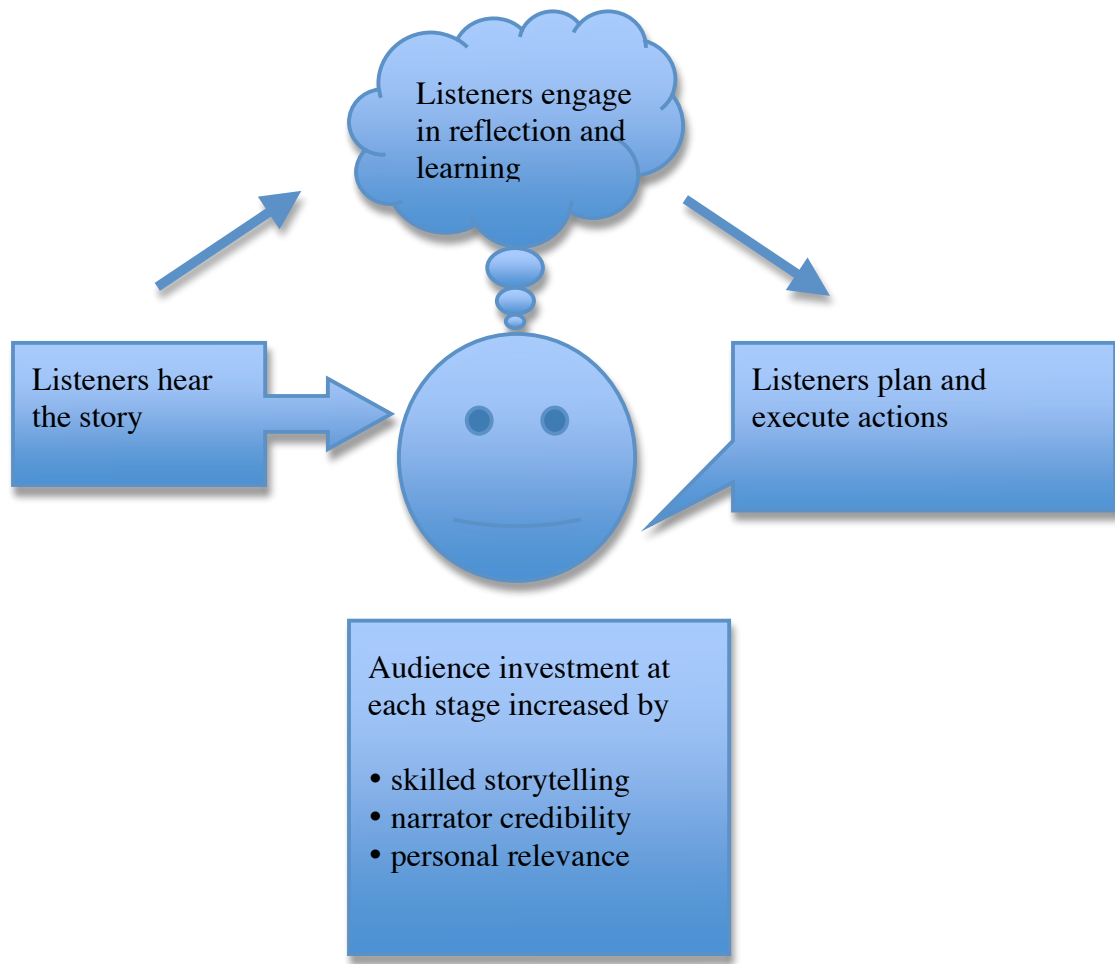
Adam responded that:

> In reality all of this doesn't – it – the step 1 to 2 often may not happen, or it may go into step 2, but won't go into step 3…Another way to think about it is that I could see people going directly from 1 to 3 and not really reflecting on it – you know, like, blindly following what is going on in the story and trying to change their behavior without really reflecting on it.

Adam elaborated on the negative consequences of that, revealing that such listeners might "copy other people's experiences instead of thinking about 'what are the key components that are being conveyed in the story?' "

Finally, during this interview, Adam was asked to (1) describe his ideal tardy policy for students, (2) listen to a story about a teacher who had to change her original policy to one she found more effective (see Appendix T, question 16), and (3) discuss whether the story had any impact on his thoughts or actions. Adam revealed that the narrator of the story was not at all like "who I am as a person," that he would not use the narrator's original or altered policy, and that the story had reinforced his original plans. It is noteworthy that Adam felt the narrator missed an important concept: "connecting with students." The significance is that while making this point, Adam did not reference the experienced teacher panel, despite the fact that the theme of that panel - "getting to know your students" – closely paralleled his line of thinking.

*Factors Influencing Impact:*

Adam commented on three factors including: stage of teacher education, narrator credibility and the story itself.

Stage of Teacher Education:

Questions about the stage of teacher education encouraged Adam to think about whether he would be more receptive to stories before or during student teaching and how changing confidence levels during his training could affect the impact of stories. In his response, Adam revealed that he was more confident after having completed five weeks of student teaching, but that confidence did not alter the potential impact of any stories. He also

revealed that certain stories, particularly those addressing lesson planning and classroom management should be told "after someone has started [student] teaching so they can really understand what you're talking about." Ideally, he suggested, stories about those topics would be told in a class devoted to the principles of pedagogy that took place after student teaching was completed. He felt such a class should devote one afternoon to going "through case study stories and relating that back to your experience."

Narrator Credibility:

While responding to questions about narrator credibility, Adam reinforced the answers he gave during stage C, revealing that he would be more likely to listen to someone who had experience teaching and who taught in the type of school and at the grade level in which he hoped to teach. Since he had mentioned concerns about teacher apathy during an earlier interview, Adam was asked if he would be less likely to listen to an experienced teacher who was "apathetic." He revealed that he would still listen, but would have to "scrape away the cynicism from the story."

The Story Itself:

Adam revealed that one key factor in impact was whether the story was "relevant to me at that time."

*Perception of Feedback Opportunities:*

After hearing feedback on stories as a teaching tool for three stages of the study, the researcher began to wonder if those sharing the stories - or those in a position to influence

how many and what stories were shared - were receiving any guiding feedback from these participants. To explore this, a former coordinator of - and current professor in - the program was asked about opportunities for feedback. Her response, as well as the response of each participant during the stage D interview, are noted at the end of the results section.

### Participant Two: Nathan

#### Stage A (Interview)

Nathan is a white, twenty-two year old male. He grew up in a small northeastern town, where he attended public schools. He decided to become a teacher because he had a "great experience" in those schools and "felt indebted" to the public school "program." He reveals that he "had some great teachers that I really connected with . . . so I wanted to kind of emulate them as well."

When asked about his baseline experience with stories, Nathan revealed that his close relationship with his high school teachers allowed him to learn about the teaching lifestyle while he was still a secondary school student. He revealed that he was "from an ultra-tiny town, so everybody kind of knows everybody." While house-sitting for his teachers, and encountering them at the birthday parties of family friends, he "hear[d] them talk about how much work they have to do outside of the classroom – spend[ing] weeks grading papers and doing things like that." He learned that teaching "is definitely an out of school job – that you get home and you have work to do, but I never – everybody grumbles about their job, but there was never anything that was too particular."

Although Nathan's initial interview occurred during the first month of his program and was intended to gather baseline data, he had already encountered instructors that had shared stories with him. He could not recall specific stories, but stated that:

> You hear a lot of negative stories just because I think that their job to teach us is to prepare us for situations, and I think naturally you're going to be prepared for an easy situation – a good situation. I think anyone can handle that for the most part. [The instructors'] job is to kind of make you think of things you might not have necessarily thought of. So you hear stories of kids not cooperating, kids not doing homework, kids fighting, kids doing whatever. You hear a lot of it, but I think it's more just due to the fact that they're trying to warn us – not that they're complaining, because they'd always wrap it up by [saying], "It's going to be great. You're going to enjoy it. This is a one in a million thing, but it happened.

Although he was unable to recall specific stories, Nathan did "remember a lot of the lessons – the morals behind" the stories. Two of these morals stood out in his mind: "Don't touch another student" and "Don't give homework." He elaborated on the second theme, stating that he had been told not to give homework because "because kids aren't going to do it and it's just going to drop test scores and this and that." Nathan also revealed that:

> The stories just always seem to end on the kind of note where 'you have your job, enjoy it, do your job, be great at it, but don't get to personally involved in things. Don't try to be their friends'. There's always these warnings, and that's the kind of thing I try to remember.

When asked if simply giving the "warnings" or advice, without the story, would be equally effective, Nathan revealed that "for some people it would be just as effective," but for him it was

> hard to say. I tend to think, in my experience, you need to tell them details of the story so that people remember the moral, just because it's the kind of thing that you tell the kid, 'don't touch the hot burner'. You don't learn from it unless you do it in a lot of cases, but if you hear somebody who's done it, or can show you evidence of what happens when you do something that you shouldn't, it's easier to remember because you have a consequence, you have an image, everything goes together. And while I personally can't remember the stories, I just remember them having real weight to them, and I think that's

what makes it important, but I think at the same time, I think some people can hear, 'don't touch kids' and they'll just say , 'ok-done' and that's that.

Nathan described the experience of hearing stories in these words:

> It is exciting because you hear a story – and for me, I always try to think of 'what would I do in that situation?' so there's always this kind of hypothetical thing that runs through my head, and that's exciting. And I always find it intriguing to hear what people have to say about things that I have opinions on. So I guess that's the main thing that goes on. I just try to process [the story], and I try to just keep it in mind, and I really believe you can learn something from anybody, so I'm always trying to keep my ears up for that. I guess that's the biggest thing. I would say that at times, it can be depressing if you hear a sad story about a student who died – or someone who went in and just had a nightmare classroom.

When asked to reveal his thoughts about student teaching in the later part of his program, Nathan expressed both enthusiasm and fear. He had ideas about how to teach, but in his words:

> I don't really know how to do anything yet, and that's really exciting but it's also kind of scary. I mean, I don't know what's going to happen. I could walk in there and I could be awesome or I could be really terrible, and I don't know that yet and that's scary.

Nathan expressed a different fear when asked to share his thoughts about lead teaching after graduation: the fear of receiving a poor evaluation from a supervisor. He stated that:

> I think that's the scariest part of starting my career – to me – the first couple of stages where you're just constantly going to be evaluated. I mean, I understand there's going to be – for the most cases – a lot of leeway and a lot of learning that goes on that first year as well, but I'm the kind of person that I want to go and I want to be able to do it right. I know I'm not going to, but I want to, and so the idea being called out on not doing it right is kind of intimidating.

On a final, personal note, Nathan expressed concern about the shift in his cultural context since moving to this area of the country. He revealed that:

> The biggest issue I've come across since moving here is . . . [the] lack of teacher unions and the lack of state unions in general. And for me – I come

92

from [the northeast], where everything is unionized - and that blew my mind. So that was the first time since I've been here and sort of really, honestly being a teacher, that I started to question for a minute, because everything that I know about a job site has to do with unions and I'm very pro-union. And to hear about 60% of my class – I don't know about the whole cohort – but my [class] was anti-union . . . that just boggles me, and I mean that – to each their own, and I'm always very welcoming of other people's opinions, but things like that that come up that are just different than what I know are scary, and that's what makes me sometimes go, 'oh- pfft – do I know what I'm doing?' and the answer is always no.

*Stage B (Panel and Focus Group)*

By the time of the panel presentation, Nathan had been assigned to complete weekly observations at a local suburban school and had discovered that he would complete his student teaching at that institution.

Nathan's initial response to the panel was revealed through an individually written reflection. During this reflection, Nathan expressed appreciation for the narrators' positive tones. He wrote "though most stories were words of caution, they all were overwhelmingly positive people" and the stories "reminded me of why I wanted to be a teacher in the first place." Although Nathan did not know if he would "remember the actual stories" in a few weeks, he believed "the tips and lessons will stick with me." Specifically, he "learned that there are a bunch of little things we can do to get to know our students and how far a little respect can go." Nathan did not feel the stories altered his plans for classroom design or management, as "they all just reaffirmed my existing ideas."

Although at first glance, that statement of ideas "reaffirmed" might suggest that the stories aligned well with Nathan's existing beliefs, the focus group conversation revealed that Nathan actually disagreed with several of the lessons the experienced teachers were trying to convey with their stories. His beliefs were "reaffirmed" in the sense that the stories asked

93

him to consider an alternate perspective, and after doing so, he was even more convinced of his original belief. To provide an example, when asked to recall and respond to any story shared by the panel, Nathan said that when he heard

> the story about the woman who had the warm up questions, and she found that they were too intriguing or whatever - I was just kind of – huh? For me, I was like, really? Because, ok, I understand that maybe she didn't get her planned results from it, but to me – maybe this was like my ideal pre-teaching in me – but like – no question would be too incisive. Just run with it. They're going to complain about their grades and tie it in some way. Don't be like, well, apparently, I don't need to poke these kids. No. Poke them just as much and see what you get. That was just kind of how I thought about it.

Later in the group conversation, after hearing Adam reveal that while "it may sound stubborn," Adam's perception had not changed because he was being "driven by personality and character…and you can't change who you are," Nathan responded that he

> agreed completely with [Adam] because . . . you can hear these stories . . . and say that maybe I should rethink this certain thing, but I don't think you should write [your original opinion] off. I think you can still be free to try [your original plan] because you don't know if it might work [or] it might not. I think that's just the biggest – the biggest hurdle to overcome is this kind of fear of screwing up, because we're just kind of told, 'This is what works. Read these books. And this is the way everybody does it. Do this. You should do that. And kids think like this, and kids think like that, and do this and don't do that.' And I just think, 'You don't know. Not everyone is the same. Not every situation is the same, so just go for it'.

These statements were interesting in light of Nathan's insistence in the earlier interview that he remembered morals more than stories. It raised the question of what earned his focus during the actual telling: the moral, or the story itself? And was the moral that he remembered the one expressed by the narrator, or was it one that he helped construct as he put the story through his own filter? When it was suggested to Nathan that his response made it seem that he was focused on the story (rather than just the moral) and used his own filtering process to identify the correct moral (rather than relying on the narrator's

conclusions), he responded that his focus and process were "definitely, definitely, exactly, exactly" that: a focus on the story, and use of his own filter to determine the moral.

Finally, during the second written reflection, Nathan was asked to note any changes the focus group conversation had inspired in his initial, written responses. He did not note any changes, but did write one other "self-observation" about his reaction to the panel. In his words, "I feel like I listened and connected more with the male teachers. I felt they had more respect for their students and just had a more experienced feel to them." This, and other ideas, were explored in more depth during the Stage C interview detailed below.

*Stage C (Interview):*

*Stories Heard:*

During this interview, Nathan revealed that he had spent the last several months conducting observations at the school where he would eventually complete his student teaching, and that while there, he heard several stories from experienced teachers. Most of these stories were shared by his female mentor teacher and involved tales of the "drama and what not that happens at this kind of job." Nathan provided three specific examples. The first was a story of

> how that particular school functions . . . according to her, that school is run by a lot of – kind of like an old boys club there - and she often ruffles their feathers, I guess. So I always hear about how. [For example], I guess they changed their midterm schedule and they were supposed to have like a week of midterms without classes. But then they changed this to have half classes and half midterms, and a lot of the guys that have been there for a while and are quote-unquote 'lazy' didn't want to switch to that. They wanted to be able to have their days off and just do the midterms, but then they didn't show up for the vote, so it was all a big thing. And 'if you didn't vote, you can't complain' kind of attitude going on.

95

Nathan also admitted that he avoids certain parts of the school, such as the teachers' lounge,

because he does not want to hear some stories. He also revealed that there are some stories

he intentionally tries to forget. In his words:

> One of the first pieces of advice I was ever given when I was graduating
> from high school and told some of my teachers that I wanted to be a teacher
> was 'eat lunch in your classroom. Don't even go to the teachers' lounge'. I
> mean –obviously you need to cultivate relationships with your fellow
> teachers, but the more time you spend in that kind of – somewhat incessant, or
> incestuous, kind of area where you keep hearing these same kind of stories
> and you get things wound up – so I mean when I hear a story like [the story of
> the altered midterm schedule upsetting some teachers] - I hear it, and I hear
> them drop a teacher's name, but I try to forget it immediately, because I don't
> want to base my opinion off of that person.

Nathan admits that there are other reasons he avoids the teachers' lounge, including feeling

out of place there as a student teacher, recalling that as "the shunned door" when he was in

high school, and generally hoping to be the type of teacher who students might visit in his

classroom during the lunch hour. However, along with these other factors, the advice to stay

away from the stories one might hear there was influential. In Nathan's words, "I don't go in

there." To the point that " I kind of get afraid because the bathroom is in there, so I kind of

sneak in and then run back out."

> Nathan also said that his mentor shared stories about parents. He revealed that she

> often tells me stories too about different nightmare parents that complain
> about the difference between a ninety-seven and a ninety-five . . . [and] it's
> interesting because she's not the kind of person who's going to tell you 'this is
> the way you should do it', but she does tell me how she handles it, and I often
> agree. And with that, her basis is kind of an idea of, 'ok, I understand and I
> appreciate that a parent is invested in a student's grades, but . . . if there's a
> problem a student should come to me and show that they're invested in the
> grades.

According to Nathan's mentor, the problem is that a parent may say:

> 'Oh, I know my daughter or son loves your class and they're always
> talking about it', when in reality their child is not in class participating . . . so,

[my mentor's message is] just kind of like 'hav[e] the spine and the backbone to just stand up and if you're doing what you believe is right and you have the administration's backing, then you shouldn't have to cow-tow to the parents'.

Nathan believes that in addition to trying to make him aware of the "drama" that comes along with teaching, his mentor shares these stories

because I'm there to be vented to, and I'm only there once a week, and I'm not involved with it, and I think there is a certain bit of –kind of – momma duck – trying to be like – 'these are the sort of situations you're probably going to face'.

Finally, Nathan shared one other story he heard from his mentor, and admitted that it had affected his thinking about where to apply for jobs. He revealed that his mentor teacher told a story that made him think about what life might be like in a 'right to work', non-union state. In his words, the mentor teacher

was talking to me about how parents can come in and challenge you and question you about this and about that. [She] has been telling me stories about how a student whose parents are both lawyers – I forget what the actual particulars about it were – [but] when they added in the [mentor's] school system that [students] have to do community service hours – when they added that, two parents took it to court. [They] made it, I think, to the state court and then it was thrown out, but then they took it to a different – I mean I don't remember exactly the particulars – but they kept at it. They tried to get it into the courts, and while I understand that doesn't directly affect union-wise, that kind of  - the power of a parent to take you to court and to challenge to you without really any backing – that's horrifying. Because you can try all your life to be as non-offensive as possible, but someday you're going to say something that is going to go home, and you don't know what's going to happen, and I don't personally want to have that kind of fear.

Nathan continued, emphasizing other reasons he feared working in a non-union state, including "pay and benefits" and the way teachers are held "so accountable" for student scores on state tests. In his words, it is about

the way that those standards are upheld and how teacher-focused those results are – it's more about how many students you get to pass and you know, holding the teachers so accountable, and while yes, I agree – the teacher needs to be held accountable to a certain degree . . . you get nailed by the

administration and people are watching you and it just feels kind of – the oppressive nature of [this] state system. Whereas I feel like the [northeastern] state system is more open and teachers are given more room for dialogue and to express their concerns and their needs, which I think is a result of the union. I think by having that power, um, and that source of money to spend on the issues – I think [the union] gives [teachers] the ability to voice their opinions and be heard, whereas here the state just kind of muffles everything.

In short, Nathan's anxiety about his plans to apply for jobs in this state was increasing as he learned more about the absence of unions, and his mentor teacher's story about a court case enhanced that anxiety.

*Impact:*

When asked if the previous story and thoughts affected his intentions about where to apply for a job, Nathan replied:

Definitely. I mean it's a kind of a mix of many things, but the thing that gets me in my gut about it is that when I graduated high school, I knew from then that I wanted to be a teacher. So I had an imagination of what being a teacher would be like. I mean, I was wise enough to know it wasn't going to be the perfect wonderland that I imagined it to be. But I imagine working in a system like [my own high school system], and then to come here and to be in a system that's completely different. It's not necessarily that I always disagree with this system. It's just not what I imagined kind of thing. So that's part of it. And the things I just described to me are kind of hugely crushing I guess.

He revealed that he will look for jobs locally, but is seriously considering moving back north or even overseas to find the right teaching job.

These stories and experiences about working in a non-union, 'right-to-work', state reinforced Nathan's original pro-union position and heightened his fears about having his actions evaluated by parents and administrators. The stories that reminded him to stay out of the teachers' lounge also reinforced a pre-existing belief. In this interview, Nathan was also

asked about the impact of stories that challenged his beliefs. Specifically, he was asked about a story whose details he could not remember, but whose moral he had mentioned in an earlier interview. The moral of that story was "enjoy your job, do your job, be great at it, but don't get too personally involved in things, don't try to be their friend." When asked if the moral affected his decisions about who he wanted to be as a teacher, Nathan responded, "I mean, I guess [it does]. I mean, I don't know if I necessarily like that [moral] in particular. I don't know that I necessarily want that to be true." This sentiment influenced Nathan's thoughts in at least one interaction. He described that moment, explaining that when his MAT program required him to interview several of his students, this moral of remaining somewhat personally detached came to mind. He revealed that:

> in the back of my head I was thinking, 'just, you know, be professional about it and, you know, do the interview and get it done'. But that's just not me. I mean, obviously I was professional, but I wanted to also – if they said a story that reminded me of something in my life that wasn't inappropriate to talk about then I wanted to talk about it, and that's just the way I am.

Nathan provided insight into how he decides which stories or moral will change him, and which ones will not. He stated that:

> I'm pretty confident in my own personality and my own beliefs . . . I'm only twenty-two . . . but I'm not a kid . . . I know who I am at this point. So if I've successfully navigated my twenty-two-and-a-half years in a certain attitude – in a certain way of presenting myself and beliefs - then I'm confident that I can carry that into the classroom as well. So if somebody tells me something – [for example, how] you don't have time to do group lessons, you don't have time to do this, you can't hand out homework and things like that – to me, I don't believe that. I mean, I could be completely wrong, but this is how I've gotten to where I am, and so I'm just going to trust that. And, like, I appreciate the advice and maybe someday it might come back to completely bite me, but I'm not going to know unless I try, so I'm going to stick to my guns and see where we go with it.

He also noted that when he hears a story, "I think about it and I just always kind of say to myself, 'like – oh, I never thought of that, but at the same time I don't know how true this

99

really is – how blown up has it gotten by the time it gets to me." So instead of buying the

story wholesale, the main thing he "take[s] away from it is kind of an awareness of the type

of difficulties and challenges that come along."

*Factors Influencing Impact:*

Nathan addressed two potential factors influencing the impact of stories: (1) the role

of reflection and (2) narrator characteristics.

<u>Role of Reflection</u>:

First, when asked if there was any formal or informal reflection that occurred after

hearing these stories at his school site, Nathan revealed that there was an opportunity to share

'what happened this week' in one of his MAT classes. This provided an opportunity to talk

about the stories he heard, but would require him to take the initiative.

However he did find himself reflecting informally on the stories. He revealed that:

> If you hear a really exciting story or a really moving story, I don't think
> you necessarily have to sit down and journal about it . . . it's going to have an
> effect on you to the point where you are thinking about it whether on – you
> know – the drive home or in the shower or something. It's going to be in
> there.

Still, he noted, that "if you did sit down and write, it would make even little insignificant

kind of things be more significant because you'd have to think about it more."

Nathan did reveal that when there were opportunities to formally reflect – after the

panel, for example – that reflection was beneficial. He stated that formal reflection

> gets you out of that emotional range. Like when you hear a story, you
> just immediately react to it, and that immediate is more of a gut reaction, more
> of a sensing reaction. You feel like you agree. You feel like you disagree.
> But when you have to sit down and reflect about it: 'Well, what is it about it

that didn't resonate with me or did?' . . . It's much more analytical I think if you sit down and have a discussion or write-up about it. So I think it's valuable because it kind of takes you a step away from it so you can kind of look at it a little more objectively.

<u>Narrator Characteristics</u>:

While considering narrator characteristics, Nathan addressed several different aspects of narrator identity. While considering the impact of his mentor's stories, he revealed that she was a "very strong and very opinionated woman." Although he believes "she's brilliant. When I listen to her stories I try to keep [her opinionated nature] in mind because I don't really know necessarily how non-biased [those stories] are." Nathan also considered the impact of narrator identity on his reaction to the panelist of experienced teacher panelists. Recall that in one written reaction to that panel, Nathan had expressed that he felt more of a connection to the male teachers. During this interview, he elaborated, revealing that it is not the idea of

> 'oh, well that's a woman teacher. I can't learn anything from her.' I don't believe that at all. But I think there is something when you hear a guy teacher talk and you're a guy, then you think, 'oh, well, this person knows – has gone through like the same challenges that I'm going to go through and have the same attitude and you kind of jive, so I'm sure it did [enhance my communication with the male narrator] – I wouldn't say intentionally by any means – but I'm sure there was something there.

Nathan also identified the narrator's attitude as being important in earning his attention. When describing the panelist with whom he felt the most connection, he stated that he felt connected not because of a particular story, but because of that teacher's

> general attitude and his kind of 'joy' in things. You could tell he was having a blast. Even when he told the story that was kind of a 'oh, what was I thinking' or 'this moment was kind of a horrible moment', you could tell he still enjoyed it. So I really was attracted to that. And that was something with teaching that attracts me in general.

Finally, Nathan did not feel that the narrator's type of school had an effect in his investment, stating that while he realized every school was different, "I think teaching – if you're good at it, you could probably do it almost anywhere except for, like, the most hostile environments."

*Stage D (Interview)*

*Stories Heard:*

During this stage D interview, Nathan remembered only one story from his first eight to nine months of training – a story one of his professors told early in the program about "how he had jumped out of a window to come break up a fight outside once." Nathan remembered the story "because it was just such a vivid image" even though there was no real moral other than "This was crazy. Do not do this."

Despite forgetting the narratives, Nathan did remember the moral of several other stories. He remembered the idea that he should " 'never touch the students' ." He also learned that managing a classroom might mean using strategies that "'don't always fall directly to a traditional response' ." It is worth noting that according to Nathan, the tendency to remember only the moral of the story did not diminish the importance of initially attaching that moral to a narrative. He revealed that if advice was provided only through a statement of the moral, the "immediate reaction would be, why? And so the story provides you that answer before you get to that question . . . it answers the 'why?' question before you even think of it.

Finally, to test the idea that a classroom situation might bring a story to mind, Nathan was asked "If I were to tell you that you were going to have a student with autism in your class next year, would that trigger memory of any stories you heard?" Despite hearing a

story about an autistic student and advice for helping that student during the experienced teacher panel, Nathan had no recollection of the narrative or the counsel.

*Impact:*

When asked what had the most impact on his thoughts and actions during student teaching, and on his plans for future classrooms, Nathan responded that "his personality" was the most important factor.

Nathan was also asked to review and comment on the debate about the impact of stories during pre-service teacher education. He read the following summary of alternate perspectives in the literature[8]:

*Figure 2: Question about Debate in the Literature*

> *There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*
>
> *One perspective:*
> *Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*
>
> *Another perspective:*
> *Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*
>
> *What do you think about those arguments? Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

---

[8] To prevent influence by the number of texts supporting each perspective, sources were not included in the draft given to pre-service participants.

After reading, Nathan was asked, "What do you think about those arguments?  Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?"  In response, Nathan initially responded that "it's hard to choose a side…I think there is a lot of clout to each one of these."  However, he later revealed his belief that stories could have an impact if two factors were in place:  (1) they were "truly applicable . . . . something I think I'm going to come across" and (2) they were "not given in [the wrong] vein."

Nathan elaborated on both of these elements.  First, he felt that "applicable" stories could provide pre-service teachers "a way to kind of look into the future and think, well, if I come across this situation, realistically how do I think I would handle it, and is that right, and if not, what can I do to change it?  More than anything, I think it makes you – I think that's a huge part –it makes you imagine yourself in that situation rather than just writing down a textbook of other people's reactions."

However, Nathan was quick to point out that such an impact would not occur if stories were told in the wrong "vein."  In his words, some narrators "make us – at least make me – feel more and more that I don't know what I'm doing because it's kind of like a, 'you wait until you get out into the trenches' ."  He continued, stating that "when it's just constantly driven into you and there's a certain pompousness to it - especially with pre-service teachers - that's what gets you.  It is subtly putting you down – even if they're not intending to, it just kind of feels that way."  Nathan believed that if a person or program told too many stories, or talked too much about a topic, "all [pre-service teachers] are thinking about is, 'ok, I get it.  I just want to go' ."  He revealed that:

> A lot of it has to do with volume – how many times you are told a story
> or multiple stories in a single day.  If you've heard thirteen, you start to feel

like you're being preached to and you start to feel like – maybe it's just kind
of repeatedly crammed into your head that you know nothing.

Later in the interview, Nathan made several other statements that suggested his support for the second position. These statements, many of which postulated that teachers with experience would be less likely to listen to stories and advice, are discussed in the section entitled "Stages of Teacher Education" below.

When asked to comment on the accuracy of the potential pathway for stories' impact postulated (but not expressed to participants) at the beginning of this study (see Figure 1), Nathan revealed that if a story "work[ed] for me . . . this would definitely be how I processed it." However, when asked where the pathway broke down during ineffective stories, he revealed that the problem occurred when "the engage and reflection [lasted] for all of about ten seconds" before a listener decided to "jump right to the planning and actions. You hear the story and you don't so much think about what they did as say, 'this is what I'm going to do' ." Nathan felt this happened when you, as a listener, displayed a "a degree of your own pompousness," when you were willing to "writ[e] off an experienced person's – you know - advice, for your own kind of ideals. You know, you don't really have anything to hook your ideas to, but for some reason you think that [relying on them] is of more value than [listening to] someone who does. I think there is that danger of "you can kind of fabricate a reasonability that shouldn't be there."

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
(based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)
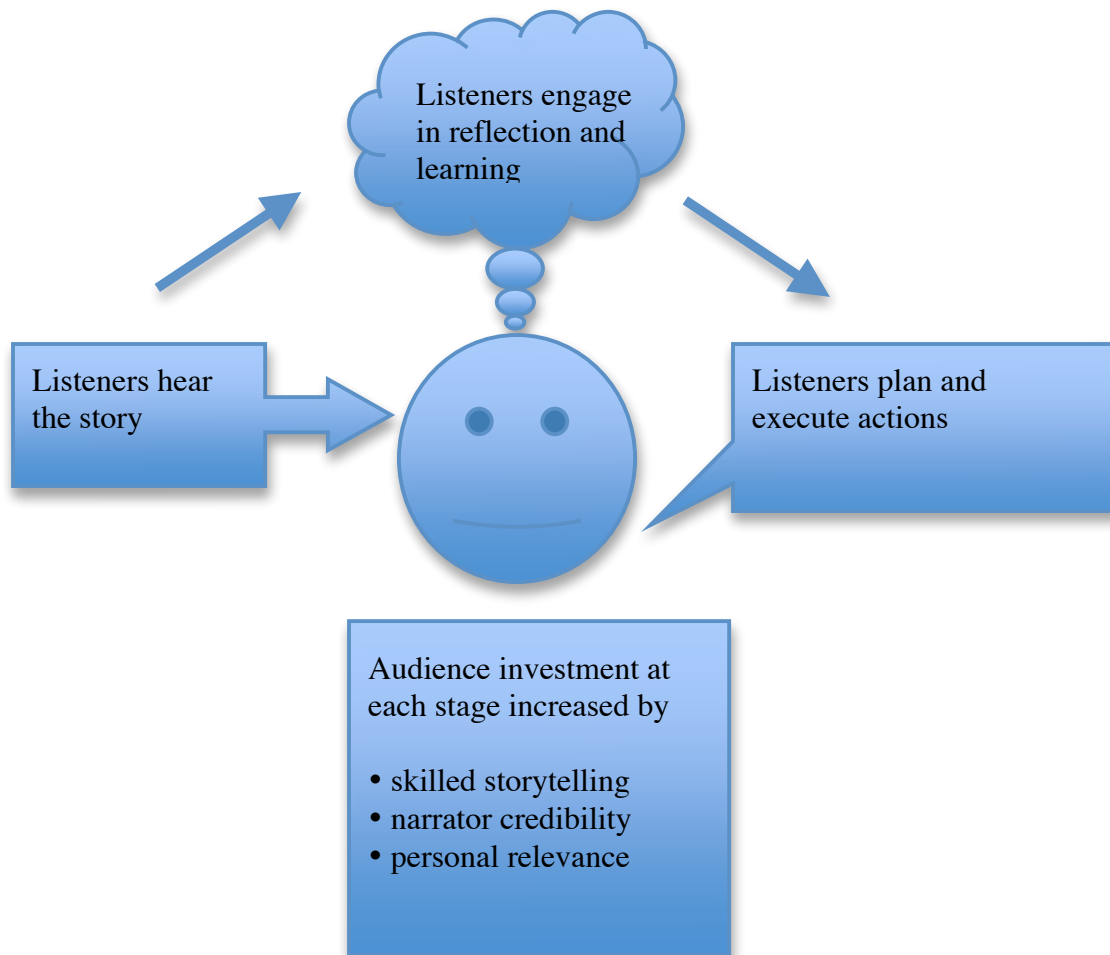


Finally, during this interview, Nathan was asked to (1) describe his ideal tardy policy

for students, (2) listen to a story about a teacher who had to change her original policy to one

she found more effective (see Appendix T, question 16) and (3) discuss whether the story had

any impact on his thoughts or actions. Although Nathan did not alter his plans significantly

after hearing the story, he was interested in the idea that both the narrator's original and

altered plans had a high degree of structure and said "that's something I should probably look

at." Thus, Nathan learned from a story, but again focused on a part of the narrative other than the intended moral.

*Factors Influencing Impact:*

The previous section on impact mentioned several elements Nathan identified as factors in a story's impact, including the applicability of a story, the "vein" in which a story was shared, and the number of stories told. Nathan was also asked to comment on three additional, potential factors including: stage of teacher education, narrator credibility and environment.

Stage of Teacher Education:

Questions about the stage of teacher education encouraged Nathan to think about whether he would be more receptive to stories before or during student teaching and how changing confidence levels during his training could affect the impact of stories. In his response, Nathan suggested that pre-service programs might see more of an impact if stories were told before student teaching began. Although he did not initially feel the timing would make a difference for him personally, he felt that in general I think people would be more reluctant to take stories and to take advice once they've done it. Because there is kind of an attitude among human beings of, 'well, I've done it so I know my method. I know how to do this'." He later admitted that this might apply to him on a personal level as well, stating that:

> I know I just said a minute ago that I'm always receptive to stories, but I guess I can think of some occasions where I hear a story and think like, 'well, I don't need to worry about that; you could do it also like this – and I have another explanation'. So I guess I'm not as receptive as I think I am… if

you're confident in your method, then you don't typically want to see flaws in it, I guess, and you don't always want people to change it, because it's your thing – your creation.

For Nathan, this response was linked to an increase in confidence during student teaching, since that opportunity had given him a chance to discover what worked for him in the classroom. He stated that as a student teacher, he had moments where he felt,

'I can do this. This didn't work so I can change it'. And once you get a change that works you're more confident because you're less afraid of problems coming.

Nathan provided an example of how experience in the classroom could limit interest in a story. Although the classroom experience he cited was volunteering in a classroom prior to his MAT program, as opposed to experience student teaching, Nathan felt the example reinforced the idea that is was more beneficial to share stories with pre-service teachers before they began student teaching.

He remembered only the moral of the story – " ' never touch the students' ," but emphasized that at the time he heard that story, he had already spent time in a classroom and knew that

students come in and they want to give you a hug, so you do like the sideways, butt-out awkward hug, because you don't really want to make contact…so when people would tell [me], 'whatever you do, do not do that', I kind of already wrote that off because I know how to be appropriate about it, and as long as I'm appropriate about it – I know I'm not always defensible because of the way law works - but I feel confident in the sense that if I am never crossing a line and forcing myself on anybody, then I'm ok. So that was something where I was like – I get your point, but I'm going to ignore that.

Still, the story did have an impact, as Nathan admitted that:

I do – I guess I do tread cautiously. I probably express caution in ways that I wouldn't need to. Like, for instance, one of [my mentor teacher's] senior . . . girls came in to take a quiz, and [my mentor] wasn't there yet, and I didn't know where the quiz was or anything, so she was just waiting around,

and when she had come in, she had closed the door. So I like, found an excuse to reopen the door, because it was just one of those things where I was just like – "I'm not going to do anything. I don't think anything is going to happen, but forbid anything does, I want to at least have the door open, so I can be like, 'the door was open! Nothing was happening!'" So those kind of caution things have kind of scared me – you hear stories about people in general. I don't remember what it is, but crazy things happen.

As an additional thought on the timing of storytelling within a pre-service program, Nathan suggested that while stories should be told before student teaching, that telling should not come too far in advance. He suggested that if storytelling took place during " a shorter period of time - instead of from June to February having heard all these stories - if it were that last semester right before [the] February [student teaching experience], that would be nice."

Finally, Nathan had two additional thoughts that involve the timing of stories. First, he suggested that "the structure of a graduate school class is tough." He specifically referred the three hour classes, emphasizing that "if you get down to the 2 hour and 30 minute mark and all you've heard is a bunch of stories, by the end you are just kind of worn out." Second, Nathan said if he were designing a teacher education program he

wouldn't plan lessons around this idea of 'today's storytime', which . . . I don't think anybody has, but I would only encourage my teachers and professors to tell stories when asked . . . [For example, if] I asked a question about '…what would you do if students got into a fight' and you have an answer and you know, 'this is actually what I did', then that's a moment to tell a story.

Narrator Credibility:

While responding to questions about narrator credibility, Nathan reinforced the answers he gave during stage C. He re-asserted that the narrator's attitude was important in determining whether he would listen to a story. He specifically highlighted the impact of

narrators who seemed to express the joy in teaching and told stories in a way that was not

"pompous." He also re-iterated the idea that the type of school in which the narrator taught

did not have significant affect on the story's potential for impact.  Still, school experience as

a general attribute was important, Nathan revealed that:

> It definitely made [the narrator] more credible when they were, 'yeah.  I finished teaching two years ago, and I taught for three years at this school . . . Some of the professors have never taught before, and it's not like it takes away credibility, but you are a little like – when they tell you this theory that you read in a book and they tell you a story about how you should do this because it's in a book, it is a little less endearing, I guess, than if someone says 'yeah, these kids got into a fight in the hallway, and this is what I did and this is what I said'.  When you hear stories from somebody who is there and is willing to tell you the mistakes they made as opposed to hearing these stories about superteachers and teachers of the year that get published.  Of course, super-perfect-teacher-woman has the best response to this, but us – like everybody else – yes, we want to strive to be that, but realistically, what do people do?  How do people react?

Finally, Nathan did state that grade level experience was an important factor, revealing that

he would be more likely to listen to a narrator who had worked at the secondary school level

that he was interested in, as opposed to someone with only elementary school experience.


*Perception of Feedback Opportunities:*

Please see the section entitled "An Added Question: Perceived Opportunities for Feedback"

at the end of this chapter.


**Participant Three: Amy**

<u>Stage A (Interview)</u>

Amy is a white female in the 36-45 age range.  She originates from the midwest,

where she grew up attending private, religious schools. She was the first in her family to

graduate from college, earning a B.A. in International Studies and German. Amy worked as

an attorney for several years. Her interest in teaching began when a friend asked her to help

a inner-city private school. Her initial role was to fill out government funding forms as part

of the school choice voucher program. While at the school helping, Amy began observing

classes and noticed a "real troublemaker" who, at the age of sixteen, was in danger of failing

the eighth grade. She asked the principal if she could tutor him, eventually saw him

promoted to high school, and decided she wanted to become a teacher in an inner-city school.

She acknowledges that this work is challenging, stating that:

> I may decide during the experience that I get burnt out and it's not for me,
> but that's what has brought me into the program and brought me into wanting
> to be a teacher to begin with, so that's what I want to be doing for the rest of
> my life.

Although Amy's initial interview occurred during the first month of her program and

was intended to gather baseline data, she had already encountered instructors who had shared

stories with her. She mentioned hearing several during her first few weeks of the MAT

program, but could "not think of any specifically." She did note that one teacher had worked

in an inner-city school, and that setting made his stories "particularly interesting" for her.

Without recalling details, she remembered that he had identified "the top five mistakes he

made [as a teacher] – big, huge bloopers that he's surprised that he didn't get kicked out of

the school for," and she found that helpful. Those stories allowed her to "see that other

teachers have made lots of mistakes before – that there is a learning curve. It gives us ideas,

and I think that if you don't have any of that in with the general theory and everything – the

teaching – it's hard to put into perspective." Adding emphasis to her belief in the importance

of hearing an experienced teachers' stories, Amy revealed her opinion that "the best thing the

teachers can do for us as incoming students who are going to go on to become teachers is to give us their real life experiences."

Questions asked to determine if Amy's experiences observing and tutoring in a school helped her in identify which experienced teacher stories most reflected reality prompted the following response:

> To some extent, but to some extent it's still very novel. I didn't go through the public school system for elementary or secondary education, so for me it's very helpful to hear about the stories because even just the slightest things like homeroom or AP classes – you know, that just never existed in my world. So for me, it helps me a lot to get an idea of what the American public school system is like.

In short, Amy felt that the she was still very much experiencing the stories as a newcomer, and she found even the most novel stories useful.

Amy predicted that during her pre-service year, she would hear stories from her (at this point, unassigned) teacher mentor. She anticipated hearing both good and bad stories.


*Stage B (Panel & Focus Group)*

By the beginning of stage B, Amy had been assigned to complete weekly observations at a local inner-city school and had discovered that she would complete her student teaching at that institution.

Amy's initial response to the panel was revealed through an individually written reflection. During this reflection, Amy noted that she "enjoyed" hearing the stories and appreciated both the reminder that "even seasoned teachers will make mistakes" and the "advice and ideas on how to handle certain situations which might arise in a classroom setting." She wrote that she now had "a few additional ideas about how I might want manage

my classroom." She had also "learned about a couple of techniques which I will probably try." Finally, Amy wrote that she might

> seem to forget the stories in a few weeks, but I am confident that the stories will remain in the back of my brain so that if I ever come across a situation with similar circumstances, their stories and how they handled the situation will come to mind.

During the focus group conversation, Amy shared many of these thoughts. She also wondered if the story shared by a suburban school panelist would applicable to someone in an inner-city setting. The story was the same narrative mentioned by Adam – the story that emphasized allowing students to "save face" instead of cornering a student when disciplining them. Amy responded that she "really liked that [story] - his idea from that, [but] I was thinking 'could that work in a classroom at [my inner-city school]? I thought, 'Nooo - I'm not certain it would work quite as well, but it might'."

Amy expressed interest in the panelist (experienced teacher B) that worked in the inner-city school where she would do her student teaching, but attributed that interest to the panelists' background working with ESL students who were "afraid to speak" in class. This was interesting, since the panelist only mentioned that experience that while giving background information, while another panelist (experienced teacher A) had told an entire story about working with an ESL class. Still, Amy was "struck" by this teacher (experienced teacher B) "when she said that" because "I already know that in one of my classes I have a kid from Guatemala, and I think he's afraid to speak... I'd like to know like, what she did to draw the students out." She continued that her attention had been earned by that narrator because

> all weekend, I guess almost into another full week already, I've been planning in my head what I can possibly do to draw this one student in, so I have just been thinking about it naturally, so when she said something, I was

113

like – 'oh!' . It wasn't really the point to her story, but I was like, ' I would like to ask her something more about that specific thing'.

Finally, during the second written reflection, Amy was asked if her response to the stories or plans for teaching were altered at all by the focus group reflection. In response, she revealed that all of her responses during the first written reflection remained unchanged.

*Stage C (Interview)*

*Stories Heard:*

During this interview, Amy revealed that her mentor teacher had shared "a little – like bits and pieces – but no big stories." The only "stories" that Amy did recall came from her classmates and directly related to her struggle to reconcile what she knew of her inner-city school with what she heard about schools in more suburban environments. These classmates' "stories" were more like descriptions than actual narratives. Still, during the interview, Amy emphasized her pre-service classmates' words about the resources available in their suburban schools, stating that one classmate's mentor teacher

> has a whiteboard, which is like the latest cutting edge technology, and doesn't even use it. And I'm like, 'goodness, and I can't even get a projector. Let me have the whiteboard, and I'll use it' . . . [These suburban teachers have] got the technology, but these teachers – they can just read from notes, and these kids will take down notes and self - you know parents or whatever or self[-teach the topics]– they're interested in. You know they're going to learn the stuff, so they don't need to see powerpoint pictures and stuff to be able to help them visually.

Amy paid attention to her classmates' words, and was mentally and emotionally impacted by them. They turned her thoughts to her own, inner-city students. She revealed that it was hard "if I can't show [those visual tools], I mean, these are the kids that need [them] more

than anyone else." Emotionally, she described the impact of the words, or of the facts those words contained, stating that " I'm just – as you can tell – I am very frustrated."

Her frustration became fear when she heard related information from a teacher at her inner-city school. That teacher revealed that "a lot of times [teachers here] can't get hired by other schools because they're looked down upon'. Amy identified that as

> one thing that scares *me* right away. I mean, I don't want to be
> pigeonholed the rest of my life. This is what I want - believe I want - to do,
> but if I decide it doesn't work out for me –

These mental and emotional reactions did translate into action and consideration of action for Amy. She tried to educate her classmates about the disparity in the schools at which they were teaching, spoke with one of her professors about her frustrations, and had an appointment to speak with the MAT coordinator.

*Impact:*

Although Amy could not remember any specific stories that she heard during her first five to six months of teacher education, she did remember the narrators. She mentioned the instructor who shared stories of his inner-city teaching experience, stating that, "I don't really remember any particular stories, but just – It's like I remember him sort of fondly as in that 'he did this; he believed in this; he struggled; [he] kept working'."

When reminded that this teacher had shared stories of his "five big, huge bloopers" during the summer, Amy responded, "Oh yeah! I forgot about that already!," but acknowledged that she did not remember what any of them were. Still, she believes that his story-sharing shaped her perception of him, and that her perception of him could influence

her as a teacher.  She revealed that his story-sharing reinforced "the fact that I did really respect him as teacher, and kind of like look up to him as a mentor."

When asked if he occupied her thoughts as she worked to figure out who she would be as a student teacher or as a full-time, lead teacher, Amy responded that she would because "he seems like one of those teachers who really cared and really worked hard, and I'd like to be like that, you know."  Amy did mention her wish that "he'd actually be observing me in the classroom next year because I feel like he would be the best person to give me advice and everything," but said that when she "actually tried to get him to" she

> didn't hear back . . . it was really unusual – but he had been out of town
> for a while or something, and he had come back – I didn't hear from him
> again, but we met up – just bumped into each other at an event and stuff.  We
> talked a little bit then and everything.  I think he's just really busy.

Amy's reaction to the teacher panel was similar, in that she struggled to recall stories, but was moved by those stories to forge influential contacts with the narrators.  One panelist – whose story Amy could not recall even when reminded of the topic – made enough of an impression that Amy contacted him after the presentation.  In her words, "he made a good impression on me, and I said that I wanted to see him specifically teach, so I spent the entire day in his classroom."

*Factors Influencing Impact:*

Amy addressed three potential factors influencing the impact of stories:  (1) narrator credibility, including the type of school, class and grade levels in which the narrator has experience, (2) the context in which the story is told, and (3) the role of reflection.

<u>Narrator Credibility: Type of school, class and grade level:</u>

The first category of factors - the type of school, class and grade levels in which the narrator has experience – was introduced in the impact section above.  That section revealed that school type was an important issue for Amy and noted her understanding that suburban and inner-city schools were very different.  When asked if a narrator's school type affected if or how she listened to a story, Amy revealed her belief that  "there's value to hearing from different settings – to the extent that we don't know where we're going to be working… so I guess it's good to hear all those stories."  However,

> I think too many teachers from a [suburban]-like setting are ignorant to what's actually happening at [my inner-city school], so . . . their way, method, of handling discipline - or if they would suggest handling it this way . . . I would  have to really think twice about it.  I have – I think I would be more interested in hearing their story if they were working at [a suburban school] and they had already previously worked at [an inner-city] school or something.

In addition to noting the narrator's type of school, Amy paid attention to the type of class and grade levels of the narrators.  She revealed that "there's definitely a difference between an eleventh graders' US History class and a ninth grade standard class" and mentioned that while one of the panelists did in fact teach at her school, she "hasn't been teaching ninth grade" classes that Amy would work with.  Instead, "she's been teaching all upper level."

<u>Context in Which a Story is Told:</u>

Amy revealed that stories were "worthwhile" whether they were told in or out of context.  Here, 'in context' was defined as a moment in which a teacher knows that a listener is thinking about a topic and can respond with a story.  'Out of context' was defined as a story about something the listener has not been thinking about.  Amy stated that:

117

I think it is good to even hear stories out of context. I mean, certainly stories in context are very good, but sometimes you might not be thinking of something, but it will be a story from a context that you will experience later, or maybe that you have been experiencing that hasn't been a major thing or you just haven't been spending time on it, but it – I think they're all worthwhile. That's just my personal opinion. And it's never a waste of time unless you're going to like – corner someone in a room and say, "You're going to have to listen to stories all day." I don't feel that it's a waste of time. I feel if anything there's definitely a huge benefit to it.

Still, Amy clarified that if the story was about a topic she was not concerned with at all, "it's not really going to make an impact."

The Role of Reflection:

Amy revealed that structured reflection was not as important in determining a story's impact as other factors. She identified herself as a someone who would reflect independently whether there was a structured session or not, stating that "I reflect on everything . . . I'm a thinker. I think about everything, and I rethink and I rethink and I rethink."

*This participant's opinion on the value of stories:*

During this interview, Amy revealed that spending time on storytelling during pre-service teacher education, even an afternoon that took the place of something else, was

worth it, because unless you're going to find something else more practical, because - like a lot of my colleagues are saying - there's just too much theory, and I get it that it's a masters program that they have to justify it, etc, etc. but to a certain extent, learning about the psychology of adolescence and all of that good or wonderful stuff – some of it is just kind of like, common sense stuff. They're trying to make – it's almost like they're trying to make something harder than it really is and we kind of already know the basics

In short, Amy wanted her program to shift some of the focus from theory to practice. She believed a session that focused on sharing practical advice through stories would be more beneficial than a session addressing theories that could be identified as "common sense."

*Stage D (Interview)*

*Stories Heard:*

During this stage D interview, Amy addressed the role of stories in her MAT program, revealing that she heard them in four places: (1) from doctoral students who taught MAT classes during the summer session (2) from the panel of experienced teachers associated with this study, (3) from a panel of parents who spoke to one of her university classes and (4) from other pre-service teachers in her program. She provided details on each of these.

Stories from Doctoral Students Teaching MAT Classes:

Amy explained that she heard more stories from the doctoral students who taught summer classes because they "were within a few years of having teaching experience." She emphasized, and expressed frustration, about the idea that many of her professors don't necessarily have teaching experience or [do not have] teaching experience in the past – you know – ten, fifteen, twenty years." This was a large issue for Amy, as she felt that "for better or worse, I've learned that pretty much most of what comes out of the university – I can take it in one ear and throw it out the other ear."

<u>Stories From the Experienced Teacher Panel:</u>

While she did hear stories from the experienced teacher panel, Amy did not recall any of the stories, or the theme of that panel. She recalled that one of the panelists was a teacher from the inner-city school where she was completing her student teaching,

> but I can't remember her really saying much in stories. She's one of the teachers who – she teachers generally upperclass and more 'IB', which would be your more advanced kids and stuff, so she doesn't have the run-of-the-mill ninth and tenth graders, so she doesn't quite have the same stories.

When reminded of the theme of the panel – 'getting to know your students' – and asked if she had gotten to know them while student teaching, Amy responded that she had, "as much as you can with thirty students." However, when asked how she had tried to do that, she recalled only one panel suggestion – speaking with their parents.

Finally, to test the idea that a classroom situation might bring a story from the experienced teacher to mind, Amy was asked, "If I were to tell you that you were going to have a student with autism in your class next year, would that trigger memory of any stories you heard?" This question did not bring the experienced teachers' story of an autistic student (entitled "Autism Outburst" and included as Appendix G) to Amy's mind. Instead, it reminded her of a story told by a member of the parent panel. That story is detailed below.

<u>Story From the Parent Panel:</u>

Amy mentioned the parent panel twice during the interview: (1) when asked where she heard stories and (2) in response to the question about working with an autistic student. As mentioned in the previous section, Amy was asked, "If I were to tell you that you were going to have a student with autism in your class next year, would that trigger memory of any stories you heard?" In response she revealed that:

We had to talk to a parent who had a kid with autism and [the parent] doesn't believe in inclusion and stuff – taking the kids with handicaps and stuff and putting them with everybody else.

Amy continued, describing the difference between autism and ADHD, then revealing her understanding that autistic students

need to be in a smaller setting – not a lot of movement – a very controlled setting, etc. And I just remember it didn't work for her kid to be in a normal classroom setting with kids who could be like hyper or [have] behavior problems.

Amy was then asked, "If there is an autistic child in your class, is there anything you learned from that person that will change how you think or act?" She responded:

I guess I would try to pull the kid off – put them on the edge of the classroom maybe. I just think it's a bad situation – I'm not a really big fan of inclusion. I'm not. From the stories I've heard – and this is a lot from stories –I'm not a big fan. And even what I see here, you've got kids who – with inclusion you've got too many – you put everybody in the general population, and then you've got huge groups of students, like in this classroom – thirty kids, ninth graders, in a very small setting all smushed in together. You've got kids with ADHD – various ones – that can't sit still. Then you've kids that are kind of borderline; they're ok, but with all that commotion – what would be a normal student – they can't concentrate in it. So then they're throwing everybody else off. And if you add a kid with autism in, you basically have kids with ADHD –this is way too many kids for that. So I - if you're going to do this inclusion thing, then you've got to also plan for the fact that you need small classrooms too. So this general inclusion without having a lot more factors in place is just – I don't see it working. I see it actually pulling down more kids. I don't see it bringing up those kids. The idea was to help those kids, and I actually see it – especially in a school like this, where you have more kids with problems than you do with the other way, so you actually end up with the opposite problem. You end up with those kids bringing everyone else down.

Thus, the parents' story, and other stories about inclusion, did have an impact on Amy. They led to an opinion about inclusion in general, and influenced a plan of action if Amy were to have an autistic student in her mainstream social studies class (e.g. "pull[ing] the kid off – put[ting] them on the edge of the classroom maybe").

<u>Stories From Other Pre-service Teachers:</u>

Amy felt that "some stories that are the most helpful for me are from my colleague who was a 'Teach For America' teacher, and she did inner-city." While Amy did not recall any specifics, she found it helpful to "hear her stories of – you know - constant frustration, failure, when she wasn't doing it right - That makes me I guess feel better because I know other people have done the same – I'm not the only person in that boat."

*Impact:*

When asked what had the most impact on her thoughts and actions during student teaching, and on her plans for future classrooms, Amy revealed that "it's probably my teacher mentor." She also noted that:

> A lot of my learning is simply through trial and error. I try everything. I try everything that the university said do and we should be doing, etc. I've tried lots of different types of lesson plans, ideas, formats, etc. – teacher centered, student centered – and I just need to find out what works for the majority of the students.

Still, as mentioned in the previous section, Amy did demonstrate that some stories also had an influence on her thoughts, actions and plans to act. The parent's story about the autistic student influenced her thinking about inclusion and her plans to help future autistic students. The stories from her classmate, who had experience teaching in the inner-city, made Amy feel less alone.

Amy was also asked to review and comment on the debate about the impact of stories during pre-service teacher education. After reading the following[9]:

*Figure 2: Question about Debate in the Literature*

> *There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*
>
> *One perspective:*
> *Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*
>
> *Another perspective:*
> *Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*
>
> *What do you think about those arguments? Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

Amy responded, "I obviously agree with 'another perspective' – the second one."

When asked to comment on the accuracy of the potential pathway for stories' impact postulated (but not expressed to participants) at the beginning of this study (see Figure 1), Amy revealed that the figure was an accurate representation of the impact that hearing an experienced teachers' stories had on her. In her own words, "it's very good."

---

[9] To prevent influence by the number of texts supporting each perspective, sources were not included in the draft given to pre-service participants.

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
(based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)

Listeners engage in reflection and learning

Listeners hear the story

Listeners plan and execute actions

Audience investment at each stage increased by

• skilled storytelling
• narrator credibility
• personal relevance
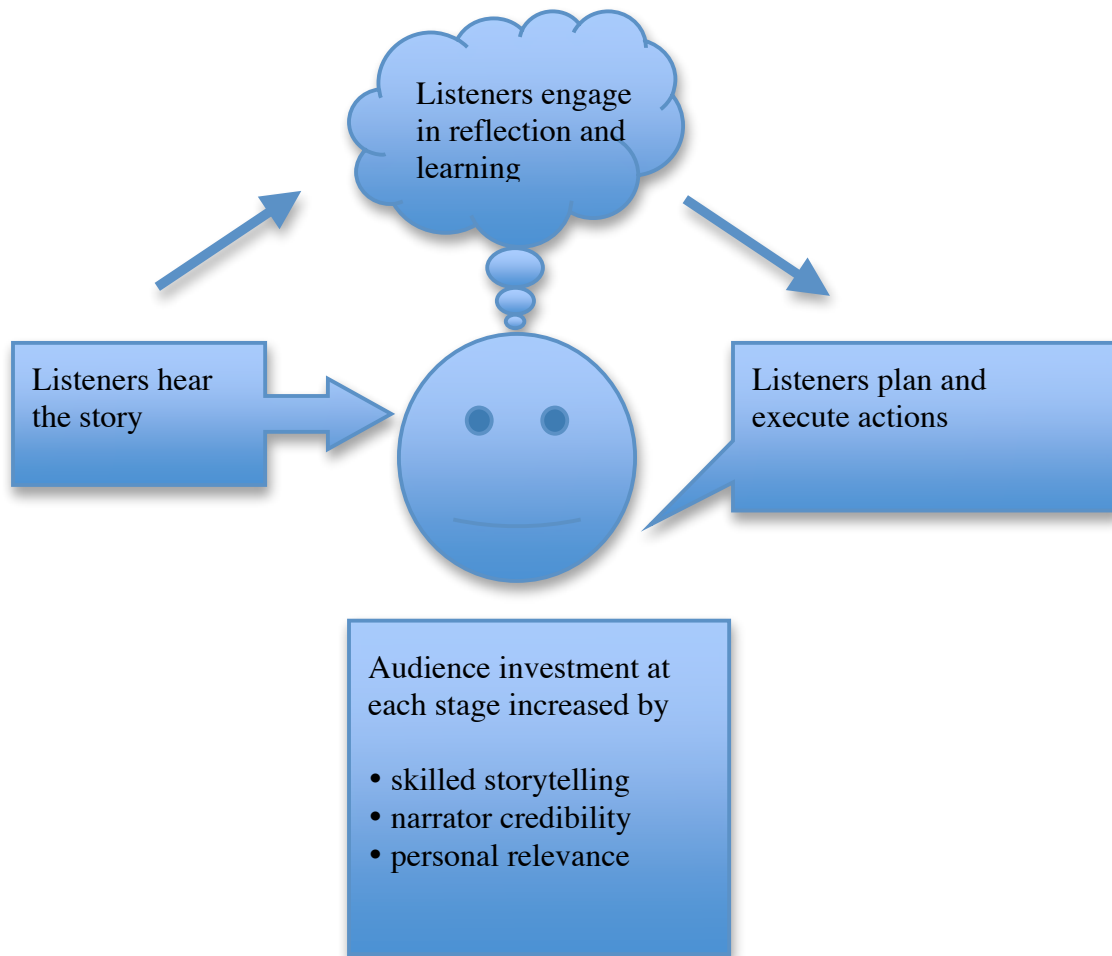
Finally, during this interview, Amy was asked to (1) describe her ideal tardy policy for students, (2) listen to a story about a teacher who had to change her original policy to one she found more effective (see Appendix T, question 16) and (3) discuss whether the story had any impact on her thoughts or actions. After hearing the story, Amy revealed that the methods it advised were methods she had "observed . . . five years ago, and it was something I liked . . . [but I had] maybe forgotten all of it – or hadn't used all of it ." This led Amy to observe that repeating lessons was important, and introducing stories at the beginning, then

124

repeating them might be beneficial.  Finally, when asked if she could see herself implementing strategies similar to the narrator's in the next few weeks of student teaching, Amy responded that she could.

*Factors Influencing Impact:*

Amy identified several elements that factor into a story's impact, some of which have been mentioned in previous sections.  The factors she mentioned include: (1) narrator credibility, including timing of teaching experience, type of school, attitude, type of class, and grade level (2) the story itself, and (3) the listener's personal characteristics.  The stage of teacher education was not a factor.

Narrator Credibility:

As mentioned in earlier sections, Amy believed it was important for narrators to have recent teaching experience, finding that professors who had not taught in "ten, fifteen, twenty" years did not really share classroom stories.

She also believed it was important that they have experience in the type of school that interested the listener.  She revealed that "if you had somebody from [a suburban district] trying to tell me how to get kids to behave, I would be like, 'have you ever taught in an inner-city?'  You know, I would be like – I would probably shut them out immediately."  She later explained further that it was as much the attitude as the type of school experience, noting that:

>  It's not necessarily – I wouldn't totally tune somebody out at a
>  [suburban]-type school.  It would more that they've got the answers – you
>  know – all the right answers and this is the way to do it and make you feel
>  like, 'oh' – you know, it's – I've heard so many times at the university that it's

125

like – you know- 'you're being a bad teacher if you can't keep management'. If there's like an innuendo or - you know - kind of somewhat blatantly said . . . 'You should be able to - ' and I'm like, 'yeah, maybe if you're in [a suburban district] like - you know - at their top school', but I'm like, 'Come on!' I'm like – I got so sick and tired of hearing stuff like that. So if somebody is constantly telling you stuff like, 'this is the way to do it' –

When asked for a word that would describe that attitude, Amy was silent. When asked if 'arrogant' would be an appropriate word, she responded, "I guess that would be somebody whose arrogant – possibly. In this case, I think it was just a person who was out of touch."

The type of class they taught was also important, revealing that a teacher who taught "upperclass. advanced kids" would not "have the same stories" as someone who taught "run-of-the-mill ninth and tenth graders."

The story itself: Hearing a story with a moral/advice vs. hearing only the moral/advice:

Amy revealed that hearing the full story would be better than hearing direct advice, because

it puts it into context and it helps me remember it . . . If you were just to tell me, 'this is a way to do things', I think that would be harder to remember. But when you've got a story attached to it, other facts surrounding it, it makes it easier to remember. So at least for me, that would be easier to remember than just having a list of, 'here's things to do: A,B,C,D,E'

Listener Characteristics:

When asked if there were factors not addressed during any interview that influenced who she listened to or how she heard stories, she responded:

No – other than the obvious: I might be too tired that day; there might be ten thousand other things on my mind. Something like that that has absolutely nothing to do with the person, the story or something else I might be very interested in.

126

<u>Not a Factor: the Stage of Teacher Education</u>:

Amy believed that stories were valuable both before and during student teaching. She acknowledged feeling less confident since student teaching had started, but did not see a direct connection between confidence and the likelihood that she would listen to an experienced teacher's story.

With regards to teacher education in general, Amy felt that "the emphasis should be on making us good, practical teachers, and sometimes all the theory in the world is just not going to do that, and I think stories are a whole lot more practical and realistic."

*Perception of Feedback Opportunities:*

Please see the section entitled "An Added Question: Perceived Opportunities for Feedback" at the end of this chapter.

***Participant Four: Laura***

<u>*Stage A (Interview)*</u>

Laura is a white female who is under the age of 25. Her family is relatively local – in the same state – and her mom currently works as an elementary school teacher. Laura earned her B.A. in history at the same state university where she is currently working on her MAT. She worked as a fundraiser for that university for two years before deciding to apply for the MAT program. When asked why she wanted to teach, Laura revealed that her primary motivation for entering the teaching profession was "job security," and she laments the fact that job security in the teaching profession has recently declined. When describing her

choice of career, she stated, "I was a history major, so I figured – well, I might as well teach." Toward the end of the interview, however, she did reveal an additional source of inspiration – her own high school history teachers. She noted that two of those teachers had classes and personalities that were "so cool" that it "determined my major and my career path."

When asked about her baseline experience with stories, Laura revealed that her mom had told her classroom narratives. In addition, although it was only a few weeks into her MAT program, Laura revealed that her doctoral student summer instructors had told her stories. While she mentioned very few specifics, Laura did note that she had heard several "stories about bad kids and what we should do if someone's doing this, and someone's doing that." She had also heard stories about what teachers "did wrong and what we shouldn't do – giving us advice about that." Laura revealed that the impact of these stories "depends on how successful facing that kid was." However, Laura's next statement indicated that, for her, limited optimism persists even if she is impacted by a negative story. In her words, even

> if the kid was just hopeless, and you realize at the end of the story –
> 'that's not cool' – but then you're still like, 'well, there's probably something
> we could still try to do; it's not a complete lost cause'.

Laura did recall that one of the stories was about a student named "Jason." She provided more detail about this story in a later interview (see the section devoted to Stage C), but here only noted the teacher's observation that "he was smart, but he never applied himself or maybe he was just always bad and so she didn't really know what to do with him."

Laura anticipated that she would "probably" hear stories from experienced teachers during her pre-service year. She revealed that although she believes the stories she has heard from teachers so far are "pretty true to life," she is looking forward to

see[ing] the kids that are part of these stories instead of just hearing about them, and then maybe I'll see, 'ok – that's what it's actually like'. Because you never know if the stories people tell are completely true or if they're exaggerating.

On a personal level, Laura revealed that she did not want to complete her student

teaching in an inner-city school because

I hear the schools are just not good, and since I'm like a tiny girl, I don't know if I could deal with an unruly class as best as I can and so that might be cheating the students out of an actual education if I can't even control them.

She planned to speak to someone in the MAT administration about ensuring a suburban

school, student teaching placement. Finally, she revealed "mixed feelings" about lead

teaching after graduation, expressing "hope" that it would "be a positive experience, but if

it's not, I can just try to switch schools or carry on for at least like two years."


*Stage B (Panel & Focus Group)*

By the beginning of stage B, Laura had been assigned to complete weekly

observations at a local suburban school and had discovered that she would complete her

student teaching at that institution.

Laura's initial response to the panel was revealed through an individually written

reflection. During this reflection, Laura noted that the stories "were fun to listen to and gave

good advice." Specifically, she felt "they helped me realize the importance of getting to

know your students" and taught her that "it is important to learn things about your students

and interact with them individually so they know [I] know they exist and that they matter."

In response to a question about what impact the stories had on her as she made plans for her

classroom, she wrote about learning that "I will have to address the specific needs of

students" and "alter her management for classes because not all [classes] will be the same."

Laura believed she would remember the stories and could "use their advice when dealing with students in class."

During the focus group conversation, Laura was the quietest member of the group. She did reveal that prior to the panel, "I didn't really know that you had to – well I didn't really know it was important to like, interact with students like so individually . . . so just hearing that stuff was good." Laura also expressed "surprise" at one panelist's story. Recalling the story of that teacher's initial assumptions about her student skill level, and the instructional adjustments that teacher eventually made (see Appendix J, "Assumptions and Assignments"), Laura stated that:

> I was surprised that she came down with so many – like, expectations, that people already knew certain things. She assigned these high level essays to ninth graders, and I was like, 'how is this possible?' But then she went from like, completely like – I guess not maybe unstructured – but then completely like rigid about, 'you must do this –you must do that –XYZ, blah, blah, blah', and I was like, 'that's kind of extreme!'

Although Laura did not offer additional thoughts on this topic during the focus group conversation, she did revisit the impact this story had on her during subsequent interviews. Those interviews are detailed in the sections below.

Finally, during the second written reflection, Laura was asked if her response to the stories or plans for teaching were altered at all by the focus group reflection. She wrote that there was "no change in response."


*Stage C (Interview)*

*Stories Heard:*

During previous interviews, Laura had referenced stories that she remembered. These included a story about a student named "Jason" and several stories told by a doctoral

student who had taught one of Laura's summer school classes. During this interview, Laura was asked if she recalled any details from those stories. She stated,

> I think 'Jason' was just one of those students that would never do what she wanted. [The instructor] told a story about kids, how they change their identity and snap, so one of the students was one day – dressed like a normal kid – but came in the next day with dyed hair and fingernail polish and eyeliner, and stuff like that. Maybe that was 'Jason'; I don't know.

While unsure about the details, Laura was quick to remember the moral of the story. She said the message was that as a teacher, you have to "pay attention to what your kids are doing. If they look like they have a problem, they probably [do]. Talk to them at some point in time. Try to figure out what's causing the problem." She "hope[d]" the story would have an impact on her, stating that she did "not really know how yet, but it probably will. I will probably try to understand more about where other kids are coming from before I like fuss at them too harsh or something."

She also remembered two of the stories her summer instructor had shared. One was the story of a field trip he had taken with his students. He took them to a

> movie that he thought would be related to their class, but then it ended up having some inappropriate stuff in the movie, but then it was just like 'oh my goodness', what are they doing on screen . . . . it was bad, and it was all girls with him, so it was just really awkward.

The other story was about a fight the teacher witnessed through his classroom window.

> He didn't see anyone who could stop the fight, and he couldn't run out the door and through the halls and get out the main entrance, so he's like, 'I open up the window and jumped out and did this roll', and then he got there, and already some teachers were there stopping the fight, and he was just like, looking around.

When asked to detail the moral or message of these stories, Laura respond very simply, "'always view movies before you show the kids them', and then 'if there's a fight, don't jump out of a window to like, go stop the fight'."

131

In addition to these stories, Laura recalled two stories shared by members of the experienced teacher panel. One was the story of a teacher who had quoted a narrative that contained swear words while teaching his high school class. Laura remembered the story "because I was just like, 'what were you thinking?'," but noted no impact beyond this re-affirmation of her beliefs that such words were inappropriate in any classroom context. Laura also remembered the story she had mentioned during the focus group conversation months before – the story about a teacher's assumptions regarding student skill levels, and the instructional alterations that teacher eventually made. In this interview, Laura noted the impact this story had on her, revealing that she learned "you should also ask some [people who have been there awhile], ok, 'what level are these people on – these students on – right now? Would it be appropriate if I assigned this?'"

Finally, Laura revealed that she had heard two stories about a local urban school district. One of those stories had been told the previous year and factored into her decisions to seek a student- and eventually lead- teaching position in more suburban setting. The other had been told recently and confirmed her desire – and by this point, her appreciation - for her placement in a more suburban school. The first story was from "my friend [who] was a student teacher [in the urban district] last year and he talked about their reading level, and how they can't read very well." The second was from

> one of the other MAT students [who] said that her first day someone, I
> think like, punched someone else, or threw his head through a window or
> something like that. They had to call the hospital and send some kid off to
> jail, so I was like, ok -

Laura stated that she had "not really heard any stories from my mentor teacher or anyone around [the school where I have been observing], but I also haven't asked."

132

Laura also recalled advice from experienced teachers that did not come in the form of a story. Some of her own classmates, who had previously worked as lead teachers in schools, had given "advice, like, when we use primary sources for some of ours, they are like, 'ok, you really have to pare those down to make them readable for like ninth graders' because they definitely won't be able to understand those words."

*Impact:*

Several instances of impact were noted in the previous section. These include (1) the story of "Jason" that encouraged her to "try to understand more about where other kids are coming from," (2) the story of a teacher's inaccurate assumptions that encouraged her to "ask some [people who have been there awhile], ok, 'what level are these people on – these students on – right now? Would it be appropriate if I assigned this?'," and (3) the stories about the inner-city schools that convinced her she "wouldn't be able to deal with that" and should seek positions in more suburban schools.

Laura also addressed the issue of impact directly when she was asked if she agreed with a classmates' focus group comment that a story from an experienced teacher would likely not change his plans for a classroom because his teaching would be driven by his own personality and character, and "you can't really change who you are." Laura responded by stating that:

> Listening to a story would totally make me like, at least rethink some stuff I'm going to do. If you hear a story by an experienced teacher, you're going to learn, 'ok this will work in the classroom' or 'this will not'. I'm not going to do what will not work, so hearing stories really does shape my way or how I'm going to approach teaching.

*This participant's perspective on factors influencing impact*

Laura addressed three potential factors influencing the impact of stories: (1) narrator credibility, (2) reflection and (3) personal traits.

With regards to narrator credibility, Laura revealed that one panelist earned more of her attention because she had two personal connections to him. First, one of her MAT classmates had him as a teacher in high school and said, "'he's so awesome – he's great at this; he's great at that'; so I paid attention to him more –just to see what his personality was." Second, he was a teacher at the school where Laura knew she would be student teaching. It is important to note that the second factor was significant to Laura "because then you're like, 'ok, I get to work next to this guy, so it might be interesting to kind of pay attention to him'." She specifically stated that her attention was not increased because he was currently working with the same population of students she would be student teaching in a few months.

Laura expressed mixed feelings on the value of formal reflection, stating that:

> I think it's good to have questions or discussion. If I had just heard the stories, I'd be like, 'ok – cool stories – and I'd go home and watch some TV and not think about them – well, I'd still think about them, but not at the level like, after having been asked questions about it.

Still, she did not feel that reflection necessarily increased listeners' depth of insight or ability to remember the narrative.

Finally, the idea of 'personal traits' as a factor in impact was suggested during the aforementioned conversation about a classmates' focus group opinion. Specifically, while considering that classmate's belief that stories have a limited impact because teaching is driven by unalterable personality and character - Laura stated that:

> I know I don't know much about teaching, so I'm going to absorb what other people tell me to do. They know better. And maybe I'm more receptive

to new ideas, or I'm not very, like, stubborn with my current ideas, so if I need to change some way in the classroom, I'll just do that.

*Stories Heard:*

When asked about stories heard during her pre-service education, Laura noted that she did hear some from professors. However, she only described one story in any detail – a story she had referenced during the previous interview. Specifically, it was the story shared by the panelist who had quoted a narrative that contained swear words while teaching his high school class. She remembered the story "just because [it is] a funny story" and she "pass[ed that teacher] in the hall sometimes" at her student teaching site. Although Laura did not recall the specific story, she did recall the theme of the experienced teacher panel, and that a story from that panel had encouraged her to get to know her students by "going to extra activities they do or something." Laura had acted on this advice, and those actions are detailed in the impact section below.

Finally, to test the idea that a classroom situation might bring a story to mind, Laura was asked "If I were to tell you that you were going to have a student with autism in your class next year, would that trigger memory of any stories you heard?" Despite hearing a story about an autistic student (entitled "Autism Outburst," Appendix G) and advice for helping that student during the experienced teacher panel, Laura had no recollection of the narrative or the counsel.

*Impact:*

When asked what had the most impact on her thoughts and actions during student teaching, and on her plans for future classrooms, Laura revealed that student behavior would be the largest factor, since "classroom management is a problem."

Still, stories did have an impact. As noted previously, during this interview Laura recalled the theme of the experienced teacher panel, and that someone on that panel had encouraged her to get to know her students by "going to extra activities they do" (see "Attending Extracurriculars," which is part of "Teaching an ESL class" in Appendix M). She revealed that:

> I'm trying to do that. I went to a band concert yesterday. The kid saw me and was like, 'Ms. Blah, blah, blah – I saw you at the concert yesterday! Did you like it?' [I responded], 'Oh yeah , I loved it. Good job!' . . . He's been having issues, so today, I guess it really helped.

The panel also influenced Laura in other ways. Recall her statement in the stage C interview that a panelist's assumptions regarding student skill levels had made an impression on her. In that interview, Laura described the impact by revealing that she learned "you should also ask some [people who have been there awhile], ok, 'what level are these people on – these students on – right now? Would it be appropriate if I assigned this?'" In this stage D interview, Laura confirmed that the teacher's story (see "Assumptions and Assignments" in Appendix J) was the source of learning, and revealed that she had acted on that learning. In her words, during her student teaching, "I've asked what levels people are on – what level students are." Unfortunately, the answers she received were unsatisfying, as she heard

> really vague answers like, 'he's a smart kid'. Well, what does that mean? Who am I comparing his smartness to? Like Einstein? Or – I don't know – 'he's a regular kid'. [So I need to say], 'Please describe the quality of his work to me – I need to know'. Something like that. I get very ambiguous answers on the levels of kids.

When asked if she would inquire about where to begin with students if she was hired as a lead teacher at a new school next year, she responded, "If I have time, definitely."  Laura did address one other way that stories could impact a pre-service teacher, briefly stating that stories could "show what's out there – what could happen."

These examples of impact notwithstanding, Laura did feel that there were limits to what stories could do.  In short, she agreed with a statement that "there are some things teachers have to learn the hard way, that you do not necessarily get that knowledge from hearing someone else's story."  She also believed that even when she listened to a story, she might not learn everything from a story that a situation might require her to know.  In Laura's words:

> Yes – you have to go through some junk – like, I just had a horrible week this week, but –like, you have to go through mistakes to learn how to fix things. You can't just listen to a veteran teacher yak about something and be like [in a sarcastic tone], 'oh – I definitely now know exactly what to do in that situation should it arise'.  You have to go through the situation.

To illustrate this point, Laura provided an example of an 'oh no' moment in her class that she does not believe a story could have fully prepared her for.  In her words:

> I wasn't prepared enough for class.  I didn't know the material as well as I should have.  So when I got in there and the kids threw like, random questions at me, I was just like , 'you can go research that!'  Something like that, but it was just horrifying. So, panel discussions can tell you, 'oh, kids will throw horrible questions at you' or 'you need to be prepared', but until you actually like, don't come prepared, you just feel like 'oh, whatever – I can deal'.

According to Laura, living through the experience provided a different level of insight.  She revealed that:

> Veteran teachers can tell me, 'oh, you need to be prepared – you need to be prepared for every class', but then I could be like, 'oh yeah, whatever – I can wing it.  I don't have to be *so* prepared for class'.  But then you

experience in the classroom that you cannot wing certain things. So you need that experience.

When asked to imagine herself as someone who was educating pre-service teachers and to consider whether it would be worthwhile to share that story of her 'oh no' moment, Laura responded that she would share the story "to spare future teachers the horror of kids throwing random questions at you and you looking like an idiot up at the front." However, when asked if she believed pre-service teachers would learn from her story, Laura said, "No. They'll be like, 'oh – that's never going to happen to me'. I can yak all I want, but -"

Laura reiterated this line of thinking in her response to the debate about the impact of stories during pre-service teacher education. After reading the following[10]:

*Figure 2: Question about Debate in the Literature*

*There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*

<u>*One perspective:*</u>
*Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*

<u>*Another perspective:*</u>
 *Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*

*What do you think about those arguments? Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

---

[10] To prevent influence by the number of texts supporting each perspective, sources were not included in the draft given to pre-service participants.

138

She expressed her view that, "the first perspective is good . . . .[stories] can impact pre-service teachers, but that's only if the pre-service teacher decides to, like, take the story and actually re-examine their own – like, you have – I don't know –"

While unable to put her full rationale into words, Laura was able to express her view that the first perspective was more convincing. Basically, she believed stories could impact a pre-service teacher, but that impact would be limited by their experience. That lack of experience limited impact by creating doubt about the reality of a story and by restricting a pre-service teacher's connection to the story itself.

Finally, when asked to comment on the accuracy of the potential pathway for stories' impact postulated (but not expressed to participants) at the beginning of this study (see Figure 1), Laura gave two responses: one for herself as an individual and another for 'listeners' in general. When speaking about her own personal reaction to stories, she revealed that the pathway

> is correct – when I hear a story, I try to incorporate aspects of the story into my lesson, so if I heard a teacher say, 'you should not assign essays until you know the level of your students', I'd be like, 'ok – I need to find out the level of my students before I assign – like, give an essay'. So I guess I do learn from the stories.

However, when speaking about 'the listener' in general, Laura said this of the pathway:

> I think it's fairly idealistic. It depends on how stubborn you are. Because stubborn people already have it in their head – ok, this is what's going to work. I'm not going to listen to so-and-so because he doesn't know what he's talking about. And then they will go into the classroom – well, the stubborn person will go into the classroom, do something horrible, then remember what the story was and be like, 'darn – I should have listened to so-and-so's story'.

When asked at which specific point stubbornness could disrupt the pathway, Laura pointed to the second arrow, indicating that while a "stubborn" person might hear, reflect and even learn from a story, they were less likely to use that learning to plan and execute actions. It is

139

significant, however, that Laura felt the story might have a delayed impact, re-entering a

listeners thoughts after personal classroom experience had underscored that story's message.

Finally, it is important to note that Laura mentioned being a person who was "not

stubborn" on three separate occasions during the research (during stage B, C and D), but on

one occasion, in stage D, did state that "I'm not as stubborn – I'm thinking of a certain

person, but yeah, I kind of – I am stubborn, but not stubborn enough not to listen to people."

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
(based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)
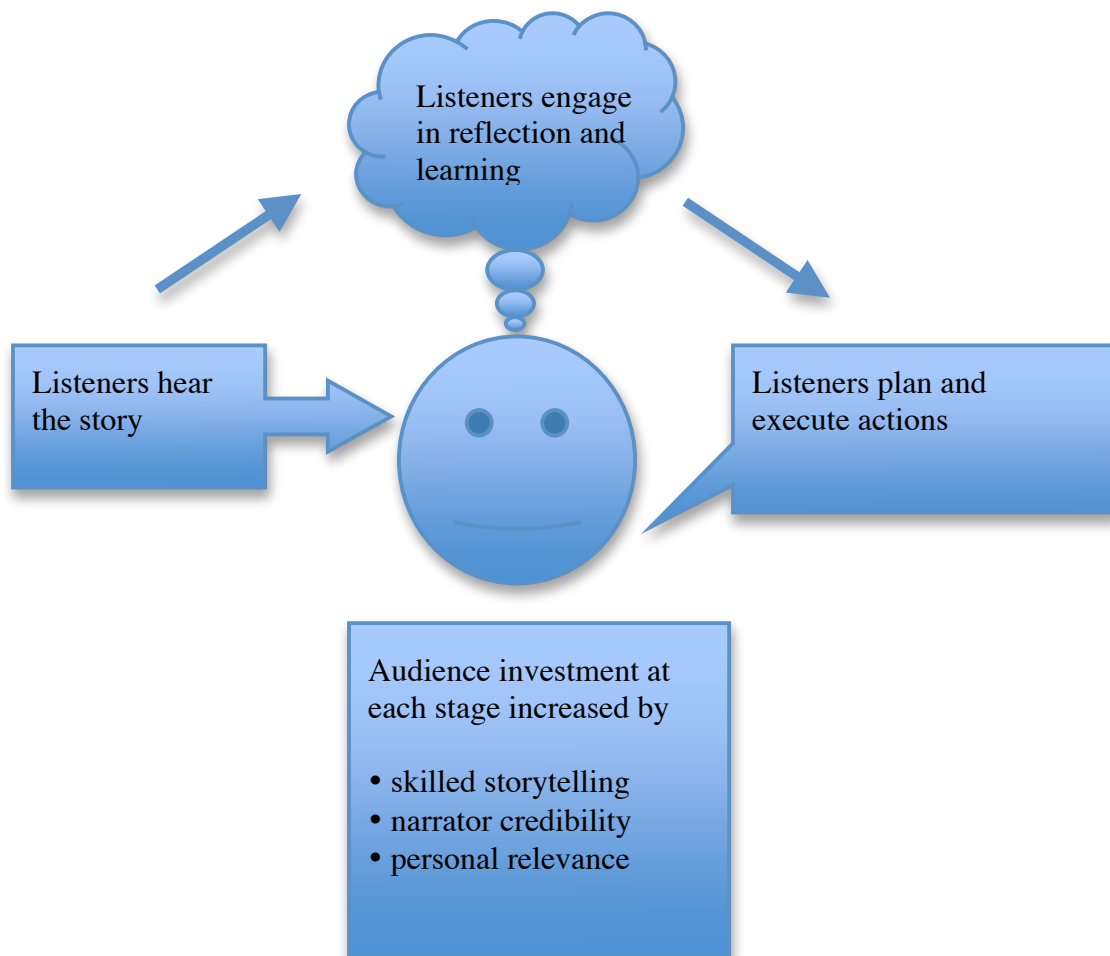
*Factors Influencing Impact:*

Laura identified several elements that factor into a story's impact, some of which have been mentioned in previous sections. The factors she mentioned included: (1) narrator credibility, including years of experience, type of school, grade level experience and a direct connection to the listener's personal plans, (2) stage of teacher education and confidence, (3) the story itself, (4) listener characteristics, and (5) other factors, including listener investment and skilled storytelling.

Narrator credibility:

Laura believed narrator credibility was an important factor in determining impact. She expressed her view that years of experience, type of school, working at the grade level that interested the listener, and a direct connection to the listener's personal plans (e.g. teaching in the state or school where the listener planned on teaching or student teaching) were all factors that influenced narrator credibility. When asked if there were any narrator characteristics that would decrease the likelihood of listening, Laura responded, "if I thought you were a bad teacher, I would be like, 'why would I listen to her?' ."

Stage of Teacher Education and Confidence:

Laura expressed her view that it is better to tell a pre-service teacher stories "before" they begin student teaching

> because then, if you remember one of the stories, you could be like, 'oh! Mr. So-and-so told me about that. Maybe I can change my lesson accordingly or maybe I can learn what he taught' . . . . pre-service teachers can draw upon those stories to solve problems should they arise.

141

She cited another reason for this timing while responding to questions about how student teaching had affected her confidence in the classroom. According to Laura, who became very emotional during this part of the interview, since beginning her student teaching experience her confidence had gone "way down." She revealed that this had an affect on whether she would listen to a story, stating that:

> At the moment right now, I don't really – I don't think I'd listen to stories because I'm too wrapped up in student teaching . . . . . Like if someone introduced a story to me right now, I'd just sit here like, 'woh, woh, woh, woh, woh' – you know like Charlie Brown listening to the teacher. I'd stare at them – pretend to listen, but I'm still off in my own little world thinking about how many papers I need to grade and how awful these kids were, like yesterday, or something like that.

Given Laura's view that stories were valuable before student teaching, and too overwhelming during student teaching, she was then asked about their usefulness after student teaching. She responded, "I think it would be good to have the student teachers share their stories so that we could get advice from each other. I don't really know if it would be effective for like, other teachers, to come in."

The story itself:

When asked if a listener could derive the same value from hearing a story's moral or advice without the actual narrative, Laura responded, "you definitely need the story. It gives you the context of the situation and advice on what not to do, then advice on what to do, so you need the story."

Listener characteristics:

Laura referenced two listener characteristics during this interview: classroom confidence and the degree of stubbornness. Her thoughts on classroom confidence were

142

noted in the previous section entitled "Stage of Teacher Education and Confidence." Those thoughts can be summarized by stating that low classroom confidence led Laura to become "wrapped up" in her student teaching, and that decreased her level of listening.

Laura's thoughts on stubbornness were noted in the previous section entitled "Impact." Basically, Laura expressed her belief that a "stubborn" person's original classroom plans would not be influenced by a story until they had classroom experience that created doubt about their original plan and reminded them of the stories alternate idea.

Other factors:

Laura believed that listener investment and skilled storytelling were important factors in impact.

*Perception of Feedback Opportunities:*

Please see the section entitled "An Added Question: Perceived Opportunities for Feedback" at the end of this chapter.

## An Added Question: Perceived Opportunities for Feedback

After hearing feedback on stories as a teaching tool for three stages of the study (stages A, B, and C), the researcher began to wonder if those sharing the stories - or those in a position to influence how many and what stories were shared - were receiving any guiding feedback from these participants. To explore this, a former coordinator of - and current professor in - the program was asked about opportunities for pre-service teachers to give program feedback. In addition, a question was added to the stage D interview, providing

each pre-service participant a chance to detail their perception of feedback opportunities, and to tell whether they had taken advantage of those opportunities.

### *Professor's Description*

The MAT professor revealed that pre-service participants had several opportunities to provide feedback. Some of these opportunities were anonymous, including opportunities to provide written evaluations at the end of each course and a written evaluation at the end of the program. There were other non-anonymous opportunities to provide feedback, including required reflections submitted throughout the year. Some of these reflections were assigned by topic (e.g. a reflection on classroom management strategies) and others were more open (e.g. a reflection on what they observed at their school sites).

### *Pre-service Participant Perceptions*

When asked if there were opportunities to provide feedback in the MAT program, Adam responded:

> Not really. I mean they give us these forms to fill out, but I don't hear of anything changing . . . . it would be nice if there were a forum to feel like I could give some feedback without burning my bridges for references. Until that happens, I won't – I'll just say everything is fine.

Nathan recalled additional opportunities, revealing that administrators were

> trying to redesign the program, so we've had a few opportunities where [the program coordinator] would come in or something and ask, 'we're trying to change this. What do you think about this class?' . . . and you have a couple or twenty minutes or so to talk about things and take our suggestions, so there is a lot of room for that.

Nathan believed that his professors were making an effort to know who he was and what worked for him, "but at the same time, I'm not entirely sure what the value of our collective

voice is, just because you hear – they ask you, what would you change, and sometimes you get the answer, 'well, in a perfect world we would get that kind of thing', so it's like ,'if the things that we want we're not going to get, why are you asking?'"

Amy revealed that there were opportunities for feedback and that many classmates took advantage of them, but she was unsure about how much of that feedback was truly heard by her professors.  In her words:

> even if we talk – we can talk all we want . . . but there's a disconnect. They're not really hearing us or understanding us, because like I said, I think the majority of them aren't teachers or it's been so long since they have been teachers, or they haven't been teachers in a setting like this – you can only do so much.

Laura did not feel that there were opportunities to provide feedback, but anticipated that she would have opportunities in the future.  She stated, "I don't really spend very much time with professors or anything, so, I don't think they've had enough time to actually know who I am."

# CHAPTER V

# ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

## Analysis

### Introduction and Explanation of Process

According to Chenail (1995),

> in a well-done qualitative research study, in addition to seeing the results of the labor, the reader should have ample opportunities to examine the particulars of the inquiry: What choices were made by the researcher in the construction of the study, what were the steps in the process of forming the research questions, selecting a site, generating and collecting the data, processing and analyzing the data, and selecting the data exemplars for the paper or presentation.

Several of these "particulars" were discussed in the methodology section of this paper.

However, as this work moves into analysis, it is important to pause for a moment to explore

those "particulars" that directly impact the analysis. Specifically, before further processing

and analyzing the data, it is essential to explain how the research questions evolved over the

course of the study, and how the categories of data to be analyzed here became categories in

the eyes of the researcher.

Within the initial study proposal, and at the outset of data collection, the largest

research questions were:

(a) What is the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers' thoughts, and do those thoughts translate into actions during their student teaching experience or plans for action in their own future classrooms? and

(b) What is the impact of hearing select stories in a formal setting with guided reflection versus the impact of hearing various stories in other settings?

The first question remained an area of focus throughout the research, as participants provided a wealth of information about the impact of stories on their thoughts, actions and plans. However, while collecting and categorizing data, it became clear that the second question was too pointed for this type of research. While that question focused on only one factor in a story's potential impact – namely the setting in which a story was told and the amount of reflection that setting required – pre-service participants wanted to share their thoughts on many potential factors. In retrospect, the need to broaden the questions should have been evident earlier – during the researcher review of the literature. This initial literature review did include information about other potential factors in impact such as narrator credibility (Akerson, 2004), the degree of skill in storytelling (Preskill, 2001) and the personal relevance of the story for an individual listener (Frykholm & Meyer, 1999, p. 151). These factors were even included on the potential pathway pre-service participants were asked to examine during stage D. However, the overarching questions did not reflect these factors – or allow for others - making it impossible to use those initial questions as (a) the only springboards for interview inquiries or (b) the only categories for organizing data.

As is usually the case in qualitative research, the data began driving the questions asked of pre-service teachers. As the pre-service teachers introduced new ideas - such as a listener's personal characteristics as factors in impact, to provide just one example – the initial questions  broadened to explore these ideas. The questions became:

(a) What stories do pre-service teachers hear, and do they remember them at any point after the telling?

(d) What is the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers' thoughts, actions during student teaching, and plans for action in their own future classrooms?

(e) What factors influence impact?

This shift was reflected in the chapter four presentation of study data. While it made sense to organize that chapter by participant, and by stage/interview within each participant (to allow readers to track each participant's views over time), it was impossible to organize the later (stage C and stage D) interviews without utilizing these three questions as data categories. Thus the results section was organized in the format presented in chapter four. A final section on "feedback" was added to the chapter on results for two reasons: (1) It became clear that the pre-service teachers had strong opinions about the value of stories and about how a pre-service program (that might include stories) should be structured. This begged the question of whether they had an opportunity to share this feedback with the storytellers and administrators in their program, potentially influencing program structure and story sharing and (2) It became clear that the impact of stories was a highly individualized phenomenon, suggesting the possibility that hearing feedback from each pre-service teacher could be key in evaluating whether storytelling was valuable for them. This inspired inquiry into whether they felt they could tell storytellers and administrators what worked for them and what did not.

While the initial (ultimately discarded) format of the results section also included a summary for each participant, it became clear as these summaries took shape that they included analysis. As Bogdan and Biklen (1982, p. 145) write, qualitative data analysis involves 'working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding

what you will tell others'." Each "summary" involves elements of this type of data analysis. As a result, the "summaries" were moved from the "results" chapter to this chapter on "analysis." Specifically, there is a section of chapter five entitled "Summary and Initial Analysis By Participant." Within that section, each participant's data are summarized, synthesized, and presented in the following format:

*Summary and Initial Analysis By Participant*
- *Re-introduction and Relevant Stories:*
- *Impact*
- *Are the following factors in impact?*
  - *Narrator characteristics*
    - Narrator credibility
    - Skilled storytelling
  - *Listener characteristics and experiences*
    - Personal traits
    - Stage of training
    - Reflection
  - *The story itself*
    - Type of story
    - Story with advice vs. advice

Note that there is some repetition within each participant's section, as the same story or reaction often informed several categories of data. Those individual participant summary sections are then followed by a separate section that utilizes the same headings to organize work entitled a "Summary and Initial analysis *Across* Participants." The purpose of that section is to provide an overview of the landscape of participant reactions, to note any patterns or inconsistencies in those reactions, and to examine those patterns or inconsistencies using the participants' own ideas. It is important to note the idea of landscapes here, as one limitation of this study is the generalizability of its results given its small number of pre-service participants. This section of "summary and initial analysis of data across participants" is intended to display a range of reactions to stories. No

149

participant's reactions are excluded, and while the reactions are examined in light of – and

used to challenge - one another, they are all valid and should be considered as potential areas

of inquiry for further study with a larger population of pre-service teachers.

Finally, after the pre-service participants' words have undergone initial analysis

individually (where their intrapersonal consistencies and inconsistencies are explored using

their own words) and as a group (an opportunity for interpersonal exploration as they "speak"

to each other), the patterns and inconsistencies are then evaluated in light of the literature.

This section, entitled "Further Analysis Using the Literature" is then followed by sections on

"Limitations and Potential Extensions of the Study" and "Conclusions and Implications for

Practice."

To summarize, chapter five is organized as follows:

**Analysis**

*Introduction and Explanation of Process*

*Summary and Initial Analysis By Participant*
<u>*Participant One: Adam*</u>
- *Re-introduction and Stories:*
- *Impact*
- *Are the Following Elements Factors in Impact?*
  - *(1) Narrator Characteristics*
    - Narrator Credibility
    - Skilled Storytelling
  - *(2) Listener Characteristics and Experiences*
    - Personal Traits
    - Stage of Training
    - Reflection
  - *(3) Story Characteristics*
    - Type of Story
    - Story with Advice vs. Advice

<u>*Participant Two: Nathan*</u>
<u>*Participant Three: Amy*</u>
<u>*Participant Four: Laura*</u>

*Summary and Initial Analysis Across Participants*
<u>*An Overview of Participant Reactions:*</u>
  - (1) Table VI: Overview of Impacts and Factors in Impacts
  - (2) Figure 3: Flowchart of Impacts, Pathways to Impacts, and Factors in Impacts
  - (3) Figure 4: Flowchart Key

<u>*Examining Patterns and Inconsistencies in Participant Reactions Using the Participants' Own Ideas:*</u>

*Further Analysis Using the Literature*
<u>*Analysis of Factors in Impact*</u>
<u>*Analysis of Pathways and Impacts*</u>
<u>*Analysis: The Flowchart Does Not Identify the Purpose/Goal of Sharing Stories*</u>

**Limitations and Potential Extensions of the Study**

---

**Summary and Initial Analysis By Participant**

*Participant One: Adam*

*Re-introduction and Relevant Stories:*

Recall that Adam is a white male in the 26-35 age range.  Throughout the study, he

frequently emphasized the importance of a listener's character and personality, so it is worth

151

re-iterating his self-description here. In his words, "I typically am not [susceptible to being influenced by someone's horror story]. I have a relatively discipline-oriented [upbringing]. I'm used to self-reliance, independence as it were, in making decisions."

The only story that Adam actually recalled during his pre-service education was a panelist's story that taught him that instead of cornering a student when disciplining them, a teacher should allow the student to "save face" (entitled "Saving Face" and included as appendix O).

*Impact:*

Over the course of the study, Adam maintained his view that his thoughts, actions, and plans for future actions in the classroom were - and would continue to be - shaped more by his own character and experience than by the stories he heard from experienced teachers. In addition to character and personal experience, he revealed a few other factors that were influential in shaping his thoughts and actions. These included "pressure to deliver the content" quickly and his own experiences as a pupil. He did acknowledge that experienced teachers, such as his mentor, might influence him "to a certain extent," but maintained that his thoughts about, and plans for, teaching were not altered by the stories he heard from the experienced teacher panel or other sources. Despite this, he mentioned during stage C and D that he thought stories that address "mistakes to avoid" did have some value. He felt that "disaster stories" could teach him "what not to do" and were more valuable that stories with "Hollywood endings."

Adam's month one prediction about how many stories he would hear from experienced teachers proved to be an overestimation. By month five, he had discovered that they "don't have time" to talk as much as had expected or would like. Also, despite his

152

prediction that he would remember the stories told by experienced teachers, his only consistent recall was of the "saving face" story that reinforced his existing beliefs about classroom management. As an example of a story forgotten, despite documented exposure to a panelist's story and advice about assisting an autistic student delivered during stage B (entitled "Autism Outburst" and included as Appendix G), a question about how he would help an autistic student in a future classroom triggered no memory of that narrative or of the advice it contained.

When asked to comment on the debate about whether or not stories can impact a pre-service teacher (see Figure 2), Adam revealed that he could "see both sides of the argument." He explained, stating that there was value (i.e. the second perspective could be true), but the amount of value was dependent on the type of story. Those stories that "explain[ed] real problems and scenarios that need to be avoided" were the most valuable.

*Figure 2: Question about Debate in the Literature*

> *There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*
>
> <u>*One perspective:*</u>
> *Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*
>
> <u>*Another perspective:*</u>
> *Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*
>
> *What do you think about those arguments? Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

Adam did not feel that the pathway postulated by this study (see Figure 1) was an accurate representation of what happens when pre-service teachers hear experienced teachers' stories.  More details on his response to that pathway are included in the section on 'reflection' below.

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
 (based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)

Listeners engage in reflection and learning

Listeners hear the story

Listeners plan and execute actions

Audience investment at each stage increased by

• skilled storytelling
• narrator credibility
• personal relevance
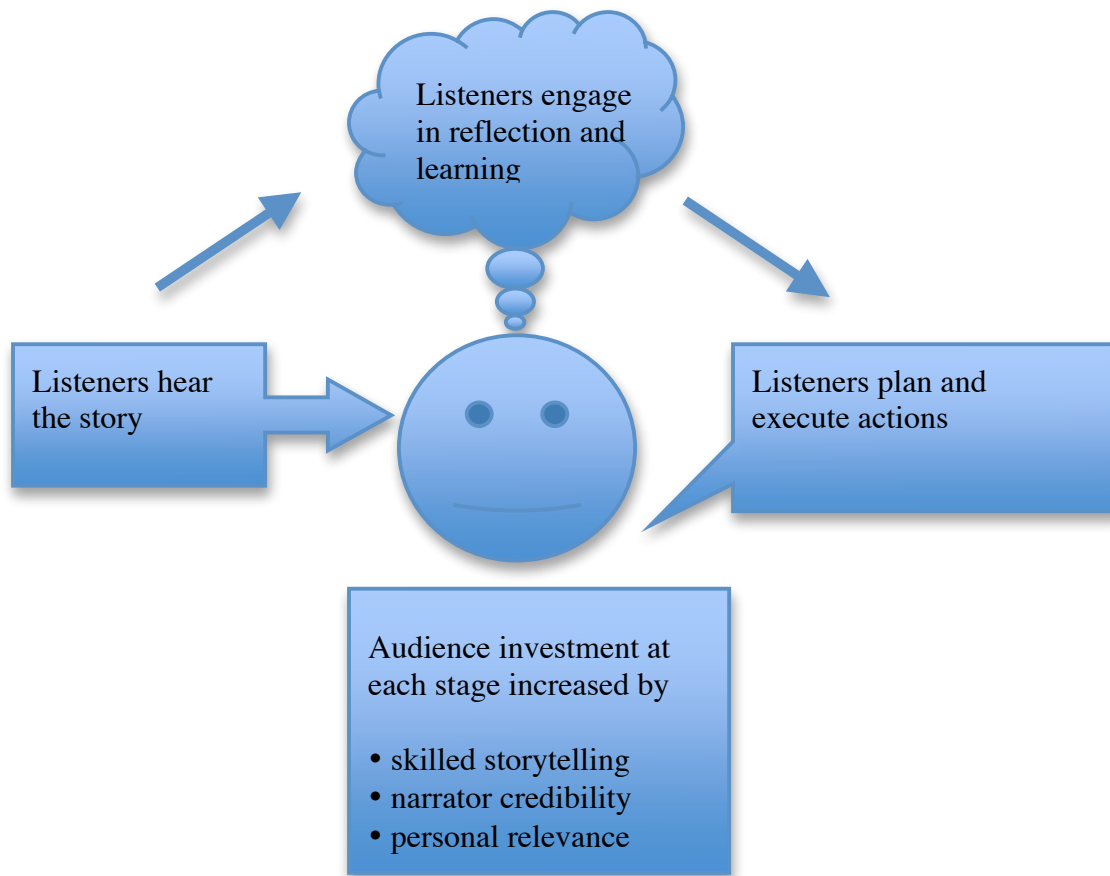
*Are the Following Elements Factors in Impact?*

*1) Narrator Characteristics*

<u>Narrator Credibility</u>:

Adam's perception of the type of teacher that could influence him shifted during the study.  During stage B, he felt that the type of population with which an experienced teacher

worked was "not necessarily" relevant to the amount he could learn from that individual.  By stage C, after conducting school observations for almost a semester, he stated that he would "tune in" more to someone who taught in a place, in a class, and had a style that aligned with his own plans and personality.  Adam reiterated this new perspective in stage D.

Skilled Storytelling:

During stage C, Adam did mention that his mentor, whose stories he best remembered, was "a gifted storyteller" and he agreed that skilled storytelling would increase the potential for impact.

*2) Listener Characteristics and Experiences*

Personal Traits:

Adam mentioned on a number of occasions that while "it may sound stubborn," the main reason the experienced teachers' stories did not change his thoughts and actions was simply because of who he is as a person.  He identified himself as self-reliant and independent when making decisions.  Adam did feel that others, who have different upbringings than his own, might be "more susceptible to being influenced" by an experienced teacher's story.

Stage of Teacher Education:

Adam believes that stories should be told during or after student teaching so that individuals can relate those stories to their own experience.  The amount of classroom

experience was the key factor, not the confidence gained or lost during student teaching. It was also important that the stories be "relevant to me at that time."

Reflection:

Adam stated that formal reflection "probably increases the focus a little bit," but found it "difficult to say" if the focus group reflection really made a difference in how he processed the story or what he thought about. According to Adam, his original responses to the panel and plans for the teaching remained "the same" after engaging in a group discussion about the experienced teachers' stories. Despite this, when Adam was asked to consider the pathway postulated by this study (revisit Figure 1), he expressed his view that it often fails because listeners do not engage in reflection on - and learning from – the stories, making it impossible to use that learning to plan and execute actions.

*3) The Story Itself*

Type of Story:

Adam suggested that the type of story is important in evaluating potential impact, revealing that stories that highlighted mistakes to avoid were more valuable than stories with "Hollywood endings." He also emphasized that stories should address topics that are relevant to the listener "at that time."

Story with Advice vs. Advice:

Adam revealed that sharing advice through a story "helps you realize it in your mind."

*Participant Two: Nathan*

*Re-introduction and Stories*

Recall that Nathan is a white, twenty-two year old male. He frequently emphasized the significance of listener personality throughout the study, and frequently insisted that he was "pretty confident in . . . my own beliefs . . . . I'm only 22 . . . but I'm not a kid . . . I know who I am at this point . . . [and] I'm confident that I can carry that into the classroom." Throughout the study, Nathan stated that he wanted to enjoy teaching. He connected with teachers and narrators who expressed enjoyment of their jobs and appreciated stories that maintained a positive tone, even when describing difficult situations. Finally, Nathan had one personal area of interest that he mentioned throughout the study – an interest in unions. As a pro-union individual from the northeast, where unions are more common, he struggled to understand life as a teacher in the right-to-work, non-union state that housed this MAT program.

Nathan recalled several stories during the study that are important for understanding his perspective and are referenced in this section. One of these stories was from a panelist who described a "provocative warm up" she used with her class. The complete version of that story is included as Appendix H. Nathan also recalled stories illustrating life in a non-union, right-to-work state. Stories on this topic were shared by Nathan during the interviews, and his descriptions are included in the previous results section. Finally, Nathan mentioned a story that admonished him to "never touch the students." Nathan only recalled the moral of this story. That recollection is included in the results section as well.

*Impact:*

When asked what had the most impact on his thoughts and actions during student teaching, and on his plans for future classrooms, Nathan responded that "his personality" was the most important factor. Stories also had some impact, but with two minor exceptions, the impact was that of inspiring reflection that ultimately re-affirmed Nathan's existing beliefs. The two minor exceptions inspired reflection that led to (a) a slight modification of his interactions with students and (b) a reconsideration of post-graduate plans. All of these impacts are reviewed below.

First, consider the stories that inspired Nathan to reflect, and ultimately affirm, his existing beliefs. Although at first glance, the idea of "affirmation" might suggest that the stories aligned well with Nathan's original thinking, further conversations revealed that Nathan actually disagreed with several of the lessons the experienced teachers were trying to convey with their stories. His beliefs were "affirmed" in the sense that the stories asked him to consider an alternate perspective, and after doing so, he was even more convinced of his original position.

Nathan offered several explanations for this. First, he acknowledged that he listened to the story and used his own filter to identify the correct moral or message, rather than relying on the narrator's conclusions. This meant that even a story that some might find oppositional could, in Nathan's mind, lead to a different, more affirming, result. The most pointed example of this was in his analysis of the panelists' story about a "provocative warm up" (see Appendix H). While recalling that the panelist had reflected on her experience and concluded, "I don't need to poke these kids," Nathan drew a different conclusion. "No! Poke them just as much and see what you get!"

Even when Nathan was inspired to rethink his position, he did not believe this meant his original opinion should be completely abandoned. As he revealed:

> I think you can still be free to try [your original plan] because you don't know if it might work, it might not . . . we're just kind of told, 'this is what works. Read these books. And this is the way everybody does it. Do this. You should do that. And kids think like this, and kids think like that, and do this and don't do that.' And I just think, 'you don't know. Not everyone is the same. Not every situation is the same, so just go for it'.

In spite of these assertions, recall that two stories did have a limited altering impact on Nathan's thoughts and actions. Although he dismissed one story's admonition to 'never touch the students' - insisting that it was both his style and appropriate to reciprocate a student's high-five or sideways, limited contact hug - he acknowledged that stories had inspired him to make a special effort to re-open a door closed by a female student who had come in alone after school to take a quiz. Another example of impact was found in the way his exposure to stories of life in a right-to-work, non-union state had led to confusion about whether or not a job in this area would be the right fit for him. Although his stage A intention (expressed on the initial participation survey) was to apply for teaching jobs in the state, by stage D he felt that he would "probably apply," but it was certainly "not my top choice."

When asked to comment on the debate about whether or not stories can impact pre-service teachers, Nathan reviewed the two perspectives (see Figure 2) and stated that "it's hard to choose a side." After lengthy consideration of several factors he believed would push him toward one perspective or the other, it became apparent that Nathan believed if that if a story was applicable to him, and the narrator was credible, the second perspective (i.e. stories are important for pre-service teachers) would be true. He believed that story would "make you imagine yourself in the situation." Still, as Nathan demonstrated throughout the study,

159

the belief that stories are important for pre-service teachers does not mean they will have an altering impact.

*Figure 2: Question about debate in the literature*

*There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*

*One perspective:*
*Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*

*Another perspective:*
 *Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*

*What do you think about those arguments?  Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

Finally, Nathan felt that the pathway postulated by this study (see Figure 1) was an accurate representation of what happens when pre-service teachers are impacted by experienced teachers stories.  However, he felt that the process often breaks down when potential listeners only engaged or reflected for a short amount of time or were "pompous" enough to  "writ[e] off an experienced person's – you know - advice, for your own kind of ideals."

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
(based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)



*Are the Following Elements Factors in Impact?*

*1) Narrator Characteristics*

<u>Narrator Credibility</u>:

Nathan felt that a narrator needed to have some teaching experience to be credible, but the number of years did not make a difference since "no matter what, it's more than I have." The type of school in which the narrator gained that experience was not a factor, but it was important that the teaching was at the relevant school level (e.g. secondary as opposed

to elementary experience).  According to Nathan, a narrator loses credibility when they are "pompous," tell too many stories, or convey the idea that pre-service teachers are being preached to because "you know nothing."  He felt particular connections to teachers who were "positive people."  He expressed appreciation for a narrator that had a

> good general attitude and [a] kind of 'joy' in things.  You could tell he was having a blast.  Even when he told the story that was kind of a 'oh, what was I thinking' or 'this moment was kind of a horrible moment', you could tell he still enjoyed it.  So I really was attracted to that.  And that was something with teaching that attracts me in general.

Skilled storytelling:

Nathan felt that skill as a storyteller enhanced credibility "on some level, but it's not vital that you be a master storyteller."


*2) Listener Characteristics and Experiences*

Personal Traits:

Nathan described himself as being "pretty confident in my own personality and my own beliefs"  He revealed that his "attitude" and "present[ation]" has served him well in life and would guide his future steps in "the classroom as well."  While he "appreciate[s] the advice" and stories from experienced teachers and acknowledges that disregarding it "someday might come back to completely bite me," he is – for the most part - planning to rely on his own instincts in the classroom.

Nathan expressed one other personal tendency worth noting – the tendency to intentionally avoid or forget certain stories.  Years before he entered the pre-service program, Nathan was warned by experienced teachers to avoid the teachers' lounge and the stories told there because "things [get] wound up," and it can lead to inappropriately negative opinions of

162

people portrayed in the stories. Although Nathan's observance of this advice is an example of experienced teachers having an impact on his thoughts and actions, the ultimate effect of that impact has been to (1) promote avoidance of an area where he might hear additional advice or stories and (2) encourage the intentional forgetting of certain story details.

Stage of Teacher Education:

Nathan believes that stories should be told shortly before student teaching. This perspective stemmed from his belief that as teachers gained experience and confidence, they would be less likely to listen to stories and advice. He also believed stories would be best received if they were told in response to a student inquiry, as opposed to an instructor-scripted "storytime."

Reflection:

Nathan demonstrated a belief in the power of reflection early in the study. In stage B, he revealed that he focused on the story (rather than just the moral) and used his own filtering process to identify the correct moral (rather than relying on the narrator's conclusions).

Nathan felt that although this type of informal reflection occurs naturally when a story is "exciting" or "moving," formal reflection is more valuable because it moves listeners from "emotional" to more "analytical…objectiv[e]" reactions. The formal reflection causes listeners to think and provides an opportunity to explore that initial emotional response, asking ''Well, what is it about it that didn't resonate with me or did?"

Nathan also emphasized the importance of reflection while evaluating the proposed pathway (revisit Figure 1). He felt that the pathway would be rendered ineffective if listeners engaged and reflected too briefly before moving into planning and action.

*3) The Story Itself*

Type of Story:

Nathan believed that the story itself had to be "applicable" to the listener in order to have an impact. He defined applicable as "something I think I'm going to come across" and revealed that he would be more likely to "pay attention" and "store" a story that was applicable to him. Nathan believed that applicable stories inspired pre-service teachers with a way to "look in the future and think, well, if I come across this situation, realistically how do I think I would handle it, and is that right, and if not, what can I do to change it?"

As noted previously, Nathan also appreciated stories that conveyed the narrator's enjoyment of the teaching profession. He emphasized that even "stories of kids not cooperating, kids not doing homework, kids fighting, kids doing whatever" can be "wrap[ped] up by [saying], "It's going to be great. You're going to enjoy it. This is a one in a million thing, but it happened."

Story with Advice vs. Advice:

As mentioned in the section on reflection, Nathan wanted to hear the story itself, rather than simply the moral. This allowed him to process the details and kept open the possibility that he would draw a different conclusion than the narrator. Nathan also believed that hearing the story was valuable because it increased the likelihood that a listener would remember the moral and attach a real "weight" to it. Finally, Nathan believed that that if

advice was provided only through a statement of the moral, the "immediate reaction would be, why?  And so the story provides you that answer before you get to that question . . . it answers the 'why?' question before you even think of it."

### *Participant Three: Amy*

*Re-introduction and Stories:*

Recall that Amy is a white female in the 36-45 age range.  On many occasions, Amy emphasized her goal of becoming a teacher in an inner-city school.  Throughout her teacher education, Amy experienced increasing frustration over two issues related to this interest: (1) the disparity in resources between the urban school where she was student teaching and the more suburban schools where many of her classmates trained, and (2) what she saw as the MAT program's lack of attention toward detailing these disparities for her classmates and toward helping her (Amy) with practical advice for facing the unique challenges of working in an urban school.

Amy recalled several stories during the study that are important for understanding her perspective and are referenced in this section.  One of these stories was the story of allowing a student to "save face" during discipline.  The complete version of that story is included as "Saving Face" in Appendix O.  Amy also commented on a story shared during one interview.  That story described a teacher who altered her tardy policy.  The complete version of that story in included as Appendix T, question 16.  Finally, Amy referenced several stories during the interviews, but could not recall the details of those stories.  The references in this section include a story of an inner-city teacher who could not "get hired by other schools" and stories

from a colleague who had taught in inner-city schools. Amy's brief recollections of these stories were detailed in the previous results chapter.

*Impact:*

When asked what had the most impact on her thoughts and actions during student teaching, and on her plans for future classrooms, Amy responded that her mentor teacher was most influential. This mentor teacher had shared "a little – like bits and pieces – but no big stories." Amy was also highly influenced by her students, revealing that through trial-and-error she was slowly determining what worked for them.

Experienced teachers' stories did have some impact on Amy. However, instead of influencing her thoughts and actions directly, the stories impacted Amy by shaping her perception of the narrators and inspiring her to learn more from those individuals. A doctoral student who had experience as a teacher in inner-city school and taught Amy's summer school class provided one example of this. Although Amy could not recall the specific stories he shared, she remembered being impressed by those stories and thought of him as she worked to figure out who she would become as a teacher. These thoughts became action when she tried to contact him, in hopes that he would observe and advise her as she learned to teach. Amy had a similar reaction to a panelist who worked in an inner-city school. That panelist, whose story Amy could not recall even when reminded of the topic, made enough of an impression that Amy contacted him after the presentation and arranged to spend a day observing in his classroom. The final example of impact actually came from a MAT classmate who had experience as an inner-city teacher and shared her stories with Amy. Again, Amy focused on the narrator rather than the stories. Amy simply appreciated

knowing that such narrators existed, since it made me "feel better because I know . . . I'm not the only person in that boat."

Only two experienced teachers' stories impacted Amy's thoughts and actions directly. When she heard about teachers at an inner-city school who could not "get hired by other schools because they're looked down upon" (see details in "results" section), she tried to educate her classmates about the disparity in the schools at which they were teaching, spoke with one of her professors about her frustrations, and had made an appointment to speak with the MAT coordinator (pending as of the final interview date). When she heard the story of a teacher who altered her tardy policy (see Appendix T, question 16), she was reminded of a technique she had seen before and would like to try. It is worth noting that both of these stories inspired her to act or plan to act on pre-existing beliefs, rather than altering her perspectives. Other stories had an impact on Amy, but they were not told by experienced teachers and are thus beyond the scope of this summary. Some details about those stories and their impact were included in the previous "results" section.

Given the impact of stories on Amy, particularly with respect to the connections they forged with the narrators, it is not surprising that she agreed with the following statement from the "Question about Debate in the Literature":

> Stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms, add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content.

For Amy, this statement was the "obvious" choice over the first perspective (see Figure 2).

*Figure 2: Question about Debate in the Literature*

> *There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*
>
> *<u>One perspective:</u>*
> *Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*
>
> *<u>Another perspective:</u>*
> *Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*
>
> *What do you think about those arguments? Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

Amy did feel that feel that the postulated pathway (see Figure 1) was an accurate representation of what happens when pre-service teachers hear experienced teachers' stories.

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
 (based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion,
2005)



*Are the Following Elements Factors in Impact?*

*1) Narrator Characteristics*

Narrator Credibility:  Amy believed that narrator credibility was an important factor in

determining the potential impact of a story.  For her, factors in narrator credibility included

teaching experience, the timing of that experience (ten years before was too long), the type of

school (appropriate for listener, which meant inner-city for Amy), the type of class (advanced

vs. standard), grade level (noting a difference even within high school grades when comparing grades nine and ten to grades eleven and twelve), and attitude (important to avoid narrators who are arrogant, out of touch, or make you feel they have "all the right answers and this is the way to do it").

While Amy considered most of these significant factors throughout the study, teaching experience in a particular type of school gained increasing importance as she progressed through the MAT program. She did not mention school type as a factor during stage A. During stage B, she acknowledged that a narrator's experience in a different type of school created some doubt about applicability, stating that his during his story of disciplining while allowing a student to "saving face" (see Appendix O),

> I was thinking, 'could that [technique the teacher used in his suburban school] work in a classroom [at my urban school]?' I thought, 'Nooo - I'm not certain it would work quite as well, but it might'.

By stage C, she revealed that she would "have to really think twice about" applying a strategy from a suburban teacher in her inner-city setting. Finally, by stage D, she had become convinced that "any stories I heard [from suburban teachers] are pretty much irrelevant to this – the setting I am now in," and stated that if she had a suburban teacher "trying to tell me how to get kids to behave, I would be like, 'have you ever taught in an inner city? You know, I would be like – I would probably shut them out immediately." She did later retreat slightly from this position, stating that she "wouldn't totally tune somebody out at a [suburban]-type school," but would be frustrated by the "this is the way to do it" attitude that she saw coming from a population of teachers that, according to Amy, did not understand her setting or her students.

By stage D, Amy had also shut out many of her university professors, expressing her view that:

> The majority of our teachers – the doctors at the universities – have never taught themselves. We have doctors of psychology, etc. teaching us these theories, but they've never taught. One – they've never taught before, or if they have taught it was so long ago, or they've never taught in an inner-city school setting, so there are so many factors that go in, and you're like – these are the totally wrong people to be teaching. The theory is all well and good, but unfortunately if it doesn't apply and it's not practical, then – you know – it doesn't work.

This perspective led Amy to conclude "that pretty much most of what comes out of the university – I can take it in one ear and throw it out the other ear."

Skilled Storytelling:

Even within the same interview, Amy waffled on the question of whether skilled storytelling was a factor in impact. During the stage D interview, she revealed that "when you're talking about experiences – real, real life experiences – no, I don't think it makes a difference." However, she later stated that her investment in a story could be

> increased by skilled storytelling? I'm sure – without even recognizing it, I'm sure. You've got somebody who's a great storyteller – you're just kind of drawn in. So I'm sure that probably has an effect on [investment].

The apparent inconsistency in these statements can be reconciled by recalling Amy's insistence that practical, experience-based, advice was more valuable than educational theory. This suggests that perhaps skilled storytelling does not make a difference in investment "when you're talking about . . . real, real life experiences" because she would already be invested in those stories. In any other situation, skilled storytelling could draw in even an otherwise uninvested party. Finally, it is worth noting that Amy agreed that listener investment was a factor in impact.

171

*2) Listener Characteristics and Experiences*

Personal Traits:

Amy revealed that if she were tired or distracted, a story would be less likely to have an impact on her. However, it is important to note that stories that addressed her fatigue – stories that made her feel less alone as she confronted the challenges of working in an inner-city school – had a greater impact because they addressed her present personal experiences. Amy was feeling overwhelmed, frustrated, and abandoned by a university she saw as "disconnect[ed]" from her urban student teaching experience. Stories that introduced her to other inner-city teachers, especially stories that showed how others had survived classroom mistakes, had a significant emotional impact when they made Amy feel that "I'm not the only person in that boat." This was true in spite of the fact that Amy recalled only that such stories had been told, without recalling the story details.

Stage of Teacher Education:

The stage of teacher education was not a factor in impact for Amy. She believed stories were valuable before and during student teaching. She specifically stated that she valued stories whether they were told in context (e.g. when a teacher knows that a listener is thinking about a topic and can respond with a story) and out of context (e.g. when the story is about something the listener has not been thinking about), unless the story was about a topic she was not concerned with at all.

Reflection:

Amy did not believe that structured reflection was a significant factor in determining a story's impact. Her responses to the panel stories were unchanged by structured reflection.

172

Amy believed this could be because she was someone who would reflect independently whether there was a structured session or not.

*3) The Story Itself*

Type of Story:

Amy believed that stories containing practical advice were the most likely to make an impact on pre-service teachers.   In general, Amy felt her pre-service program should rebalance its interests – devoting more time to practical issues and less to educational theory. She revealed that "the emphasis should be on making us good, practical teachers, and sometimes all the theory in the world is just not going to do that, and I think stories are a whole lot more practical and realistic."

Story with Advice vs. Advice:

Amy also stated that full stories were more memorable than advice given without a narrative context.

***Participant Four: Laura***

*Re-introduction and Relevant Stories:*

Laura is a white female who is under the age of 25.  Over the course of the study, Laura began to make a distinction between herself as someone who was "receptive to new ideas" and other potential listeners who might be more "stubborn."

Laura recalled several stories during the study that are important for understanding her perspective and are referenced in this section.  Two of these stories were from panelists:

the story of "Assumptions and Assignments" (in Appendix J) and the story of "Attending Extracurriculars" (included as the latter part of another narrative in appendix M). Laura also recalled two "stories" (one is more of a brief description) about inner-city schools. Laura's brief recollections of these stories are detailed in the results section.

*Impact:*

When asked what had the most impact on her thoughts and actions during student teaching, and on her plans for future classrooms, Laura revealed that student behavior would be the largest factor, since "classroom management is a problem."

Experienced teachers' stories also had an impact on Laura. Several stories had a direct impact on her thoughts and actions. The clearest examples include:

(1) a panelist's story that described assumptions that panelist made about her students and how these assumptions led to inappropriately difficult assignments. This story led Laura to action as a student teacher and plans for action as a lead teacher. Specifically, they led Laura to ask more veteran teachers about academic levels and the appropriateness of assignments while she was student teaching, and led her to anticipate asking these questions in future teaching roles.

(2) a panelists' story that encouraged Laura to attend her students' extracurricular events. Specifically, this story led Laura to attend a struggling student's band concert.

(3) two stories/descriptions from former and current student teachers about inner city schools, both which affirmed Laura's belief that she should teach in a suburban environment and led her to seek suburban teaching positions.

174

Throughout the study, when speaking only about herself, Laura's words affirmed this

evidence of direct impact.  She emphasized that she was "not stubborn," was "receptive to

new ideas" and stated that she did "not know much about teaching, so I'm going to absorb

what other people tell me to do.  They know better."  She summarized her personal reaction

to stories by stating that:

> If you hear a story by an experienced teacher, you're going to learn, 'ok
> this will work in the classroom' or 'this will not'.  I'm not going to do what
> will not work, so hearing stories really does shape my way or how I'm going
> to approach teaching.

Her final affirmation of a story's impact on her came when she reviewed the proposed

pathway (see Figure 1).  When asked if the pathway "accurately works for you" she

responded:

> Yeah.  This [pathway] is correct.  When I hear a story, I try to incorporate
> aspects of the story into my lesson, so if I heard a teacher say, 'you should not
> assign essays until you know the level of your students', I'd be like, 'ok – I
> need to find out the level of my students before I assign – like, give an essay'.
> So I guess I do learn from the stories.

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
 (based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)
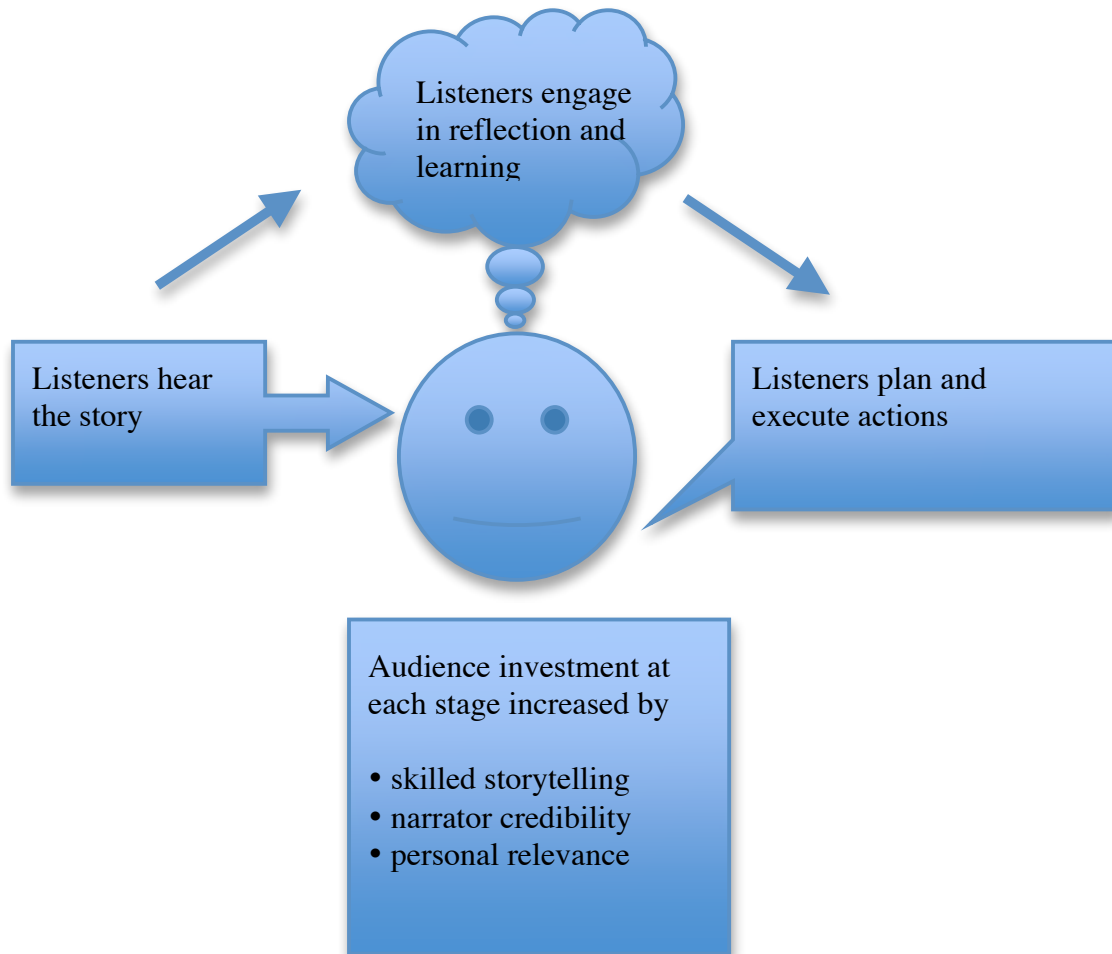


This evidence and these expressions of the *personal*, direct impact of stories notwithstanding, Laura consistently spoke of the factors that altered (but not necessarily lessened) the impact of stories for *others*, e.g. 'the listeners'.  Although she struggled to describe this, Laura's thoughts circled around the idea of a delayed impact for many pre-service teachers, particularly those who were "stubborn."  The stage D interview testifies to the emergence of this idea as follows:  (1) Laura's agreement with the first perspective in the debate on sharing stories with pre-service teachers (e.g. their lack of experience limits

impact) seemingly contradicted her view that experienced teachers should still share their stories with pre-service teachers *before* the student teaching experience occurred. (2) This apparent contradiction was reconciled by Laura's allusion to a delayed impact of stories for many pre-service teachers. Specifically, she shared a brief, imagined example of someone who heard a story before student teaching, still made a mistake in the classroom, then used recall of the story to revisit the moral, learn that moral, and change something in the classroom. In her words, "Tell them before. Yeah. Beforehand. Because then, if you remember one of the stories, you could be like, 'oh! Mr. So-and-so told me about that. Maybe I can change my lesson accordingly or maybe I can learn what he taught' ." (3) This idea of delayed impact also came through in Laura's explanation of the accuracy of the proposed pathway for 'the listener'. At that point in the interview, she made a distinction between the degree of accuracy for her (e.g. the pathway as "correct") and for that 'listener' (e.g. the pathway was too "idealistic," particularly if that listener was "stubborn"). According to Laura, "the stubborn person will go into the classroom, do something horrible, then remember what the story was and be like, 'darn – I should have listened to so-and-so's story'." For that person, the pathway broke down at the second arrow of figure one; the listener could reflect and learn, but those activities would not translate into actions or plans to act.

Thus, over the course of the study, Laura made a distinction between how stories impacted her as someone who was "not stubborn," was "receptive to new ideas," and believed that experienced teachers "know better," and how stories impacted other 'listeners' who were "stubborn." The proposed pathway was "correct" for her. However, it was too "idealistic" to describe "stubborn" listeners, who needed classroom experience to either (a)

177

create doubt in their own methods or (b) affirm the methods detailed in the story, before they could experience a story's impact.

This still leaves the question of why stubborn listeners might need to hear stories before student teaching instead of at the moment of their experience. Laura addressed this in an emotional statement that student teaching could bring someone's confidence "way down," making it harder to listen to stories at that time.

Finally, it is important to note that although Laura mentioned being a person who was "not stubborn" on three separate occasions during the research, on one occasion, she did state, "I'm kind of – I am stubborn, but not stubborn enough not to listen to people." She also stated that sometimes, even when she listened, she did not learn everything from a story that a situation might require her to know.

*Are the Following Elements Factors in Impact?*

*1) Narrator Characteristics*

Narrator Credibility:

Laura introduced the idea of narrator credibility during her first interview, when she revealed that although she believed the stories she had heard from teachers were "pretty true to life . . . you never know if the stories people tell are completely true or if they're exaggerating." She suggested that one way to determine a story's validity was to gain experience in schools - "see[ing] the kids that are part of these stories instead of just hearing about them."

Laura also mentioned specific factors that enhanced narrator credibility, including years of experience, type of school, grade level experience and a direct connection to the

listener.  This direct connection could take a variety of forms. During this study, Laura connected to one narrator for two reasons: (1) a MAT colleague gave the narrator a personal recommendation and (2) the narrator worked in the same building where Laura completed her student teaching.   Finally, anyone Laura identified as a "bad teacher" lost credibility.

Skilled Storytelling:

According to Laura, skilled storytelling increased the likelihood that a narrator's story would have an impact.

*2) Listener Characteristics and Experiences*

Personal Traits:

As mentioned in the section entitled 'Impact', Laura made a distinction between how stories impacted her as someone who was "not stubborn," was "receptive to new ideas," and believed that experienced teachers "know better," and how stories impacted other 'listeners' who were "stubborn."  The proposed pathway was "correct" for her.  However, it was too simplistic to describe "stubborn" listeners, who needed classroom experience either to create doubt in their own methods or to affirm the methods detailed in the story, before they could experience a story's impact.

Laura also addressed the significance of a listener's classroom confidence, stating that when her confidence was low, she became "wrapped up" in student teaching and was less likely to listen to an experienced teacher's story.

<u>Stage of Teacher Education:</u>

As noted in the section entitled "Impact," Laura recommended telling pre-service teachers stories "before" they began student teaching. This allowed pre-service teachers to see "what's out there – what could happen." It also allowed them to hear the stories before they risked becoming "too wrapped up in student teaching" to listen. Finally, hearing the stories before student teaching gave pre-service teachers to have a classroom experience that would trigger recall of a story, re-evaluation of the applicability of that story, and a potential change in thoughts or actions.

<u>Reflection</u>:

Laura expressed her belief that while formal reflection makes you think at a deeper level, it does not ultimately, necessarily increase a listener's depth of insight or ability to remember the narrative.

*3) The story itself*

<u>Type of Story</u>:

Laura did not mention the type of story as being important in evaluating potential impact.

<u>Story with Advice vs. Advice</u>:

Laura did suggest that a full story was more valuable than straight advice because it "gives you the context of the situation."

**Summary and Initial Analysis Across Participants**

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the landscape of participant reactions, to note any patterns or inconsistencies in those reactions, and to examine those patterns or inconsistencies using the participants' own ideas. Again, as stated previously, it is important to note the idea of landscapes here, as one limitation of this study is the generalizability of its results given its small number of pre-service participants. This section of 'summary and initial analysis of data across participants' is intended to display a range of reactions to stories. No participant's reactions are excluded, and while the reactions are examined in light of – and used to challenge - one another, they are all valid and should be considered as potential areas of inquiry for further study with a larger population of pre-service teachers.

*An Overview of Participant Reactions*

This subsection consists of two parts: (1) Table 6: an overview of the impact and factors in impact as perceived by pre-service teachers, organized as a chart by category instead of person, and (2) Figure 3: a flowchart designed to how these elements related to one another during this study. Subsequent sections describe and analyze the patterns and inconsistencies in these lists and the placement, alteration, or exclusion of items on the flowchart.

*Table 6: Overview of Impact and Factors in Impact*

| Categories[11] | Landscape of elements in these categories (representing the range, rather than the frequency or intensity, of participant responses) |
|---|---|
| *Re-introduction of participant and relevant stories* | All participants were white and within the 22-45 age range. Two were male; two were female. The stories referenced most often included the following stories from the experienced teacher panel: "Saving Face," "Assumptions & Assignments," "Attending Extracurriculars" and "Provocative Warm Up." These are included as Appendix O, J, the latter part of M, and H, respectively. Other stories (some of which were more like descriptions or were only detailed by providing morals) include those heard by individual participants in other contexts, and include stories about inner-city schools, urban teachers not being hired, never touching students, and unions. All of these are referenced in the results section. |
| *Impact – overall reaction* | (1) No impact<br>(2) Impact is . . .<br>- increased narrator influence<br>- reinforcement (of original beliefs and pre-existing plans/actions)<br>- encouragement (to begin acting on original beliefs)<br>- challenge (and alteration of original beliefs) and change (in actions)<br>- challenge (of original beliefs) and partial change (in actions)<br>- challenge (of original beliefs), but no change (in actions) |
| *Factors in Impact: Narrator characteristics - credibility* | Factors mentioned as altering narrator credibility include the narrator's:<br>- experience (sometimes specific to number of years, timing, type of school, type of class, what grade level)<br>- personality<br>- teaching style<br>- attitude (positive, arrogant, pompous, judgmental)<br>- tone<br>- connection to listener (personal recommendation, work in same building)<br>- gender<br>- whether they are perceived as a "bad teacher" |
| *Factors in Impact: Narrator characteristics - skilled storytelling* | All pre-service participants felt skilled storytelling could increase listener investment, but not everyone felt it was "vital" |
| *Factors in Impact: Listener characteristics & experiences - Personal traits* | Listener characteristics that were mentioned as altering the impact of stories included the degree to which a listener was: stubborn, self-reliant, independent, susceptible to influence, confident in his or her own personality and beliefs, determined to avoid or forget certain stories, tired, distracted, receptive to new ideas, wrapped up in other things, or confident as a teacher |
| *Factors in Impact: Listener characteristics & experiences - Stage of teacher education* | Participant opinions varied – reinforcing and contradicting one another - enough that these data have been summarized in a separate chart. That chart is included as *"Table 8: Perspectives on Debate (about the importance of stories for pre-service teachers), Stage of Teacher Education, and Confidence"* |

---

[11] Please note that categories in the left-hand column are the same categories used in the description of individual participant's perspectives.

| Factors in Impact: Listener characteristics & experiences - reflection | All listeners felt reflection was an important factor in impact. Some participants felt formal reflection was more valuable than informal, since it increased focus and allowed for more analytical evaluation of stories. Others did not feel the type of reflection was significant, as long as reflection occurred. |
|---|---|
| Factors in Impact: The story itself – type of story | Most stories perceived as "valuable" were cited as stories that: detailed mistakes and scenarios to avoid, explained real problems, shared real life experiences, helped one imagine oneself in a situation, were relevant and applicable, conveyed narrator enjoyment, or detailed practical advice<br><br>Stories perceived as least valuable were those with "Hollywood endings."<br><br>One participant did not mention the type of story as being a significant factor in impact. |
| Factors in Impact: The story itself - story with advice vs. advice | The story helped with realizations about advice, explained 'why' advice was important, put advice in context and helped listeners remember the advice. |

(2) Figure 3: Flowchart of Impacts, Pathways to Impacts, and Factors in Impact & Figure 4-Flowchart Key

Potential pathways moving pre-service teachers from hearing a story to experiencing an impact are detailed in a new flowchart. This chart highlights both the range of ways in which the pre-service teachers in this study were impacted by experienced teachers' stories and the factors that influenced that impact. However, before examining that new understanding of potential pathways, recall the pathway proposed at the outset of this study.

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
 (based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)
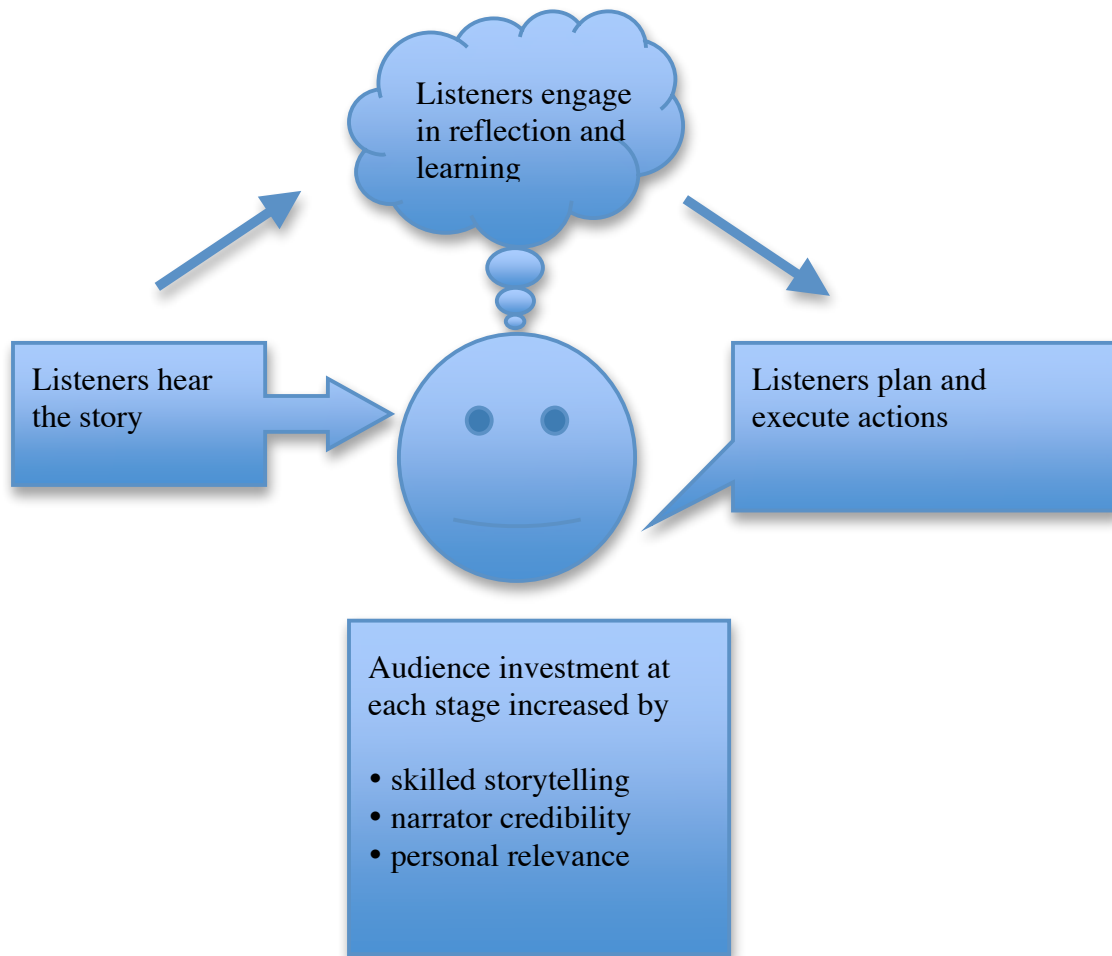


When pre-service participants were asked to comment on the accuracy of this proposed

pathway at the end of the study, their responses varied.  Some felt it was an "accurate"

representation or reality, while others felt it was much "too idealistic."  Most felt that when

the pathway failed to result in impact, it was due to inadequate reflection or the nature of a

"stubborn" listener.  Their responses are summarized in Table 7.

184

*Table 7: Pre-service participant responses to original, proposed pathway*

|  | **General comments on pathway** | **Where the pathway can break down** |
|---|---|---|
| Adam | The proposed pathway is too idealistic/not realistic | <u>Breaks down without adequate reflection</u>: The pathway can break down at either arrow: (1) because listeners do not reflect (2) or because that reflection does not have an impact. The pathway can also break down if listeners skip reflection, moving directly from hearing a story to thoughtless action. |
| Nathan | can work this way sometimes, but often does not | <u>Breaks down without adequate reflection or due to listener characteristics</u>: The pathway would be rendered ineffective if listeners (1) engaged and reflected too briefly before moving into planning and action or (2) were "pompous" enough to "writ[e] off an experienced person's – you know - advice, for your own kind of ideals." |
| Amy | accurate | |
| Laura | accurate for her, but too idealistic for "stubborn" listeners, who need classroom experience to either (a) create doubt in their own methods or (b) affirm the methods detailed in the story before they can experience a story's impact. | <u>Breaks down due to listener characteristics</u>: For "stubborn" listeners, the pathway was delayed at the second arrow. The listener could reflect and learn, but those activities would not translate into actions or plans to act until a classroom experience triggered recall of a story, re-evaluation of the applicability of that story, and a potential change in thoughts or actions |

These responses revealed that reflection played a central role in any pathway to impact and emphasized listener characteristics as a factor influencing impact. The flowchart that depicts the new understanding of potential pathways reflects these direct responses.

The flowchart also includes reactions gleaned from nine months of conversation with these pre-service teachers. Over the course of the study, before ever reviewing the proposed pathway, pre-service teachers offered indirect insight into how it should be adjusted. Their reactions to stories provided detail about different types of impact; their descriptions of the mental processes involved in these reactions provided insight into the pathways to impact;

and their perception of influential factors gave information about how pre-service teachers might move along those paths.

As a result of these direct and indirect commentaries on the proposed pathway, the presentation of that pathway was altered and more impacts, pathways to impact and factors in impact were included. The result is the flowchart and flowchart key depicted in Figure 3. Both follow and are most easily viewed in conjunction with the next section of text.

*The following information and examples may help with an understanding of the chart:*

The chart and corresponding key details the range of ways in which the pre-service teachers in this study were impacted – or not - by experienced teachers' stories. There are several potential pathways the pre-service teachers traveled along once they heard an experienced teacher's story. Each pathway is represented by a sequence of blocks and represents a different type of impact. Eight pathways are identified by color. At the end of the pathway, there is a cloud bubble that identifies which story moved a particular teacher along that path. It is clear from the chart that the same story could move two teachers along different paths.

While reviewing the chart, also note that each arrow is labeled by letter. These letters represent factors that increase the likelihood a pre-service participant will move along that path. This explains how the same story could move two teachers along different paths. Simply put, different factors played into their experience of the story. As an example, consider how the story of "saving face" (see Appendix O) moved Adam down the green path, resulting in the following impact: "reinforcement." The same story moved Amy down a path that resulted in "no impact."

Tracing Adam's steps:
- The narrator tells the story of allowing a student to "save face" (Appendix O)
- Adam (influenced to travel along arrows C and I by factors that include listener characteristics and the type of story – he appreciates stories that explain "real scenarios") becomes focused on the story
- Moving along arrow M, Adam reflects.  During this reflection, he travels along arrow F to think about the narrator.
- This narrator is a teacher whose narrator characteristics (experience, school type, grade level, teaching style, and direct connection as a mentor) appeal to Adam.  These factors move him along arrow G, reinforcing his willingness to continue his focus and (moving along arrow M) his reflection on the story.  As that reflection continues . . .
- Moving along arrow N, Adam determines the moral of the story affirms his existing beliefs
- Moving along arrow O, Adam accepts the moral
- Moving along arrow P, Adam's beliefs are affirmed
- Moving along arrow Q, Adam continues in his plans to acts on those beliefs once in the classroom, stating that "the way I would describe it is that it reinforces what I think I already – what I am capable of doing.  I think I would do something like that as well…It was my style."


Tracing Amy's steps:
- The narrator tells the story of allowing a student to "save face" (Appendix O)
- Amy (influenced to travel along arrow C and I by factors that include the type of story – she appreciates stories that explain "real life experiences" and practical advice) becomes focused on the story
- Moving along arrow M, Amy reflects.  During this reflection, she travels along arrow F to think about the narrator.
- This narrator is a teacher whose narrator characteristics (specifically, his type of school) do not appeal to Amy.  Specifically, Amy once stated that "any stories I heard [from suburban teachers] are pretty much irrelevant to this – the setting I am now in," and stated that if she had a suburban teacher "trying to tell me how to get kids to behave, I would be like, 'have you ever taught in an inner city?'  You know, I would be like – I would probably shut them out immediately."  Amy (influenced to travel along arrow H by her perception of the narrator's lack of relevant teaching experience) moves to . . .
- No attention given, and then along arrow L to
- No impact

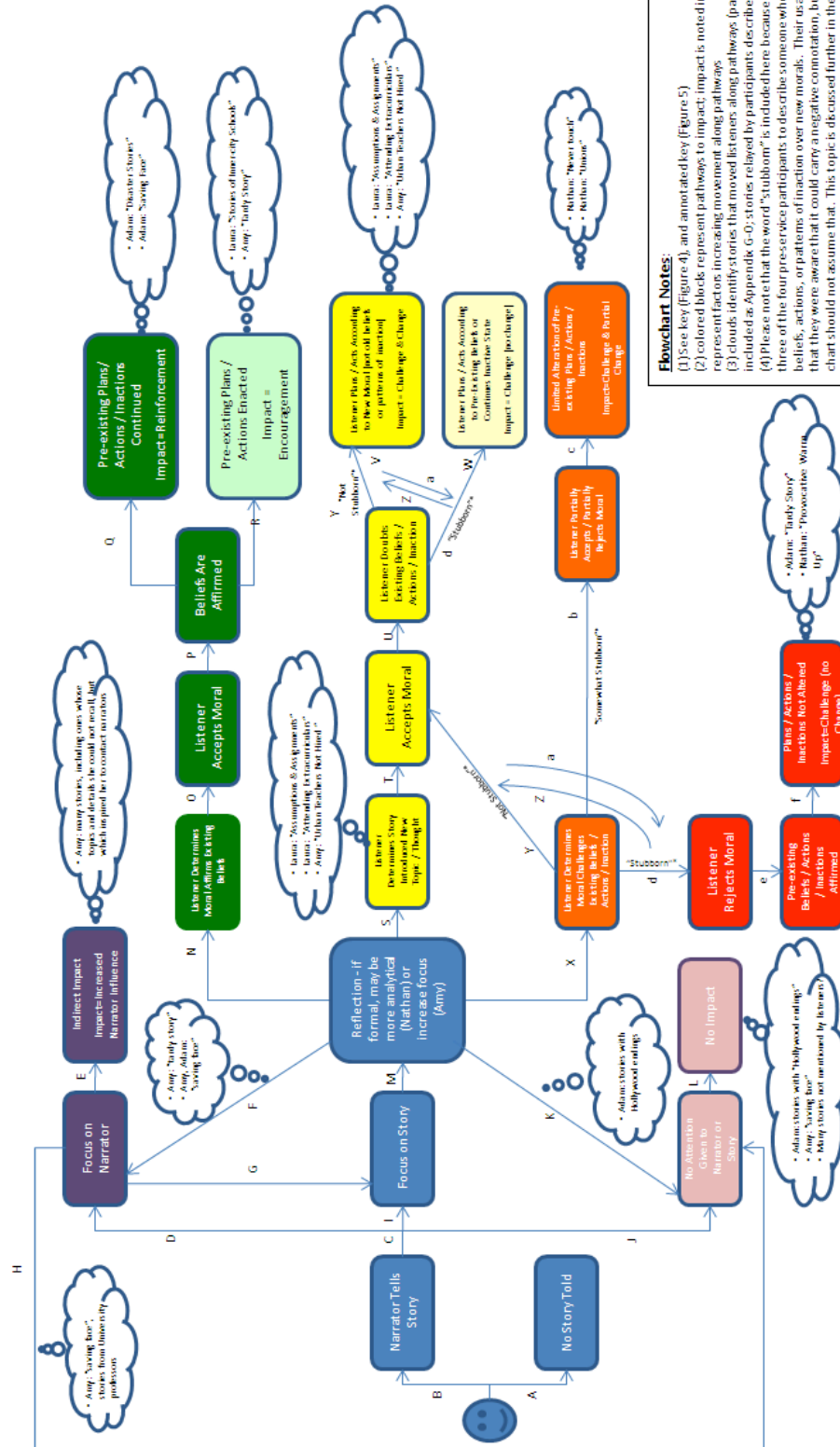Figure 3: Flowchart of Impacts, Pathways to Impact and Factors in Impact

*Figure 4: Flowchart Key[12]*

*Figure 4a: Pathways and Impact*

| Pathway | Impact |
|---|---|
| purple path | increased narrator influence |
| green path | reinforcement |
| green -> light green path | encouragement |
| yellow path | challenge and change |
| yellow -> light yellow path | challenge (no change) |
| orange path | challenge and partial change |
| orange -> red path | challenge (no change) |
| pink path | none |

*Figure 4b: Factors that increase the likelihood a pre-service teacher will move along a particular arrow and down a particular path[13]*

| | |
|---|---|
| A | Experienced teachers "don't have time to talk" (Adam) |
| B | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| C | listener characteristics, including his or her reaction to the stage of teacher education |
| D | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| E | Positive narrator characteristics as perceived by listener, including: <br> - Increased narrator credibility: Amy heard stories that testified to narrators' experiences in inner-city schools. Although she forgot the stories, she worked to build relationships with the narrator. <br> - Positive tone and expressed joy in teaching (reinforces interest in story *and* generated interest in the narrator for Nathan) |
| F | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| G | Positive narrator characteristics as perceived by listener, including: <br> - Relevant experience teaching (Adam, Nathan, Laura, Amy) including <br>    (1) timing of experience (for Amy, had to be within the last 10 years) <br>    (2) type of school: urban vs. suburban (Adam, Laura, highly influential for Amy) <br>    (3) type of class: advanced vs. general <br>    (4) grade level experience (Adam, Nathan, Laura) <br> - skilled storyteller (Laura, for Nathan, it can enhance credibility, but is not vital) <br> - direct connection to listener including (1) style/personality similar to listener (Adam) or (2) personal recommendation or work in the same building (Laura, Adam) |

---

[12] An annotated flowchart key is included in a later section of chapter five and is labeled as Figure 5.

[13] With the exception of factors labeled "C," these factors *increase* the likelihood of motion along a particular arrow. The factors labeled "C" are influential (may increase of decrease motion in a particular direction), but are more individualized and complex. These factors are noted on a line without an arrow and discussed in detail in the text.

| H | Negative narrator characteristics as perceived by listener, including:<br>   - bad teacher (Laura)<br>   - "pompous" and convey sense that "you know nothing" (Nathan); "arrogant" & "make you feel they have "all the right answers and this is the way to do it" (Amy),<br>   - tell too many stories (Nathan)<br>   - "out of touch" (Amy)<br>   - lack of relevant (grade level, type of school) teaching experience means narrator cannot give practical advice (Amy felt this about university professors so their advice went "in one ear and out the other"; Amy felt this about suburban teachers, which is why she did not act on the "saving face" story) |
|---|---|
| I | Type of Story:<br>   - "real, real life experiences" and practical advice (Amy)<br>   - "mistakes to avoid," "relevant to me at that time," explains "real problems and scenarios that need to be avoided" (Adam)<br>   - applicable (defined by Nathan as "something I think I'm going to come across")<br>   - "make[s] you imagine yourself in that situation" (Nathan) |
| J | Listener characteristics:<br>   - tired (Amy)<br>   - distracted (Amy, Laura)<br>   - eager to avoid or forget certain stories (Nathan)<br>Type of Story:<br>   - not applicable (Nathan)<br>   - not realistic (Adam – Hollywood ending) |
| K | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| L | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| M | Structured reflection, since it may "increase focus a little bit" (Adam), encourage less "emotional" and more "analytical…objectiv[e]" reactions (Nathan), or "make you think at a deeper level" (Laura) |
| N | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| O | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| P | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| Q | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| R | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| S | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| T | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |

| U | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
|---|---|
| V | Listener characteristic: "not stubborn" (see note on flowchart) |
| W | Listener characteristic: "stubborn" (see note on flowchart) |
| X | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| Y | Listener characteristic: "stubborn" (see note on flowchart) |
| Z | classroom experience that induces doubt about pre-existing beliefs |
| a | classroom experience that affirms pre-existing beliefs |
| b | Listener characteristic: "somewhat stubborn" (see note on flowchart) |
| c | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| d | Listener characteristic: "stubborn" (see note on flowchart) |
| e | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |
| f | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced during study, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) |

Again, the chart was created by soliciting participants' direct feedback on the proposed pathway and by using data from each pre-service participant's reaction to the experienced teachers' stories. In their reactions, the participants detailed or demonstrated the factors that moved them and the impact they experienced. While not claiming to be comprehensive, the chart does represent many pathways that the pre-service teachers traveled along during the study and highlights many factors that influenced their motion. A description of the pathways, and the factors that influenced them, are both included on the flowchart key. To summarize the pathways, each of them represents a route to experiencing impact. The impacts noted include *increased narrator influence* (resulting from the purple path) *reinforcement* (resulting from the green path), *encouragement* (resulting from the green -> light green path), *challenge & change* (resulting from the bright yellow path), *challenge & partial change* (resulting from the orange path), *challenge but no change* (resulting from the bright yellow -> light yellow path and from the orange -> red path), and *no impact* (resulting

from the pink path).  Overall, the flowchart represents the impact of stories in a much more

complex and detailed way than the pathway proposed at the beginning of the study.

***Examining Patterns and Inconsistencies in Participant Reactions Using the Participants'
Own Ideas***

Table 6 noted many factors cited by pre-service participants, and the flowchart and

key - Figures 3 and 4 - revealed how those factors moved pre-service participants along

pathways to impact.  As stated previously, those depictions do provide an overview of these

factors.  While many of the factors on the chart are straightforward, there are several factors

that merit additional examination.  These are the factors that represent unanticipated patterns

or complex inconsistencies.  They include: reflection, a listener characteristic participants

identified as "stubborn," and the stage of teacher education that is most appropriate for

hearing stories.  At the end of this section, there is also brief segment devoted to the pre-

service teachers' perceived opportunities to provide program feedback, and the patterns and

inconsistencies in their responses to questions about that topic.

Reflection as a factor in impact:

Every pre-service participant identified "reflection" as an important step in the

pathway from hearing a story to experiencing an impact.  As noted previously, two

participants specifically stated that without adequate reflection, the pathway breaks down.

However, the participants disagreed about whether or not structured reflection was essential.

Amy felt she would reflect independently even without a structured session.  Laura felt a

period of formal reflection would make her think at a deeper level, but would not guarantee

deeper insight or increased recall of the narrative.  Adam believed that formal reflection

192

"probably increases the focus a little bit." Nathan believed that formal reflection was more valuable than informal, independent reflection, since it moves listeners from "emotional" to more "analytical . . . objectiv[e]" reactions.

Despite this variation in participant response, or strength of response, they did have one experience in common: none experienced an immediate impact from the focus group reflection that followed the experienced teacher panel. Recall the context of that focus group. Pre-service participants experienced several forms of reflection that day. They reflected informally on the panel as they listened, formally in their written responses, and formally during the focus group conversation. After the formal focus group, each participant was asked to note any changes that formal focus group reflection had inspired in the following arenas: (a) their reaction to the panel, (b) their thoughts about the stories, (c) the likelihood they would remember the stories, (d) what they learned from the stories, and (e) the impact the stories had on their plans and actions. None of the participants noted any changes. This does not discount formal reflection, as it only speaks to the immediate impact of one type of formal reflection. Still, it is worth noting.

The flowchart reflects all of this information about reflection by locating "reflection" centrally in the chart - respecting all participants' views as reflection as important and two of their views that if reflection is limited or eliminated, the pathway breaks down. The chart also notes two participants' ideas about how formal reflection can increase focus or make that focus more analytical.

<u>Listener characteristic – "stubborn" as a factor in impact:</u>

Three of the four participants used the word "stubborn" during the interviews. The first was Adam, who revealed during the stage B focus group that while "it may sound

stubborn," the main reason the experienced teachers' stories did not change his thoughts and actions was simply because of who he is as a person. Nathan and Laura both used the word during stage D. When asked if he believed if stories had the power to persuade, Nathan replied, "depends on how stubborn you are!" Also during stage D, Laura used the word "stubborn" to describe others who needed classroom experience to either (a) create doubt in their own methods or (b) affirm the methods detailed in the story, before they could experience a story's impact.

As noted on the flowchart, these participants used the term "stubborn" to describe someone who valued pre-existing beliefs, actions, or patterns of inaction over new morals. Their usage of the term implied that they were aware that it could carry a negative connotation (e.g. Adam hesitating because it "may sound stubborn" and Laura emphasizing it as a quality for others). However, as the chart states, those reviewing this chart should not assume that. Holding to one's values and beliefs can be a positive thing. Considering this idea moves us into the realm of examining what the goal of storysharing should be. Should the goal be to exert influence that leads to a certain type of impact (e.g. challenge and change)? Or should that goal be to inspire reflection that helps pre-service teachers choose their own path? These ideas are explored in a later section of this work.

For now, this section is committed to synthesizing the participants' perspectives. Those participants did not comment on the ideal goals of story sharing, but one did offer an additional insight into the listener characteristic – "stubborn." This insight came from Laura, who believed that a "stubborn" listener could have a later classroom experience that would (a) create doubt in his or her own methods or (b) affirm the methods detailed in the story. Laura implied that these doubts could shift the listener from "stubborn" to 'somewhat

194

stubborn' or 'not stubborn', altering the likelihood that they would travel along a particular arrow, down a particular pathway, toward a particular impact. Thus, the factors of "stubborn," "somewhat stubborn," and "not stubborn," along with the factors of classroom experiences (and the type of doubt or affirmation that experience provides), are noted on the flowchart.

<u>Stage of teacher education as a factor in impact: Should stories be shared with pre-service teachers? If so, when?</u>

Two of the most controversial topics and "factors" included (1) perspectives on the debate about the importance of sharing stories with pre-service teachers and (2) the most appropriate stage of pre-service education for hearing stories. Within these arenas, there are thought patterns and inconsistencies that should be noted.

First, note a connection between the two arenas. Both address the idea of when experienced teachers stories should be heard. Rephrasing these arenas in question form: (1) Should stories be heard by pre-service teachers at all? and (2) If so, at what point during pre-service education should that occur? The first question was explored by having pre-service participants offer their perspective on the debate about the value of sharing stories with pre-service teachers. Specifically, each pre-service teacher was given an opportunity to read and respond to the following:[14]

---

[14] To prevent influence by the number of texts supporting each perspective, sources were not included in the draft given to pre-service participants.

*Figure 2: Question about Debate in the Literature*

*There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*

*One perspective:*
*Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*

*Another perspective:*
*Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*

*What do you think about those arguments? Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

While each participant offered his or her perspective on this debate, their experiences in offering that perspective varied significantly. Some struggled to reach a decision, while others saw an "obvious" choice. Ultimately, while they were split on which side they would take in a true debate (one agreeing with the first perspective, two seeing both perspectives, and one firmly committed to the second perspective), each participant saw a circumstance in which the second perspective (e.g. stories are important for pre-service teachers) could be true. For Amy, the second perspective was "obvious[ly]" accurate. For Adam and Nathan, the second perspective was true only for a certain type of story. For Laura, one must look deeper. While she agreed with the first perspective, she still felt it was important for pre-service teachers to hear stories because she believed those stories could have a delayed impact. In other words, pre-service teachers could have a later classroom experience that would trigger recall of a story, re-evaluation of the applicability of that story, and a potential

change in thoughts or actions. Thus, in an attempt to foster any impact, including a delayed impact, she agreed that stories were important for pre-service teachers to hear.

Given that each pre-service participant saw at least some value in sharing stories with pre-service teachers, attention turns to the question of when. Again, there is both a pattern – all participants believed that a listener's stage of teacher education could influence a story's impact – and several extreme disagreements. Participants were divided on whether stories should be shared before, during or after student teaching. They also disagreed about why student teaching was a type of watershed in the experience of hearing a story. Was it because they were gaining classroom experiences that made them more able to relate to the stories (in Ausubel's terms, gaining knowledge that created more opportunities for anchorage in their cognitive structures, Hannum, 2004, p. 1)? Or was it that those classroom experiences changed their sense of confidence in the classroom, and their level of classroom confidence influenced how they listened to stories? The variation in responses paints a complicated picture. While a summary of these responses is included in Table 8, which documents pre-service perspectives on all of these issues, the bottom line is that the influence of one's stage of teacher education is highly individualized. This individuality is significant both in terms of when the pre-service teacher wants to hear a story, why that timing is important to them, and whether classroom confidence is a factor in that preference.

*Table 8: Perspectives on Debate (about the importance of stories for pre-service teachers), Stage of Teacher Education, and Confidence*

| | Perspective on debate (see Figure 2 for debate details; note that the second perspective suggests stories are important for pre-service teachers) | Preferred stage of training for hearing stories (When) | Explanation of preferred stage of training (Why) | Confidence during student teaching | Does confidence influence the preferred stage of training? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adam | can see both perspectives, but second is true if story explains "real problems and scenarios that need to be avoided" | during or after student teaching | During and after student teaching so that individuals can relate those stories to their own experience…stories should be "relevant to me at that time" | Became more confident | no |
| Nathan | "hard to choose a side", but second perspective is true in that it is important to hear stories that make you "make you imagine yourself in the situation", but they still might not have an altering impact | before student teaching, and anytime in response to inquiry | Before student teaching because as teachers gained experience and confidence, they would be less likely to listen to stories and advice | Became more confident | yes – a more confident student teacher is less likely to listen |
| Amy | second perspective was the "obvious" choice | before and during student teaching | Before and during student teaching because it is good for pre-service teachers to know early that others have made mistakes and learned from them. That knowledge provides pre-service teachers with some perspective on what they are going through and can also provide an idea of how to do things differently | Became less confident | no |
| Laura | first perspective, but should still tell stories to pre-service teachers because they can have a delayed impact (e.g. a classroom experience could trigger recall of a story, re-evaluation of the applicability of that story, and a potential change in thoughts or actions) | before student teaching | Before student teaching (1) allows pre-service teachers to see "what's out there – what could happen", (2) allows them to hear the stories before they risked becoming "too wrapped up in student teaching" to listen, & (3) gives pre-service teachers the opportunity to have a classroom experience that will trigger recall of a story, re-evaluation of the applicability of that story, and a potential change in thoughts or actions. | Became less confident | yes – a less confident student teacher can feel so overwhelmed and so "wrapped up in student teaching" that they stop listening |

During a brief summary of the chart, note the ways in which participants' responses contradict one another. First, note that the participants all believed that a listener's "stage of teacher education" influenced the impact a story could have. However, it became clear that each of them felt differently about when a story would have the most impact. These differences were extreme. For example, Laura emphasized the importance of hearing stories before student teaching and said she would not listen to a story during student teaching. Compare this to Adam, who felt stories were most influential during or after student teaching, when he could relate those stories to his own experience.

Comparing Nathan and Laura's responses reveals even more complexity regarding "stage of teacher education" as a factor. Both Nathan and Laura believed that "stage of teacher education" was a factor in impact; both believed that the best time to share a story was before student teaching; and both cited altered confidence levels during student teaching as the reason for their beliefs. However, Nathan believed pre-service teachers were less likely to listen to stories during student teaching because they would gain confidence during this time (rendering the storied advice unnecessary), while Laura believed they would not listen because their confidence would go "way down" (creating a situation where they were too overwhelmed to focus on any narrative).

Again, the take-home message from this chart is that preferences about timing are individualized, and that potential storytellers should solicit feedback from individual pre-service teachers about what works for them and when. However, a reaction to the chart cannot stop there. Since all of the pre-service teachers agreed that "stage of teacher education" was a factor in a story's impact, it deserves some mention in the newly proposed flowchart of potential pathways. This reality notwithstanding, the diametrically opposed

perspectives made it impossible to locate "stage of teacher education" on any particular arrow as a factor increasing impact; in reality, a particular stage of teacher education could increase the impact for one pre-service teacher, while limiting or eliminating the impact on someone else.

Ultimately, the solution lies in an alteration of the "stage of teacher education" label and an early placement on the flowchart. Specifically, the "stage of teacher education" label must be replaced with a new identifier: "listener characteristics, including his or her reaction to stage of teacher education." The justification for this is that the listener's reaction (Adam tuning in because he had an experience to which he could relate the narrative while Nathan tuned out because his experience rendered the narrative unnecessary) influences which path he or she will take early in the process. This is not to say other factors cannot outweigh these, simply that these are, to some degree, influential at this point in the process for some participants.

Other listener characteristics could be placed in various places on the flow chart. For example, the chart reveals that a tired or distracted listener is more likely to withhold attention. It reveals that someone who is "not stubborn" (in the words of several pre-service teachers) is more likely to accept the moral of a story. These are included because the chart is intended to represent a "landscape" of possible factors that could influence listener reactions along arrows, these characteristics did influence at least one listener, and no other participants stated direct – or demonstrated indirect - opposition to their placement on the chart.

The individualized nature of data on reflection, listener characteristics, and preferences about stage of teacher education, as well as the individual impacts experienced by participants throughout the study, underscored the significance of soliciting feedback from pre-service teachers about what works for them and when.  When asked about opportunities to provide feedback within the program, one professor responded that there were both anonymous and personal opportunities to give feedback.  Anonymous opportunities included written evaluations at the end of individual courses and an end-of-year evaluation of the overall program.  Personal opportunities included journal reflections and the open doors of professors and program administrators.  These were opportunities for the pre-service participants to share what worked, and what did not work, for them.

Pre-service participants had mixed reactions to these opportunities.  Adam felt there were opportunities to provide feedback, but not without "burning my bridges for references." Amy also saw opportunities, but believed her opinions were not heard or understood by university professors who could not relate to her experience of trying to teach in an urban high school.  Laura did not see opportunities, but believed she would have them in the future. The end result of all three of these perspectives is that these pre-service teachers provided relatively little feedback to their professors or program administrators.  Nathan, on the other hand, saw valid opportunities for providing feedback and took advantage of them.  He believed the professors were making an effort to know who he was and what worked for him. Still, he noted that he was unsure about the "value" of his voice, since some suggestions elicited statements from professors that "well, in a perfect world, we would get that."  This

made Adam feel that even when he was heard and understood, his responses could not realistically impact the program experience, leaving him to wonder why anyone asked.

## Further Analysis Using the Literature

As stated previously, while collecting and analyzing data, it became clear that the original research questions had been too pointed. The revised questions are more broad.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Revised Overarching Research Questions:

(a) What stories do pre-service teachers hear, and do they remember them at any point after the telling?

(b) What is the impact of experienced teachers' stories on pre-service teachers' thoughts, actions during student teaching, and plans for action in their own future classrooms?

(c) What factors influence impact?

</div>

The previous two sections detailed participants' responses to these questions, categorized those responses, and examined the participants' perceptions of how those responses could be accurately represented in a flowchart. That flowchart detailed potential pathways from hearing a story to experiencing an impact and replaced the pathway proposed at the outset of the study.

This section takes us out of the participants' perceptions back into the literature. Specifically, it revisits sources originally used in the study to (1) see if the inappropriately narrow questions limited the researcher's perception of factors influencing impact of stories and (2) examine any insight the literature can provide into an analysis of the new flowchart pathway.

A quick overview of previous sources (with the new, more broad questions in mind) reveals that the original research question did limit the discovery of factors in the literature. Many of the items that pre-service participants highlighted during the study are confirmed as factors by other sources.  Details about these factors, including what the literature suggests about their placement on the flowchart of pathways, are included below.  This section, entitled "Further Analysis Using the Literature," highlights which sections of that flowchart are supported, challenged or ignored by the literature.  At the end of this section, an annotated flowchart key is presented, allowing readers to identify which sources confirm or challenge the pre-service teachers' views.

*Analysis of Factors in Impact*

Elements on the new pathway are supported by the literature, albeit to varying degrees.  Consider each element in turn, beginning with the factor identified as "A" (experienced teachers' lack of time).  This factor was added after Adam said he heard fewer stories because experienced teachers "don't have time to talk," and its addition as a factor is supported in the literature by Boreen and Niday (2003).  These authors quote a retired teacher who states that:

> When I look back over my career, I suppose one regret is that I wasn't able to share more of what worked [for me in the classroom] and what didn't work with those just coming into the field.  I know that when I go to conferences, it was people telling their success stories that really got me excited about leaving the conference and going back home to work with my students. We really never took the time to do that at my school; we used that favorite comment 'We're too busy'.  But I wish we had been more able to talk (p. 190).

Still, many experienced teachers do find time to talk.  Adam did hear some stories throughout the year, and other pre-service participants heard many.  These led them along

203

arrow B to the next step on the pathway 'narrator tells story'.  This step is also reinforced by the literature – both by the teacher narratives that are present there and the observations of many, including Graham in McEwan and Egan (1995, p. 195), who stated that "teachers are inveterate tellers of stories."

The pre-service teachers also included several "listener characteristics" as factors along arrows J, V, W, Y, b, d and line C.  These characteristics included those that reduced attention (e.g. being tired, distracted or eager to avoid or forget stories), those that reduced the willingness to alter actions (e.g. being "stubborn") and those that moved different listeners different ways (e.g. reaction to stage of teacher education).  The literature supports the inclusion of these "listener characteristics" on the chart.  Consider each category of characteristic in turn.

Listener characteristics that reduce attention:

Pre-service participants identified several listener characteristics that reduce the attention given a story, including being tired, distracted or eager to avoid or forget stories (factor J).  Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, p. 237) support the idea that listener characteristics that reduce attention can be significant factors in impact while describing the impact of story-sharing on pre-service teachers.  They identified one group that had "no reaction" to stories and attributed this in part to that group being "stressed out" (Ibid.).

Listener characteristics that reduce willingness to alter actions:

As previously mentioned, three pre-service teachers used the word "stubborn" while identifying listener characteristics that are factors in impact.  While "stubborn" was not

mentioned as a characteristic in the literature verbatim, the phenomenon it described (e.g. the choice of previous values over new morals) is present.  Buehl and Fives (2009, p. 395) quote a pre-service teacher whose perspective on what drives teaching closely parallels Adam's identification of himself as "stubborn."  Recall how Adam introduced this as a factor, stating that while "it may sound stubborn," teachers' stories did not change his thoughts and because "I'm being driven by my personality and my character" and "you can't change you are."  Those words were closely paralleled by Buehl and Fives' (2009, p. 395) pre-service teacher, who stated

> I honestly do not think that the knowledge needed to teach effectively will change at all because the primary driving force of an effective teacher comes from the heart.

The literature also supports Laura's idea that classroom experience can reduce the degree to which someone is "stubborn" in their refusal to try a new approach.  Kohler, Henning and Usma-Wilches (2008, p. 2115), during a study of how narrative can educate teachers in reflective practice, summarize John Dewey's perspective.  They write that teachers' "reflection involves responding to a difficult or unexpected situation by stepping back to analyze the situation . . . [and] critically examine their existing practices and beliefs."  In the very next line, they also note that "novice teachers may have limited expertise with this process."  This suggests support for the idea that limited experience can mean limited examination of existing beliefs, which in turn limits the willingness to adjust those beliefs to accommodate a new moral.  This closely parallels the ideas about experience and "stubbornness" articulated by Laura.

<u>Listener characteristics that move different listeners in different ways: stage of teacher education</u>

The aforementioned belief in experience as a factor is what has inspired the debate on the appropriate "stage of teacher education" to introduce stories. As mentioned previously, the debate on this topic began in the literature when Szabo (2006) expressed doubt about how much a pre-service teacher with no classroom experience could learn from stories, while Phillion (2005, p. 2) asserted that the narratives were "particularly [important] for beginning pre-service teachers" because stories allowed them to imagine their future classroom lives. This debate was continued by the pre-service teachers who commented on it directly during the study and provided no censesus. The previously explained wording and position of this factor (e.g. "listener characteristics, including his or her reaction to the stage of teacher education" – see previous section for detailed explanation) is thus supported by the literature.

<u>Narrator characteristics as factors in impact:</u>

Narrator characteristics included on the new pathway are also supported by the literature. Some of these were on the original, proposed pathway because of early assertions in the literature, and were simply reinforced by pre-service participants in this study. Those factors include skilled storytelling (Preskill, 2001), narrator credibility (Akerson, 2004) and personal relevance (Frykholm & Meyer, 1999), and they are included in a variety of places on the pathway including as factors E, G and H. It is worth noting that narrator credibility in the literature was specifically defined in terms of grade level experience (Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd, 1998, p. 230 and Akerson, 2004) and under the general headings of "competence, having character, and being capable of caring" (Meyers & Martin, 2006, p. 82). Pre-service teachers in the study were more specific, noting the importance of the

timing of a narrator's experience (recent), type of school (urban vs. suburban), type of class (advanced vs. general), quality of teaching (good vs. bad) and overall attitude (not "pompous" or "arrogant"). Nathan also added one element that relates to narrator attitude when he emphasized the importance of narrator positivity. Martin and Robbins (in Scherer, 2006, pp. 27-33) support the significance of this attribute in their description of a teacher induction program at Leydon High School. During that new teacher induction, "a panel of our top-notch teachers offer insight into working in our district and enjoying the teaching profession." Thus, a narrator's "positive tone" and his or her ability to "convey the joy they find in teaching" was confirmed as belonging on the pathway as factor G.

Type of story as a factor in impact:

The "type of story" was not included on the original pathway as a factor in listener attention, but there was a particular definition of story that was used throughout the study. Panelists' were asked to tell a story that was "a character-based narration of a character's struggles to overcome obstacles and reach an important goal" (Haven, 2007, p. 79). To put it simply, the original pathway was intended to apply to any story that met this general definition.

However, pre-service participants' array of reactions to the variety of stories falling within this definition suggested that the original model was too simplistic. The general definition could still indicate which stories the new model intended to address, but a demonstration of which pathway a pre-service teacher was more likely to take through that model would require attention to more specific story types as factors. In short, pre-service teachers believed that stories of "real life experiences," practical advice, mistakes to avoid,

207

and a few others would increase the amount of attention they gave a story, moving them along arrow I.

The literature supports the inclusion of 'story type' as a factor. Nelson (1993, p. 15), for example, writes that "readers can only be aroused if an author has a vital interest in the subject matter and cares about the characters…The stories must be about what matters to the teachers." Phillion (2005, p. 1), reinforces a focus on stories that are real and practical, revealing that she learned from stories that "were full of the richness of experience and practice, full of the struggles and triumphs of teaching, full of the life of classrooms." She learned about "the meaning of being a teacher" from stories that were "about real-life situations."

Amid this support for "type of story" as a factor influencing a narrative's impact, there was one contradiction between a pre-service teacher and the literature. Adam specifically stated during an interview that he was not "susceptible to being influenced by someone's horror story." McLean (1993, p. 266), contrary to Adam's personal experience, found that students at the Queensland University of Technology found particular value in "horror stories" that highlighted "difficult realities" of teaching. Adam, unprompted, did acknowledge that these types of stories could work for others in ways they did not for him. Still, the direct contradiction between a pre-service participant's personal experience and the literature led to this factor being noted in this text, but not included on the pathway.

Thus, there is support in the literature for the inclusion of the factors suggested by the pre-service participants. In some cases, the literature offers general support (e.g. the literature's emphasis on narrator "character" lends support to a participant's idea that a narrator's "pompous" attitude should be included as a factor that reduces listeners' attention).

In other cases, the literature's approval of a factor's inclusion is very specific (e.g. a source in the literature who was impacted by "real-life" stories reinforcing a participant's idea that "type of story" should be included as a factor that increases listener attention since stories of "real life experiences" earned more attention from her). Either way, the literature does support the inclusion of factors suggested by pre-service participants for the new pathway.

*Analysis of Pathways and Impacts*

Attention then turns from the factors influencing a pre-service teacher's movement along the pathway to (a) the pathways themselves and (b) the ultimate impact experienced as a result of each pathway. The pre-service participants introduced many ideas about the pathway and potential impacts. And here again we find support in the literature - albeit with varying degrees of specificity.

Consider the pink pathway, where no attention is given and no impact is experienced. This was added as a result of pre-service participants who followed this course in response to a story (e.g. Amy saying she could not listen to stories if she were too tired or distracted), and it is reinforced in the literature. Specifically, Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998) provide previous evidence of travel along the pink pathway (of no attention given and no impact experienced) in their description of one group of "stressed" (p. 237) pre-service teachers who responded to stories with "apathy" (p. 230).

Consider the first two blocks in the orange/red, orange, bright yellow and green pathways. Each set of blocks details the listener's examination of – and reaction to - the story's moral. They were added after listening to Adam and Nathan describe how they considered the moral of a story, but would accept or reject that moral based on their own

209

values.  Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998) reference this process of examination and reaction, suggesting that pre-service teachers should examine stories critically and in light of their own value systems.  They write that some of the teachers in the stories they used with pre-service teachers "turn[ed] to solutions that are questionable" and reveal that they "wish we had done more to critically examine the teachers' underlying values and philosophies rather than let students simply get caught up in the 'romance' of the told stories" (Ibid., p. 244).

Also consider the movement between the orange/red, orange, bright yellow and bright yellow/light yellow pathways.  Arrows 'Z' and 'a' were added in two places between these paths to accommodate Laura's ideas about a story's delayed impact.  She felt that if a pre-service teacher heard a story, but was too "stubborn" to act on its message, later classroom experiences could make that teacher think "darn – I should have listened to so-and-so's story."  Again, Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, p. 244) provide indirect support, stating that "the stories we share can be a resource from which future teachers can draw."

Other pathways, such as the purple pathway are also reinforced by the literature.  The purple path was put into place after hearing pre-service participants discuss moments their attention turned to the narrator.  Amy displayed this most dramatically, often forgetting the stories completely, but remembering the connection the telling forged with the narrator, and using that connection to seek continued mentoring and advice.  In the literature, Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 8) suggested this as a general possibility.  They write that "the power of narrative and dialogue as contributors to reflective awareness in teachers and students is that they provide opportunities for deepened relations with others."

The green, green/light green and bright yellow pathways are also reinforced in the literature.  These pathways were initially put in place after hearing pre-service teachers describe how they were inspired by stories to plan/act or continue their plans/actions (e.g. Adam's management plans after the "saving face" story, Amy's intention to count down after the "Tardy Policy" story, and Laura attending a concert after the "Attending Extracurriculars").  The literature had suggested these pathways and impacts in a general way.  Weber (1993, p. 73) wrote that stories "made me ponder my own actions in a different light."  Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 8) wrote that stories could "serve as springboards for ethical action."

Thus, the pathways and impacts experienced by pre-service teachers during the study are supported by the ideas expressed in the literature.  Ideas about movement along those pathways (e.g. the influence of factors) and between those pathways (e.g. the potential for classroom experience to alter the degree to which a teacher is "stubborn") are also reinforced.  Still, it is important to note that much of this reinforcement is in general terms.  This makes the voices and experiences of these four pre-service teachers even more valuable, as they provide insight into the specific ways these general ideas can work.

*Figure 5a: Pathways and Impact*

| Pathway | Impact | Literature addressing the pathway or impact |
|---|---|---|
| purple path | increased narrator influence | Reference to "opportunities for deepened relations" by Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 8) |
| green path | reinforcement | Reference to plans/actions: Weber (1993, p. 73), Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 8) |
| green -> light green path | encouragement | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories by Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244); Reference to plans/actions: Weber (1993, p. 73), Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 8) |
| yellow path | challenge and change | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories by Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244); Reference to plans/actions: Weber (1993, p. 73), Witherell and Noddings (1991, p. 8) |
| yellow -> light yellow path | challenge (no change) | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories by Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244) |
| orange path | challenge and partial change | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories by Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244) |
| orange -> red path | challenge (no change) | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories by Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244) |
| pink path | none | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories by Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244) |

| | Factors | Literature addressing a factor in this row (often in general terms) |
|---|---|---|
| A | Experienced teachers "don't have time to talk" (Adam) | Boreen and Niday (2003) |
| B | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| C | listener characteristics, including his or her reaction to the stage of teacher education | - <u>Listener characteristics</u>: Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, p. 237); <br>- <u>Stage of Teacher Education</u>: Szabo (2006); Phillion (2005); |
| D | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| E | <u>Positive narrator characteristics as perceived by listener, including:</u> <br> - Increased narrator credibility: Amy heard stories that testified to narrators' experiences in inner-city schools. Although she forgot the stories, she worked to build relationships with the narrator. <br> - Positive tone and expressed joy in teaching (reinforces interest in story *and* generated interest in the narrator for Nathan) | <u>Joy:</u> Martin & Robbins (1999, pp. 27-33) |
| F | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |

---

[15] With the exception of factors labeled "C," these factors *increase* the likelihood of motion along a particular arrow. The factors labeled "C" are influential (may increase of decrease motion in a particular direction), but are more individualized and complex. These factors are noted on a line without an arrow and discussed in detail in the text.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| G | Positive narrator characteristics as perceived by listener, including:<br>- Relevant experience teaching (Adam, Nathan, Laura, Amy) including<br>    (1) timing of experience (for Amy, had to be within the last 10 years)<br>    (2) type of school: urban vs. suburban (Adam, Laura, highly influential for Amy)<br>    (3) type of class: advanced vs. general<br>    (4) grade level experience (Adam, Nathan, Laura)<br>- skilled storyteller (Laura, for Nathan, it can enhance credibility, but is not vital)<br>- direct connection to listener including<br>    (1) style/personality similar to listener (Adam) or<br>    (2) personal recommendation or work in the same building (Laura, Adam) | Skilled Storytelling: (Preskill, 2001)<br><br>Narrator Credibility:<br>- Grade level experience: Akerson, (2004); Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998)<br>- Competence, character, caring: (Meyers & Martin, 2006, p. 82) |
| H | Negative narrator characteristics as perceived by listener, including:<br>- bad teacher (Laura)<br>- "pompous" and convey sense that "you know nothing" (Nathan); "arrogant" & "make you feel they have "all the right answers and this is the way to do it" (Amy),<br>- tell too many stories (Nathan)<br>- "out of touch" (Amy)<br>- lack of relevant (grade level, type of school) teaching experience means narrator cannot give practical advice (Amy felt this about university professors so their advice went "in one ear and out the other"; Amy felt this about suburban teachers, which is why she did not act on the "saving face" story) | Narrator Credibility: competence: (Meyers & Martin, 2006, p. 82)<br><br>Reference to university professors: (Weber, 1993, p. 73). |
| I | Type of Story:<br>- "real, real life experiences" and practical advice (Amy)<br>- "mistakes to avoid," "relevant to me at that time," explains "real problems and scenarios that need to be avoided" (Adam)<br>- applicable (defined by Nathan as "something I think I'm going to come across")<br>- "make[s] you imagine yourself in that situation" (Nathan) | Nelson (1993, p. 15); Phillion (p. 1 in Miller, ed.). |
| J | Listener characteristics:<br>- tired (Amy)<br>- distracted (Amy, Laura)<br>- eager to avoid or forget certain stories (Nathan)<br>Type of Story:<br>- not applicable (Nathan)<br>- not realistic (Adam – Hollywood ending) | Listener characteristics: Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, p. 237) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| K | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| L | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| M | Structured reflection, since it may "increase focus a little bit" (Adam), encourage less "emotional" and more "analytical…objectiv[e]" reactions (Nathan), or "make you think at a deeper level" (Laura) | Preskill 2001; Witherell and Noddings 1991; Weber 1993 |
| N | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| O | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| P | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| Q | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| R | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| S | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| T | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| U | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| V | Listener characteristic: "not stubborn" (see note on flowchart) | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories: Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244.) |
| W | Listener characteristic: "stubborn" (see note on flowchart) | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories: Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244.) |
| X | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| Y | Listener characteristic: "stubborn" (see note on flowchart) | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories: Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244.) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Z | classroom experience that induces doubt about pre-existing beliefs | Stories as a "future resource": Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998) |
| a | classroom experience that affirms pre-existing beliefs | Stories as a "future resource": Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, p 244.) |
| b | Listener characteristic: "somewhat stubborn" (see note on flowchart) | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories: Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244.) |
| c | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| d | Listener characteristic: "stubborn" (see note on flowchart) | Reference to encouraging listener's critical examination of values in stories: Radencich and Barksdale-Ladd (1998, pp. 243-244.) |
| e | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |
| f | None identified during study (i.e. motion along arrow evidenced, but no specific factors influencing this motion identified) | |

### *Analysis: The Flowchart Does Not Identify the Purpose/Goal of Sharing Stories*

Although this newly proposed flowchart accomplishes much, it intentionally does not

judge which pathways are more or less desirable. The chart is a useful tool for teacher

educators, as they consider how these particular pre-service teachers reacted to factors or the

absence of factors, and as they consider what factors might be present or absent as they share

their own stories with pre-service individuals. However, as teacher educators engage in that

sharing, they must carefully consider what they really want story sharing to accomplish. If a

pre-service teacher abandons a pre-existing belief to adopt a story's moral, is that a good thing?  According to whom?

Several sources in the literature suggest that it is the pre-service teacher's right to answer the question.  McDonald (2009, p. 181) reminds teacher educators that if a story inspires change in the pre-service teacher, it should be change that is based on the meaning found by that pre-service teacher, not because the storyteller insisted that listener adopt a particular idea.  He writes that while

> the goal for storyteller-as-pedagogue becomes recognizing those stories in one's own experiences which encapsulate important messages – those that excite epistemological shifts in the listeners' thinking and ultimately enact change in behavior and future teaching practice

ultimately, the teller must make sure that the *listener* is thinking.  The goal is to "incit[e] personal meaning-making," not to "dictat[e] ideals" (ibid).

Others reinforce the idea that a listener's "personal meaning-making" is important. Waldron, Collie, and Davies (1999, p. iii) invite listeners to "to contemplate your beliefs, understandings, and experiences through reflecting" on a narrative.  The Foxfire collection of teacher narratives extends a similar invitation, reminding each reader to "make his or her own interpretation of the meaning and importance" of a particular story (Hatton, 2005, p. 122).  Their reasons for encouraging awareness of the reader's role are this:  there is "no *one* answer for the questions that bewilder teachers in their daily practice" (Ibid.).   Narratives offer insight, but are couched in circumstance.  Pre-service teachers cannot swallow messages wholesale and expect them to apply perfectly to a new situation; they must recognize that hearing stories inspires thought and action but does not end in *absolute* "solutions or in *definitive* plans" Waldron, et al (1999, p. iii, emphasis added).

217

Still, "personal meaning-making" cannot be the end point. Perhaps a story should not dictate action, but it should do more than inspire thought. It should, ultimately, *inspire thoughtful action*. As Wallace (1996, p. 55) notes, "even given the ability and the inclination to reflect, and the opportunities and support for such introspection, nothing really matters until we turn the results of our inquiry into programs and actions that ultimately help students." Binks, Smith, Smith & Joshi (2009, p. 143, citing Cooner & Tochterman, 2004) reveal that the way in which stories do this is by inspiring reflection that "enabl[es] pre-service teachers to actively develop plans for growth."

Thus, teacher educators must recognize that the goal of sharing a story is to inspire reflection (on both the narrative and pre-existing beliefs) that leads to "personal meaning-making" (McDonald, 2009, p. 181). The storyteller must also inspire the translation of this personal meaning into thoughtful action or plans for personal growth.

McDonald (2009, p. 181) offers a practical idea for inspiring "personal meaning-making." She writes that "after sharing the story with pre-service teachers, I ask them 'what is the moral of this story or lesson learned?' and 'What aspects of the story resonate with you?'" (p. 183). She reveals that while "most embrace the questions and revel in discussion," some still "want to hear *my* claims of truisms in this tale as if there are 'correct' responses." Although she was "tempted" to offer a "lecture" on the personal meaning she found in the story, she fought – and encourages others to fight – that temptation. She writes that "dialogue [must be] left open for interpretation so these fledgling teachers-to-be can personally interpret meaning from the story" (Ibid.)

Miller (1990) describes the next step in the struggle: helping pre-service teachers turn their personal meaning into thoughtful action. In short, she reveals that the instinct to dictate

meaning for a pre-service teacher during reflection has its counterpart in an instinct to dictate action during student teaching. She encourages teacher educators to resist this, and suggests steps they can take to inspire thoughtful action. First, teacher educators can remind pre-service teachers that knowledge does not come "in [a] box" (Ibid., p. 120) - or, for our purposes, in a story - that can be applied without translation to account for personal interpretations and new contexts. Second, experienced teachers can model the process of transforming reflection into action and provide space for pre-service teachers to try this. In Miller's words (referencing Schon, 1983),

> the notion of an apprentice being able to watch a professional think and reflect-in-action was a crucial experience that we all felt was lacking in teachers' preparation. None of us had experienced student teaching in these ways, because, as Cheryl said, 'There was no need to reflect. It was all laid out for you!' (Ibid., p. 121).

In short, if teacher educators agree with the literature's assertion that the purpose of story sharing is not to insist that a pre-service teacher internalize a particular message or adopt a particular type of action – if instead the purpose is to inspire personal meaning-making and thoughtful action – then there are three steps they need to take: (1) share the story, (2) fight the temptation to dictate meaning; instead, ask questions that encourage a pre-service teachers' "personal meaning-making" (McDonald, 2009, p. 181) and (3) encourage the application of this personal meaning to new contexts – first by emphasizing the personal nature of knowledge developed while reflecting on a story, then by providing a model of "reflect[ing] in action," and finally by providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to apply their knowledge through more independent action during student teaching (Miller, 1990, p. 121). Of course, the opportunities that involve observations of a model, or actions

during student teaching, require close coordination with the teacher mentor - who may or may not be the narrator of the story.

## Limitations and Potential Extensions of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, while it attempts to explore the thoughts and behavior of pre-service teachers, both measures rely on the self-reporting of those individuals. As Davidson (2004, p. 188) writes (in the context of a study involving nursing students), a truly comprehensive evaluation "of storytelling as a teaching and learning strategy should also involve observation of students' retention of knowledge, manner with clients, and performance of skills."

Also, while the this study sought to measure more than the initial impact of story sharing, following up with pre-service participants months after some narratives were revealed, the impact measurement was still early. As stated in the design section of the methodology chapter, a determination of whether story sharing actually assists those pre-service teachers as they establish their own classrooms would require later measurements including evaluations of new teacher satisfaction, retention and effectiveness.

It is also important to note that the final interview in this study occurred during the pre-service participants' student teaching experience, eight to nine months into their eleven month MAT program. This was clearly a busy and stressful time for these individuals, and that stress may have influenced their perceptions or presentation of impact. Extending similar studies, even just to the conclusion of the pre-service program, could provide opportunities for pre-service participants to reflect on their experiences with stories over the course of that entire program. It could also provide insight into how the timing of the

questions (e.g. during a stressful time in their program, as opposed to a time of reflection, graduation and celebration) affects the perception of stories, the evaluation of impact and the overall experience of learning as a pre-service teacher.

Finally, the study is limited in terms of generalizability. This limitation is due to both the small number of participants and the limited diversity among those participants. As mentioned previously, there were only four pre-service participants in the study and all of them were members of a cohort of pre-service social studies teachers. The sample was not random. One individual who was eligible to participate declined to do so without offering an explanation. Efforts were made to ensure some diversity among participants, and those efforts resulted in some differences in background and perspective. However, some issues, such as the influence of ethnicity and gender (mentioned by one participant) were not explored, and a determination of whether the findings from this group are reflective of any larger pre-service, or other, population is beyond the scope of this work.

This discussion of the current study's limitations leads naturally into a consideration of possible extensions of the research. Possibilities for future works include (a) studies that utilize observations of pre-service teachers in addition to self-reporting, (b) studies that track pre-service participants through the end of their pre-service programs and into their teaching careers in an effort to explore longer term implications, (c) studies that focus on different ethnic groups or analyze the role of listener and/or narrator gender dynamics, and (d) studies that survey larger groups of pre-service teachers to determine if the factors and impacts identified by this study are prevalent in any larger population.

## Conclusions and Implications for Practice

Reviewing the results of this study highlights the potential impact of stories on pre-service teachers. That review also highlights the variety of pathways to impact and the factors influencing movement along those pathways. To summarize, a story can reinforce, encourage, challenge, or change a listener directly. A story could also have an indirect impact by increasing a narrator's influence on that listener or a delayed impact if a later classroom experience triggered recall of a story, re-evaluation of the applicability of that story, and a change in thoughts or actions. Finally, a story could have no impact at all. Factors that influence which of these outcomes a listener will experience include characteristics of the narrator, of the listener, and of the story itself.

These insights result in awareness that the pathway proposed at the outset of this study was too simplistic. While a particular pre-service teacher might respond to a particular story by listening, reflecting, learning, and acting, there are a myriad of other possibilities. Some of these possibilities are complex, such as (a) the aforementioned delayed impact as a result of later classroom experience or (b) direct impact but only after a cycle of reflection that increases focus on narrator which increases focus on the story which results in impact along one of the pathways.

This result is not surprising. These listeners are pre-service teachers, individuals undergoing tremendous "personal development in a social context" (Fullan & Stiegebauer, 1991, p. 132 quoted in Schwarz, Alberts & Hudgens, 2001, p. 13). That is a recipe for complexity. It is the job of teacher educators to recognize this complexity: to pay attention to both the personal development and the social context, as well as complete the usual (even more complex) work of defining educational goals for these pre-service teachers.

*How does this study inform those tasks?*

First, it introduces the pre-service teachers as individuals. Adam, Nathan, Amy and Laura did more than share their reaction to others' stories. They each shared the story of their pre-service teacher education. They told of stressful days, challenging school sites, professional goals and personal concerns. As they spoke, each of them testified to the ways in which stories affected them as *individuals*. It became clear during the study that Adam needed classroom experience to pave the way for a story's impact. Amy wanted a story from an urban ninth or tenth grade teacher, preferably one who would invest in a continued relationship with her. As they articulated these, and other, needs during interviews, it inspired the question of whether they articulated these needs to their mentors or university professors. For a variety of reasons, including feeling insecure, misunderstood, or disregarded, most pre-service participants did not. Teacher educators using stories must address this issue, recognizing that the impact of a story is particular to an individual, and that to increase the likelihood of impact, the pre-service teacher must be comfortable expressing his or her needs.

Second, the study shows how social elements, including interactions with narrators and experiences student teaching, influence impact. With regard to narrators, recall that Amy and Adam heard the same story ("Saving Face"), were inspired to reflect on the same narrator, and had completely different reactions that led to different ultimate impacts. It is not simply a consideration of the individual listener that is important; it is a consideration of the ways in which storytellers present themselves to, and interact with, those listeners. With regard to experiences student teaching, recall how real classroom encounters inspired Nathan

223

to listen and Laura to ignore stories told during that stage of teacher education.  Again, an understanding of impact requires going beyond a consideration of the individual to a consideration of how that individual is experiencing the pre-service program.  In short, teacher educators using stories must be aware of who a pre-service teacher is, but they must also be aware of how that pre-service teacher is reacting to a variety of social factors, including interactions with narrators and experiences in schools.

Third, this study reveals that teacher educators must carefully consider what they are really trying to accomplish when they share (or ask others to share) their stories.  Mentor teachers, and other potential story sharers, should recognize that what they say can have an impact on impressionable pre-service teachers.  In addition to reminding teacher educators to consider what stories they share, this should serve as a reminder to consider why and how they share them.  The literature suggests that while it is tempting for experienced teachers to "dictat[e] ideals" through story, then insist on actions during student teaching, those approaches do not ultimately serve the pre-service teachers well.  Instead, stories should inspire pre-service teachers to engage in thoughtful action.  Practical ways to enact this purpose/goal include an experienced teacher engaging in the following: (1) sharing the story, (2) asking questions that encourage a pre-service teachers' "personal meaning-making" (McDonald, 2009, p. 181), and (3) encouraging these new teachers to apply that personal meaning to new contexts.  This application can be encouraged by emphasizing the personal nature of knowledge, modeling "reflect[ion] in action," and providing opportunities for pre-service teachers to apply their knowledge through more independent action during student teaching (Miller, 1990, p. 121).

To conclude, this study has shown many ways that experienced teachers' stories can impact a pre-service teacher. It has produced a chart that is a useful tool for teacher educators as they consider how these particular pre-service teachers reacted to factors or the absence of factors, and as they consider what factors might be present or absent as they share their own stories with pre-service individuals. This study reveals that while in an ideal world, a pre-service program would meet all its participants' needs individually and with perfect timing, in reality, it is not often possible to pair storytellers, pre-service teachers, and classroom experiences to such a nuanced degree. Still, storytellers can take steps to encourage reflection, personal meaning-making and thoughtful action by pre-service teachers. Asking open-ended questions about, encouraging personal responses to, and allowing in-classroom implementation of - ideas inspired by the story can accomplish movement toward each of these goals.

# APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Consent Form for the Experienced Teachers


**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**
**Adult Participants – Experienced Teachers**
**Social Behavioral Form**
_____
<u>**What are some general things you should know about research studies?**</u>
         You are being asked to take part in a research study.  To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.
         Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future.   You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.
         Details about this study are discussed below.  It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form.  You should ask the researcher named above any questions you have about this study at any time.


<u>**What is the purpose of this study?**</u>
         The purpose of this research study is to learn about the ways pre-service teachers are affected by hearing experienced teachers' stories.  Stories of  "on the job" insight (i.e. moments where a school event or classroom encounter led a teacher to think "Aha! I just realized..."  or "Oh no! I wish I had known...") are of particular interest.  The study will seek to know whether teachers ever share the stories of their "aha!" or  "oh no!" moments with other teachers and what impact that sharing has on listeners who are pre-service teachers.
         This study is part of a larger effort to improve the experience of teachers (and by extension, their students) by exploring how teachers learn on the job and from each other.  It has implications for both teacher preparation and professional development programs.


<u>**Are there any reasons you should not be in this study?**</u>
         You should not be in this study if you are not a high school history or social studies teacher in [this state].


<u>**How many people will take part in this study?**</u>
         If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of approximately six teachers in this research study.  Three teachers will be offered the opportunity to participate on a panel of experienced teachers that will present stories to a class of approximately 11-23 pre-service teachers in the fall.   Four pre-service teachers will engage in follow-up activities to determine the impact of hearing experienced teachers' stories.

**<u>How long will your part in this study last?</u>**

As an experienced teacher participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a survey that provides basic demographic information and engage in an initial, individual interview that explores stories from your career. The survey and interview will be conducted at a time and location convenient for you. Together, they will take approximately thirty minutes to complete, though time may vary depending on the level of detail you choose to provide.

You may also be offered the opportunity to participate on a panel of experienced teachers and present your stories to a group of pre-service teachers. If you express an interest in this option, you will have a second thirty-minute meeting with the researcher to prepare for the panel. The panel itself will last forty minutes.

**<u>What will happen if you take part in the study?</u>**

As stated previously, as an experienced teacher participant in this study you would be asked to engage in a thirty-minute survey/interview. The survey and initial individual interview will be conducted at a time and location convenient for you. After the initial interview, three experienced teacher participants will be offered the opportunity to participate on a panel of experienced teachers and present their stories to a group of pre-service teachers. The preparation for this panel will require thirty minutes, and the panel presentation will last for forty minutes.

For your information, after the panel presentation the pre-service teachers will be asked to respond to the stories they heard from the panel of experienced teachers in a variety of ways including written response, focus group participation and through interview. Through these activities, the impact of story sharing on the pre-service teachers' thoughts and actions will be assessed.

**<u>What are the possible benefits from being in this study?</u>**

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. Your participation in this study helps provide insight into how teachers learn from experience and from one another, and that insight will assist those who design pre-service and in-service professional development programs. Ultimately, improving those programs will help both teachers and the students with whom they work. You may also expect to benefit by participating in this study by having the opportunity to reflect on some of your own teaching experiences as you share the stories of those experiences.

**<u>What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?</u>**

Reflecting on lessons learned while teaching may bring up memories of challenging classroom moments. This risk will be minimized by your ability to direct the conversation, as there will be no pressure to tell any stories that make you at all uncomfortable. In addition, for whatever stories you choose to tell, the emphasis will be on how those experiences helped you grow as an educator – a positive outcome. Your comfort is a priority, and any discomfort or problems should be reported to the researcher.

228

Another issue in this study is that of privacy. You are encouraged to mask or alter names and details to protect the privacy of individuals referenced in your stories. The researcher will also work with you to ensure that characters within those stories cannot be identified.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
The consent forms will be the only documents with identifiers, and they will be kept in a locked file. If you agree to have interviews recorded, the tapes will also be kept in a locked file. Once the tapes are transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed and the transcripts will be kept in the locked file. Only the researcher will have access to the file. You may request that the audio recorder be turned off at any time.
Please check the line that reveals your preference regarding audio recording:

_____ It is OK to record me during the interviews

_____ It is not OK to record me during the interviews

Other documents will be coded as "Teacher Participant A," "Teacher Participant B," etc. and will be kept separate from the identifying consent forms. Attempts will be made to mask or alter enough details in the final report that deductive disclosure is not an issue. In addition, you may request copies of findings prior to reporting and, if you feel you can be identified by a combination of details provided, and would prefer not to be identified in that way, you can work with the researcher to alter additional details to your satisfaction.
If participants choose to extend the time of any interviews, the researcher may employ a research assistant to help transcribe audiotapes. If this occurs, all tapes will be hand delivered to an assistant who has completed ethics training on maintaining confidentiality and who will follow all IRB protocols.
Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**
Snacks will be provided during the initial interview. If you participate on the experienced teacher panel, you will receive a $30 gift card to a local restaurant as a token of appreciation for your time.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**
There will be no costs for being in the study.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research

subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

**Title of Study:** A Qualitative Case Study Exploring the Impact of Experienced Teachers' Stories on Pre-Service Teachers

**Principal Investigator:** Kristi J. Smith

**Participant's Agreement:**

I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.


_____     _____
Signature of Research Participant                                        Date


_____
Printed Name of Research Participant



_____     _____
Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent     Date


_____
Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

Appendix B:

Interview Prompts for the "Experienced Teachers Individual Interview"


Dear _____,

      Thank you for participating in the study on story sharing. I thought it might be helpful to provide you with an advance copy of the interview questions and a few stories that represent the type of narratives I hope to elicit during the interview. You certainly do not need to bring anything written to the interview, but should feel free to make notes on these pages if you would like to have them during our conversation.

      Again, thank you so much for your time, your participation and the work you do as a teacher. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions at all.


      Sincerely,

      Kristi J. Smith

Introduction:
The purpose of this interview is to elicit a story of "on-the-job" learning that can be shared with pre-service teachers for training purposes. Stories of moments during which you thought "Oh no! I wish I had known..." or "Aha! I just realized..."are of particular interest.

The following prompts may help you think of a story. Feel free to respond to either one of them or to disregard them and share another story that the sample narratives bring to mind.

Note: When thinking about what story, or stories, you would like to share, keep in mind that the most useful stories are those that offer a description of the events (including any goals you had or struggles you faced at the time) and your thoughts about those events now (questions you still have and how you think about those questions, or what you would do to prevent or manage the situation now).

Potential Prompts: (based on prompts used by Hatton, 2005, pp. 45, 68)
• Please describe a significant learning experience you had as a teacher?
• Please describe a mistake you made as a teacher and how it made a difference in your thinking about teaching.


Sample Narratives:

*A story from my own classroom:*

*"James, as soon as you pick up that pencil, we'll continue with class."*
*I said it with authority and with the best of intentions. James needed to take notes. That required having a pencil in his hand. Instead, he had dropped his pencil — eraser down — on the floor. Apparently, he wanted to see how high his big pink eraser would make that small pencil bounce.*
*"James, did you hear me? I said as soon as you pick up that pencil, we'll continue with class."*
*Well, James never did pick up that pencil. Instead, he resisted, and that resistance turned into agitation. Eventually, the situation escalated to the point that I had to get another adult to escort him out of class.*
*James was not a model student that day. He had not been paying attention. He had distracted other students who were trying to learn. But what had I done? The truth was, while attempting to manage his behavior, I had created a horrible moment. I had focused the entire class on our situation, and framed that situation in such a way that one of us was going to come away looking powerless and unworthy of respect. I had issued an ultimatum. Class would not continue while that pencil was lying there. James refused to lose face by retrieving it, and the only way I could pick it up while maintaining any sense of authority was by first having James removed from the class.*
*It was a learning moment for me — one of many that forced me to reconsider my approach managing the classroom. In that moment, I learned to issue choices, not ultimatums. ("James, either begin taking notes, so I can see that you're paying*

*attention, or you'll need to write two pages summarizing our discussion for homework so I know what you've learned.") I learned to make the right choices easier for my students by keeping the rest of the class focused on what we they were learning instead of what James decides to do. ("Alright everyone, take a look at this artifact…") And I learned that when appropriate, I could use positive manipulation to address minor missteps. ("Oh James! You dropped your pencil! Let me get that for you. I don't want one bit of your brilliance lost because you weren't able to write it down!")*

*How I wish that I had tried any of these other approaches . . .(Smith, 2005)*

An example from Nel Noddings, given during the Foxfire interviews (citation):

Q: "Do you remember mistakes you made as a teacher? Can you tell us if and how a mistake made a difference in your thinking about teaching?"

Noddings: I still grieve over one from my beginning years as a math teacher . . . I was a very strict grader; I was very fair and always helped kids and *all that, but I was a strict grader. I remember this kid who got a 13 on a major test, and she flunked the course. The mother came in to plead, and the principal backed me all the way. He said afterward that if I hadn't been such a strong teacher, he wouldn't have backed me. So here's this poor kid who flunked the class. Later, I thought, 'This is not helpful'. Anyone who knows just basic arithmetic knows you can't recover from a 13. You put a 13 in with two or three other grades and divide by three or four, and you've got a horrible grade, and there's no recovery from it. So a couple of years later when I really thought about that, I decided that I would never do that again..*

*So after that, I told the kids in all my math classes that they all start at 50 – it's not a good grade, but that's where you start – and you can only go upward from there. After that, I used a method of cumulative grading so kids could see how they were improving. I never again gave a grade as low as 13. I learned from that experience. And closely associated with never giving a grade under 50 was the notion of continuous progress - that at least in a subject like math, which is sequential, if kids don't know one batch of material, they really can't master the next. Watching that over a period of time, I finally decided that the thing to do was to have them take tests over again until they had mastered one thing before going on to the next. In a subject like math, it makes ultimate sense to me. If you want people to learn, you don't penalize them for their mistakes but you help them learn it. Kids would say to me, 'How many times can we take the test?' And I would say, 'As many times as are available in a marking period,' because the idea is to learn, not to be defeated by it.*

Appendix C:

Experienced Teacher Survey/Interview Questions

Date: _____

**<u>Section A: Demographic/Informational Questions:</u>**
*Please circle the responses that apply. Please disregard any questions you would prefer to leave blank.*

(1) Gender:        Male    Female

(2) Age:        under 25      26-35      36-45     46-55     56-65   over 65

(3) Race/Ethnicity:  White      Black      Hispanic     Asian/Pacific Islander

          American Indian (including Alaska Native)

          Other (please specify) _____

(4) Degrees/Certification:  (circle all that apply)

        High School Diploma

        Bachelor's Degree

        Masters (please specify) _____

        Doctorate (please specify) _____

        Teacher Certification (at any point during your career)

        National Board Certification

(5) What is your current teaching position? (Subject, grade level and district)

(6) Please describe your teaching experience. Also note any other positions in education, including work designing professional development for pre-service or practicing teachers

(7) What type of interactions have you had with pre-service teachers, other than those noted above?

**Section B: Interview Questions/ "Talking Points"**
(8) See page entitled "sample interview prompts."

(9) Have you ever described the moment detailed in question 8 to another teacher (pre-service or otherwise)?
      a.   Why or why not?
      b.   If you have described this moment to another teacher, what was his or her reaction?

9) Would you be willing to serve on the panel of experienced teachers who will share their stories with pre-service teachers?

Appendix D:

Initial Survey for Pre-service Teachers

<u>Introduction</u>:
The purpose of this survey is to identify potential participants for a study. The study requires participants to respond to questions about the impact of their pre-service training.
The study will consist of the following:

- three thirty minute interviews, arranged at times and locations convenient to the participants during the months of July, December and March, and

- one thirty minute session that will occur as part of a regularly scheduled class in September and will include a written response and focus group conversation

Participants will be compensated for their time during the three interviews at the rate of ten dollars per interview once all three interviews are complete.

Please consider participating, as your responses can help future pre-service teachers.

Survey:

The purpose of questions 1-5 is to ensure diversity among participants.  Please disregard any questions you would prefer to leave blank.

(1) Gender:      *Male      Female*

(2) Age:          *under 25          26-35              36-45          46-55              56-65      over 65*

 (3) Race/Ethnicity:   *White          Black              Hispanic          Asian/Pacific Island*

         *American Indian (including Alaska Native)    Other (please specify) _____*


(4) Please answer the following questions to describe your educational background.
    *a. What was your major in college? _____*
    *b. Do you hold any higher degree(s), and if so, what degree(s)? _____*


(5) Please briefly describe any post-college work experience, including positions inside and outside of the educational field.  (A sample response might be: "restaurant manager, 1 year")




(6) The purpose of question four is to ensure that participants are "pre-service teachers" according to the definition used in the study.  According to the definition below, are you a "pre-service teacher"?
                         *yes            no*

*Definition of pre-service teacher in this study: "an individual who is training to become a high school teacher, but has not yet experienced lead-teaching in a K-12, undergraduate or graduate classroom"*


(7) Would you be willing to consider participating in the study?          *yes            no*

(8) If you would consider participating in the study, what is the best way to contact you?

 *e-mail (please provide address): _____*
 *phone (please provide number): _____*


(7) Do you anticipate applying for teaching jobs in [this state]?

                         *yes            no*

237

Appendix E:

Consent Form for the Pre-service Teachers


**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**
**Adult Participants – Pre-service Teachers**
**Social Behavioral Form**
_____

**What are some general things you should know about research studies?**
      You are being asked to take part in a research study.  To join the study is voluntary. You may refuse to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.
      Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future.   You may not receive any direct benefit from being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies.
      Details about this study are discussed below.  It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study. You will be given a copy of this consent form.  You should ask the researcher named above any questions you have about this study at any time.


**What is the purpose of this study?**
      The purpose of this research study is to learn about the ways pre-service teachers are affected by hearing experienced teachers' stories.  Stories of  "on the job" insight (i.e. moments where a school event or classroom encounter led a teacher to think "Aha! I just realized..."  or "Oh no! I wish I had known...") are of particular interest.  The study will seek to know whether teachers ever share the stories of their "aha!" or  "oh no!" moments with other teachers and what impact that sharing has on listeners who are pre-service teachers.

      This study is part of a larger effort to improve the experience of teachers (and by extension, their students) by exploring how teachers learn on the job and from each other.  It has implications for both teacher preparation and professional development programs.


**Are there any reasons you should not be in this study?**
      You should not be in this study if you do not meet the study's definition of "pre-service teacher."  This study defines a pre-service teacher as *"an individual who is training to become a high school teacher, but has not yet experienced lead-teaching in a K-12, undergraduate or graduate classroom."*


**How many people will take part in this study?**
      There will be four pre-service teachers in this research study.  In addition, there will be six experienced teacher participants, three of whom will participate on a panel that presents stories to the pre-service group.

**How long will your part in this study last?**

Your participation in this study will consist of three thirty-minute interviews, arranged at times and locations convenient to you during the months of July, December and March. It will also involve one seventy-five-minute session that will occur as part of a regularly scheduled class in September. During that seventy-five-minute session, you will hear a panel presentation, complete a written response and engage in a focus group conversation.

**What will happen if you take part in the study?**

As stated previously, as a pre-service participant in this study, you would be asked to engage in three thirty-minute individual interviews, arranged at times and locations convenient to you during the months of July, December and March. During these individual interviews, you will be given an opportunity to discuss stories from teachers and about teaching. In addition, you will also hear a panel presentation that will occur as part of a regularly scheduled class in September. During your regularly scheduled class time, you will be asked to complete a written response and engage in a focus group conversation about the panel presentation.

**What are the possible benefits from being in this study?**

Research is designed to benefit society by gaining new knowledge. Your participation in this study helps provide insight into how teachers learn from experience and from one another, and that insight will assist those who design pre-service and in-service professional development programs. Ultimately, improving those programs will help both teachers and the students with whom they work.

**What are the possible risks or discomforts involved from being in this study?**

During this study, you will be asked about the stories you hear from experienced teachers who are not part of the panel presentation. There is a chance that you will hear some stories that you are uncomfortable repeating. It is important to note that you decide which stories to share with the researcher. Your comfort is a priority, and any discomfort or problems should be reported to the researcher.

When you do share stories with the researcher, you will be encouraged to mask or alter names and details to protect the privacy of the individuals referenced in those stories. The researcher will also work with you to ensure that characters within those stories cannot be identified.

**How will your privacy be protected?**

The original screening surveys and the consent forms will be the only documents with identifiers, and they will be kept in a locked file. Participants must agree to the audio recording of the focus group, but will have the option to be recorded or not during individual interviews. Any audio recordings will be kept in a locked file. Once the tapes are

transcribed, the tapes will be destroyed and the transcripts will be kept in the locked file. Only the researcher will have access to the file. You may request that the audio recorder be turned off at any time during the interviews. If you prefer not to be recorded during the interviews, the researcher will just take notes.

Please check the line that reveals your preference regarding audio recording:

_____ It is OK to record me during the interviews

_____ It is not OK to record me during the interviews

Other documents will be coded as "Pre-service Participant One," "Pre-service Participant Two," etc. and will be kept separate from the identifying consent forms. Attempts will be made to mask or alter enough details in the final report that deductive disclosure is not an issue. In addition, you may request copies of findings prior to reporting and can withdraw your data from the study at that time. Thus, if you feel that you could be identified by a combination of details provided, and would prefer not to be identified in that way, you may choose to withdraw your information from the study.

If participants choose to extend the time of any interviews, the researcher may employ a research assistant to help transcribe audiotapes. If this occurs, all tapes will be hand delivered to an assistant who has completed ethics training on maintaining confidentiality and who will follow all IRB protocols.

Participants will not be identified in any report or publication about this study.

**Will you receive anything for being in this study?**
You will be offered compensation for your time, which will ultimately consist of three thirty-minute interviews in addition to the class-time spent experiencing and reflecting on the experienced teacher panel. Snacks will be provided during interviews, and you will be compensated at the rate of ten dollars per interview once all three interviews are complete.

**Will it cost you anything to be in this study?**
There will be no costs for being in the study

**What if you are a UNC student?**
You may choose not to be in the study or to stop being in the study before it is over at any time. This will not affect your class standing or grades at UNC-Chapel Hill. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you take part in this research.

**What if you are a UNC employee?**
Taking part in this research is not a part of your University duties, and refusing will not affect your job. You will not be offered or receive any special job-related consideration if you take part in this research.

**What if you have questions about this study?**
You have the right to ask, and have answered, any questions you may have about this research. If you have questions, or concerns, you should contact the researchers listed on the first page of this form.

**What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?**
All research on human volunteers is reviewed by a committee that works to protect your rights and welfare. If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board at 919-966-3113 or by email to IRB_subjects@unc.edu.

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

**Title of Study:** A Qualitative Case Study Exploring the Impact of Experienced Teachers' Stories on Pre-Service Teachers

**Principal Investigator:** Kristi J. Smith

**Participant's Agreement:**
I have read the information provided above. I have asked all the questions I have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. I understand that I may request copies of the findings prior to reporting. I also understand that I may decide to withdraw from my data at that time.

_____     _____
Signature of Research Participant                                        Date


_____
Printed Name of Research Participant


_____     _____
Signature of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent     Date


_____
Printed Name of Research Team Member Obtaining Consent

Appendix F:

Pre-service Interview One (Stage A)

(1) What motivated you to become a teacher?

(2) Have any experienced teachers shared stories about their teaching, or about their lives as teachers, with you at any point?  If so, what stories stand out in your mind?  Describe the experience of hearing those stories.  What impact did those stories have on you?

(3) Do you anticipate hearing stories from experienced teachers' this year?  If so, what type of stories do you think they will tell?  Do you believe those stories will have an impact on you?  If so, what type of impact?

(4) What are your thoughts about student teaching at this point?

(5) What are your thoughts about lead-teaching after graduation?

Appendices G-O:

Stories Shared by Experienced Teachers During the Panel Presentation


*Note: The researcher, Kristi Smith, facilitated this panel presentation.  Several panelists refer to her by name during their narratives, occasionally referencing the earlier version of the story they told her in their initial interview.*

Appendix G:

"Autism Outburst"

*Narrated by experienced teacher A, a male working in an urban school*

Mr. A: I appreciate your having me here. I speak to a lot of – and [nodding to the other panelists] I'm sure you do as well . . . and [to the pre-service teachers] – I think it's awesome that you guys are going to teach. There's no job better than this in the world. [Another panelist] and I were just talking about how many hours we put in and it's – it's ridiculous how many hours we put in – but it's the best job.

My aha moment [that] I had my first year teaching

(and I had a ton – like Kristi said – you will have a ton of 'aha' moments – I had an 'aha' moment this week, in fact)

But I found out (because we do the class lists ahead of time – before the first day starts – and so of course, as a new teacher, I went around to all of the experienced teachers in my department trying to get a grasp of who was in my class) what I needed to be aware of the first day, and what I could do to prepare.

A colleague told me that one of the students on my list was an autistic student – a high functioning autistic student in my honors US history class. Ok – [I thought then] - I don't know what that is – I don't know how to deal with that, but ok, sure, because I'm a first year teacher and I can handle anything, so I'll give it a shot. And this young man was one of the hardest working students I have ever had.

With that though - and with autism as I've learned - it was a different kind of teaching situation, as far as how to present content, how to make that student feel comfortable in the class, how to prepare that student, [and] how to deal with the other students in the room so that everybody was working as effectively as possible. And consistency was really important, so the day that I was out was not a good day.

I was out a few weeks in[to the year – specifically, it was] a few weeks coming up to the end of a quarter, and one of my colleagues covered the class, and they were reviewing for a test that we were going to have the next day. And the young man said, 'Will this be on the test?' to [the] colleague of mine. And the colleague said, 'I can't imagine that Mr. A would put that on the test. I wouldn't worry about that piece of content.'

Well, as luck would have it, that piece of content was the first question on the test. So I had that going for me – and when the student saw that, he didn't know how to handle that. He didn't know how to deal with that. Especially since another adult the day before had told him there was no way that content could be on the test. And he proceeded to, and I described this a couple of different ways to Kristi, I know, but he proceeded to just begin to bang his

head on the desk repeatedly in front of him – to the point where I physically had to stop him from doing that. And as a first year teacher, that's a traumatic day.

But a traumatic day in the sense of – I learned a lot about myself that day as a teacher. I learned a lot about how to deal with individual student needs. And I learned how to work with that student and the other students in the class to avoid that kind of disruption from happening.

You know, I came to the conclusion that I needed to talk to some other people. So we brought a parent in, brought the guidance counselor in, brought the teachers in – [and] we talked about that day. [Based on their advice,] I worked a situation out where this young man ran an errand so I could talk to the rest of the class when he was not present – just to make sure we were all on the same page of how to help this student the most.

The aha moment came when I'm sitting in the parent meeting with the guidance counselor - and I had done some more research on autism because I didn't know enough about it – where all the recommendations they gave of consistency, of techniques, of review guides, of how to structure a class, of how to include students – every single thing on that list was a technique that should occur with every single student in the classroom, whether it's review guides or preparation for tests or breaking things up. And so my 'aha' moment came - sort of that day, and in the years that followed – as how to deal with *all* students in the classroom. There are some techniques that every student can benefit from. The techniques he benefitted from with high functioning autism – every other student in the class benefitted from.

That day – and I might be moving ahead and if I am, I apologize – but I sort of made it a goal that day to - as Kristi said – sort of the theme of trying to get to know your students individually. My largest class last year was 38 students. My smallest class last year was 32 students. This year I have 20 students in a class, which I'm sure was just an accident. To get to know that many students is a challenge, and I have a couple of things I try to do – from a student survey that they fill out at the beginning of the year – to making sure that every student talks every period.

Every student talks every period.

And sometimes that is a 'hello' at the door and a goodbye on the way out, but I spoke to that student as an individual on that day. And I try not to have it just be a hello and goodbye, but in case they were intimidated with class presentation, didn't participate in class, you know, it's the hello and goodbye that will count for me at the door. So whether it's them participating in class, [to] every person talks every day, to having them fill out a student survey, to mocking myself within their world.

(I just played – this weekend – I called it 'the Wii' in class all day – but I just played the Wii the first time and mocked myself in class for that when we were talking about technology in my US History class -)

They'll appreciate that! Like Kristi said [when introducing the four ways the panelists would address the theme and referring to a point panelist D would make], you are not one of them. You are a teacher, and they're the student. It helps to relate as much as you can. That was sort of my 'aha' moment.

Kristi: and [Mr. A] can you tell them a little bit about what the survey is? Whether that is an academic survey? a personal survey?

Mr. A: It's – I'm sure you remember from high school and maybe some other classes – but the teacher gives you that sheet the first day with the name and the period and the teacher you had last year and here's your schedule and your parent contact and do you get the newspaper, etc. and all that general student information on the front.

And on the back of the student survey is 20 sort of fill-in-the-blank questions. If I gave you $1000 what would you do with it? Do you prefer the beach or the mountains? What's your favorite television show? What book did you read this summer? Twenty sort of get-to-know you questions.

So I try to work those back in throughout the year. I sort of cheat – it's a teachers' secret, I know – but on an index card, I'll put some of those things – their name and a dash and some of those other things on an index card, and it will be on my podium in the front – where they can't see it, but I can see it every day.

And sometimes, if it comes up, and somebody says, 'Did you see so-and-so last night?' or 'Did you watch this?' Then I have something up front that is a quick little reminder that – 'Oh, six people in this class like this show' or 'so-and-so read this book this summer'. Let me bring that into class somehow. So it's sort of a cheat sheet of all of the student survey answers up front, but I'm able to sort of interact with them and have in the process gotten to know them a little bit better.

Appendix H:

"Warm Up Story"

*Narrated by experienced teacher B, a female working in an urban school*

I taught my first year [on the West Coast]. I'd gone to school [near there] and was from there and knew that kind of area better. I taught for a year at a school that was half white – half Latino, and as a first year teacher ended up teaching predominantly the ESL kind-of tracked classes. In that setting, I found that my teaching kind of naturally took on the form of trying to do everything I could to pull students out of their shell. A lot of them were recent immigrants, or their parents had immigrated, so they were not entirely comfortable speaking up in class. They were still working on their English skills in most cases, and I found that (and I hadn't even realized it because it was the only place I had taught) but everything I did was about provoking them and exciting them and making things controversial – things so that they would have to speak up – they would have to get involved – [things to] make them as expressive as possible in front of the room. And I hadn't realized that was what I was doing, but my whole teaching style – my whole structure, all my lesson plans really reflected what those students needed from me. Otherwise, you know, it was a very flat environment, and I needed to get them involved.

What helped me to realize that all of my teaching had really come to reflect them was when I moved. And I moved to [teach in a local "urban" school] after my first year, and I started teaching at [that school], and I had never been east of Texas. I had never been to the south really at all, other than the ways that Texas is the south. And I – for all intents and purposes – felt like I was in a foreign country just compared with where I had grown up and what I had known. I was really excited about teaching at [this school] and in [the district]. I knew I had a lot to learn, but I didn't really know how much I had to learn.

So all of my lessons were designed to really provoke discussion, debate, passion, and I found quickly that my students in my new environment didn't need that much provocation. They were pretty excited. They were pretty passionate. They were pretty willing to jump in and get things involved, and I had my mentor at [this school] observing me that first semester in one of my Civics classes, and I was struggling with classroom management. And I was like, "what can I do? What do I need to do?" And she pointed out that – while she really liked my warm up question . . . while it was a good one, [it] might have been part of the problem.

My question had been (you know this was for Civics and I was trying to get them to talk about questioning their government and that kind of thing) and the question was, "if you had to grade your government A through F, what grade would you give them and why?" So upon reflection, I realized that this brought up a lot of emotion for them about the grades they get. This brought up a lot of controversy and debate in their minds about conversations they had heard their parents having or their neighbors having or things they had seen in the newspaper. And really quickly the discussion turned – it was not productive – it was an argument, and kids were saying things to each other that had nothing to do with our government or our

President or anything like that. And she helped me to think that through and to see that it can be a good question, but maybe not a good question for these kids.

Um, so I continued doing the warm ups that I had always done (which were just some kind of thoughtful question to get them writing for five minutes and then we would discuss it), but I decided I really needed to think about how I set that up for this group. So instead of having them write it on any little piece of notebook paper they had, I made a structured form with five spots – one for each day of the week. I collected it at the end of the week. I made sure that they knew that had to stay with it each day, and I tailored the questions to be more – to get them to kind of be thinking and reflecting inwardly and not necessarily in a way that would provoke arguments, but rather going for more nuance. Instead of, "is it an A or an F?" – let's argue, [it was] more like, "Why do you feel this way? What do you think about this?"

And that really rippled out into everything that I do with my teaching now – making sure that everything is really structured and that everything reflects what they need from me. Not what a group of students would need from me if I went and taught down the street, or in another state, or in another country, but what they need from me. And the longer I'm there, the more I get to tinker with that and really get a feel for what that is.

Appendix I:

"Letter from a student"

*Narrated by experienced teacher D, a male working in a suburban school*

I found a letter that a student wrote a couple of years ago, and I'll read you bits and pieces and you'll see what the connection is. I think it's pretty obvious. The student said – oh, by the way the student is a junior at [this university] right now – but she says,

*"I devoted most of my time in [high school] to your class, and [it] is the class I improved in the most. I was always so disappointed when I didn't score well on one of your tests, but you got me really interested -*

(blah, blah, blah – she goes on – and this is a good student, now, a very good student)

*- the past 4 years at [this high school] have not really been that enjoyable, and I've had many obstacles thrown at me, but through it all I've managed to maintain pretty good grades. I really had some tough times, had to work extra hard –*

- and she says some more things that are not really relevant -

[laughter from audience]

I mean relevant to our discussion!

*"But I just want you to know that you are the teacher that cared most about my learning throughout high school, and I really appreciate it."*

And I'm not patting myself on the back – you'll see what I mean in a second. And when she gave me this, I read the rest of it and I went, "oh, yeah, I do have a vague memory of this."

[and she writes] *"After handing back one of my tests, you let me know that you knew I could do better and you wanted to see improvement, and that really made an impact on me. Never before had a teacher told me I could do better, and made an inclination that they cared how well I did in their class. I had always been just another student."*

- and then other things too -

But the point is that one of the things you might do in terms of getting to know and connect with students – [and] to me this was an almost insignificant event, and after I saw this [letter], I kind of remembered that I sort of knelt down beside her and said, "Suzie – which is not her name – you're smarter than this; you can do much better than that," but that was it for her. She makes an A for the rest of the year; she gets a 5 on the AP exam.

249

*"This is the class I improved in the most."*

I never in my wildest dreams thought she was a kid who felt forgotten, ignored, and for her to say I was the teacher that cared is amazing to me. I mean "Lori" [a pre-servicer in the audience who was a former high school student in this teacher's class] knows I'm not a touchy-feely kind of teacher. So something as simple as that had a huge impact.

That's an 'aha' moment as well. And sort of the lesson I got from that is, make a point of doing more of that. Just to a kid, come up and say, "you can do this," and you make it kind of regular, and all of a sudden they're on your side, and they're doing it for you. She was disappointed for her - and for me - if she didn't score well on my test. If you get that, you've got them. As least as much as they can do.

Appendix J:

"Assumptions and Assignments"

*Narrated by experienced teacher C, a female in an urban school*


I'm originally from [the Midwest]. And schools are a little bit different [there], so I came down here and thought, "OK, we're going to do a research project! Ninth graders, it's going to be great! You can research anybody in history."

I figured, you know, they're going to pull out all this great stuff and we're going to have all these great projects. Yeah.

I'm used to learning to research in fourth grade, and then you do it every single year, and by the time you're in high school, you're really good at it. But, in my classes [here], I ended up with stacks of Wikipedia and stacks of pictures and just all kinds of random stuff, and that was their research. They had found people and printed out what they had found. No paper written about it. No real information. Just stuff.

So my big 'aha' was reflection. What did I not tell them that was the missing link here? How did I not deliver the information that I wanted them to do? So now my whole thing is about clarity. Every time I give directions; every time we go through procedures in class, especially at the beginning of the year –

Your specific procedures are going to be different than a lot of other teachers. So you want to make sure to be very clear, because by the way – silent is different than quiet. Because if you say, "you need to be quiet," that means "I can whisper to my friend." Not, "silent – you need to be working."

So everything I do is clear, concise, act you like think they know nothing. It may insult a few kids, but in the end, they're going to know exactly what you want. They're going to follow directions, and they'll get used to it.

 So, um, one project I did [after I learned this lesson] was a travel guide, and instead of just saying, "I want you to make a travel guide for a country," I say, "here's a list from you to pick from; pick a country." So everyone in the class got to pick. And then once you do that, "these are the things you need to look for," and I gave them a whole big list. "Once you find those, you need to find activities. Or you need to find pictures, or places to go, food to eat." All of these things on a clear research guide, I guess. So they knew going in, "these are the things I'm looking for." Not just like, "oh I'm on the internet and I'm going to find stuff." They're looking for something specific. So everything I do is like that.

Appendix K:

"Looking for my father"

*Narrated by experienced teacher D, a male working in a suburban school*

My first [story], which is less than a short story, is that when I first started student teaching, I was coming out of [this university's] undergrad, back when you could just complete four years and go teach, and standing in the classroom, the teacher said Mr. D, and I literally turned and looked for my father. It couldn't have been me they were talking to. I'm just a student like them. And then I realized, that's right, I am in charge of this classroom now. I have to take charge.

Appendix L:

"Quoting curse words"

*Narrated by experienced teacher D, a male working in a suburban school*


In an effort to be cool, and to connect and bond with my students, I told them a true story about my best friend from high school, and we went to college together. And again, to date myself, we were around when the lottery came into existence and they were still shooting people in Vietnam. And his lottery number was number 3. I didn't have to go into the military, and he did.

So rather than being drafted (I tell the long complicated story), he spent a semester on campus doing a variety of things.

(I'm telling the students all this now – ninth graders – shows you how stupid I was.)

How he tried – he went to a doctor at Duke – my friend's father was a doctor – and tried to get him to falsify records. The doctor cussed him out and throws him out of his office. He tries to get us to kick his knee to tear the ligaments in his knee. We go, "we can't do that; that's ridiculous." So we won't do that. He swallows aluminum foil, and goes to the hospital complaining of an ulcer. They give him the barium – whatever it is – it shows up as aluminum foil  - they cuss him out and throw him out too. Then he walks around campus the entire second semester eating salt to raise his blood pressure. That doesn't work either.

So he decides to join the National Guard, and after two or three days in basic training, he goes, "that's it; I quit." And when they blow the horn, and whatever it is they do in the morning for you to get up, he refuses to get up. His sergeant comes, takes him to the company commander where the company commander – while he's standing at attention - proceeds to call, as he put it, "me and my mother every name in the book," and he laced the conversation with profanity.

In my effort to be cool, I quoted my friend with all the M-F- this, and M-F- that, and all this kind of stuff, and as soon as it was over, I went, "oh my G, what have I done?!" I was in a conservative, rural community, and I have just laid out every name in the book [and] talked about my friend avoiding the draft. I had the most miserable weekend I had ever had as a student teacher. I was waiting for the parents to call. I was waiting for the principal to call. I was waiting for the superintendent to call. And I go back to school the next Monday sweating. I'm going to be called into the office. And nothing happened. It's like, "phew; I made it."

My message to you - my 'aha' moment – [is] don't be cool and say stupid things to students to be their friends. It can come back to bite you. It didn't me, and that's only because I'm lucky. It only takes one kid to tell their parents and your career might sink before it starts. That was the biggest 'aha' moment for me as a student teacher.

Appendix M:

"Teaching an ESL class" and "Attending Extracurriculars"
(labeled as a separate section within Appendix M)

*Narrated by experienced teacher A, a male working in an urban school*

I had the pleasure of teaching – and I say that sincerely – the pleasure of teaching as an [English as a Second Language - ESL] lead teacher (like you are [to another panelist] now) – for social studies. I taught ESL world history, US history, Civics and economics; we shelter those classes at [my school].

And I remember very clearly doing it the first time and learned again all the things I didn't know as I taught those classes. And I remember an ESL class, and they got me pretty good. For I think half the semester – Kristi, if that's right – half the semester in addition to calling me – because they never addressed me by name, which was my first mistake – I was called maestro, "teacher." And they would throw this word in with maestro, they would call me "pandejo."

Now, if you don't know your Spanish, you might want to consider looking that up in your free time. I did not know [the translation/definition], but they worked [the word "pandejo"] in so well, that I thought, "alright, maybe that's another way to say teacher that I'm just not familiar with, and I'm not going to research, because certainly they're not saying something negative."

[I] proceeded to see our ESL coordinator who has become a very good friend of mine –weeks later, WEEKS later – and she said, "well how are things going?," and I said, "I think they really like me." She goes, "really? How can you tell?" I proceeded to say, well, this is what they call me, and she just about lost her mind. She proceeded to both define that word and say, "here are the consequences you might want to consider regarding the students who are using that term in class."

And so I made the decision to wait until it happened again. Not to just blow right in there the next day. I managed to wait, though I had some write up slips at the front of my table with the names already prewritten out of the students

[laughter from class and panel]

who I knew would call me that name, and when they did, I proceeded to say, "you know, I've done some research, and I want to make sure you get that [the slip] before you leave." And so then they just thought it was hilarious, and they all laughed out loud, and almost eagerly accepted their punishment because they were so proud that they were able to get away with it for about eight weeks, and I felt like a tool.

[laughter from everyone]

I *feel* like a tool and this was like four years ago. I've been doing this for 5 years, and I don't know what I'm doing. No. I don't have a clue, and it was a cultural barrier for a little while; it was obviously a language barrier.

You just have to know your audience. The same thing that everyone has said. You have to know your audience. And the environment you [to another panelist, referencing her quiet ESL classes] used to be in – it's hard to draw them out. And when you draw them out, you don't want *that* to come out, so you have to find techniques or strategies with students who are in that room.

You know, the discussion before [in which someone asked], "can you plan ahead?" You can't. I don't think you can set that up over the summer.

**[The following section could also be considered a separate story, entitled "Attending Extracurriculars"]**

I think being as clear and consistent as possible is the way to go, and I think trying to get to know your students – as was said before –make time in your life. You've obviously committed to this field. Make time in your life to go to a football game, to go to a soccer game, to go to a musical. See these kids and let them see you out at school events. That way you can be human. It's so worth it. One - because sometimes those will just knock your socks off.

I had one of my students play - in South Pacific – "Bloody Mary" in South Pacific. And this girl was the quietest girls I had ever had in class, and she was Bloody Mary in South Pacific! And if you've seen that - that might be the most outrageous, offensive character – in a good way – but outrageous, offensive character in that musical! And I saw her on Monday morning, and I went, "you've got to be kidding me; that was ridiculous!" But she was so talented! But the first question she said was, "you were there?" You know, they like seeing you and they appreciate knowing that you care about what they're doing, whether it's academically, "you can do better on that test" or "saw you in the game; man, that twenty-five yard run was awesome!."

(You know, I like to say that every once in a while because they know that I'm not the athlete and they're just impressed that I know what a twenty-five yard run is!)

[laughter]

But they like to see you, and they like to get to know you, and you shouldn't hesitate to do that, as long as you maintain the teacher role. Those culture and language barriers – that was a whole other thing that was not even on my radar when I first got out of undergrad. It was teaching. Not even on my radar.

Appendix N:

"The protest"

*Narrated by experienced teacher B, a female working in an urban school*

This was actually last year. And I still have these students now, because I have them for a two year [Advanced] Psychology course, and they're fabulous. I love them. Um, but, this was a very interesting situation last year. I had never quite encountered anything like this.

But one day, I just really – this is an [advanced] class – they're supposed to be some of the top of the top of the school - and I just felt like they weren't really engaging with things. And one girl in particular - I kind of got in her face a little bit, and I kind of rode her on some things like, "what do you mean by that? Tell me what you're talking about. Tell me what you mean. Explain that." And just, you know, and that's not typically how I would engage with a student, but in that moment I wanted to hear her – I wanted her to know that I was noticing that she wasn't really going [unintelligible].

Um, she - she didn't like that. And she's a socially powerful person. She's –you know – popular, stylish, pretty, and she decided she didn't like that, and she was going to make sure that she let me know, and that her friends helped her let me know. I'd never seen anything like this.

So, the next day, they come into class, and I start with my warm up where they write for five minutes, and then we're going to discuss the question, and all the - for the first time ever in this group - there aren't eight hands up in the air waiting, and five more behind that. There was – it took me a little bit to catch on – but I realized that this one student had organized her handful of - kind of best friends that were in this class – [and] that they weren't going to contribute. They were mad. They were going to protest what I had done to their little ringleader the day before. And it took me just a little bit to catch on with this, and I kind of adjusted in the moment – didn't make a big deal out of it – didn't say, "what are you –?" I didn't kind of go into her again; clearly that strategy the day before had not gone as intended. Instead, I focused on the other students in the room that clearly were oblivious.

And it was actually – as I left that lesson that day, I thought, "man that was really nice that that student and her kind of group of friends took a back seat." And I was reminded that I need to focus on these other students more. So it got me thinking about a lot of different things.

One was that I think that sometimes teachers feel like they have to respond in the moment, or that they'll look like they're letting the students win. And I see that a lot at my school, and I don't think that's terribly important, as long as somehow in the long run, if you're supporting your students' learning. You know, I didn't need to – right then – go head to head with her or any of them – make them contribute, make them speak, because I had set up that way. I had let it happen that way. So I let it play out, and the next day, I set up the discussion so it wasn't just, "Who wants to talk? Raise your hand." But put more clarity and structure about

who had to participate when and how many times you needed to participate to get this much credit.  And these were all the top of the top kind of students – these [advanced] students, so they weren't going to lose points to support their little protest with their friends.  So they were all back in it.  And within two minutes – three minutes – they had all forgotten they were upset.  They had all forgotten there was this little protest, and we were back to being a class.

And I learned a very good lesson that if I rely on those students who are more naturally inclined to speak up and contribute when I don't have all that structure, then I'm missing all those other students.  When they had that little protest, I was reminded of all those contributions I was missing out on, and it was just a very good, refreshing reminder for me in my fifth year of teaching [that] just because most of the time, things chugged along pretty smoothly and went pretty well – that that wasn't good enough.  That you have to have structure  - like you [to another panelist] said, "structure, clarity, reinforcement for the kinds of behaviors that you want built in."

So – you know- what I took away from it is that these students are impressive little organizers – one – when they want to be, and that [their] social power is profound.

But that also, I don't want to get too comfortable with things just because they're working well enough.

And also that you don't have to – I think I made the right call by not engaging in the moment when I saw that she was trying to subvert what was going on in the class – by going back, retooling, restructuring, and making it so that that sort of thing wasn't really possible.

Appendix O:

"Saving Face"

*Narrated by experienced teacher D, a male working in a suburban school*


I've found myself in the middle of class getting angry, and I'll call on "Joe." "Joe, why don't you know whatever that is?" And Joe will do something wrong. And Joe will take a drink bottle that he finished, and he will toss it over in the trash can, and I will immediately get mad, because he's not supposed to throw; it's a disruption. I go, "Joe – you know you're not supposed to do that!" and he looks at me like –

And I'll go, "Now Joe and I set this up yesterday. I wanted him to come in here and show you guys exactly what not to do." Boom. I've made my point to Joe. Joe just saved face. I'm not jumping on his back. He and I are on the same team, and Joe has [my] back, and everything is ok. He doesn't throw the trash anymore. I let him escape, got my point across. Gave a lesson to everybody else. And if I just yelled at him, he would have sat there and sulked the entire class. Best case scenario, he would have learned nothing and refused to do his homework. You give him an out, and he'll stay in the class with you.

Appendix P:

Pre-service Written Reflection One (Part of Stage B)

For researcher use only: coded response by _____

(1) Please describe your reaction to the panel.

(2) Are you glad you heard these stories? Why or why not?

(3) Do you believe you will remember any of these stories a few weeks from now? Why or why not?

(4) Did you learn anything from these stories? If so, what?

(5) What, if any, impact do these stories have on you as you determine how you will design and manage your classroom? If any story altered your plans in some way, please note which story, what part of your plan has been altered and why.

Appendix Q:

Pre-service Focus Group Prompts (Part of Stage B)

**<u>Opening Question:</u>**
What is your reaction to the sharing of these stories?

**<u>Topics for "further pinpointing" (pinpointing phrase from Pirtrkoskwi, 1978):</u>**
• intellectual response/insight gained?
• emotional response/positive or negative?
• perception of author

**<u>Additional Questions:</u>**
• Were the stories in accordance with your previous beliefs or experiences? (question inspired by Steiner, 2005)
• Were the stories relevant to your future classroom lives? (question inspired by Steiner, 2005)
• Will the stories impact your actions in the classroom or how you teach?

Appendix R:

Pre-service Written Reflection Two (Part of Stage B)


For researcher use only: coded response by _____


**<u>Question:</u>**
How has participating in the group conversation affected your response to the stories?
Please note any change in

1) your reaction to the panel

2) your thoughts about the stories

3) the likelihood you will remember the stories, or

4) if/what you learned from the stories

5) the impact the stories will have on the plans you make or actions you take as a teacher.

Appendix S:

Pre-service Interview Two (Stage C)

**Questions intended from outset of the study:**
1) Have you heard stories from any experienced teachers this fall? If so, what stories?

2) Please describe the experience of hearing those stories. (Did hearing the story have an impact? If so, please describe the impact.)

3) Points of interest or follow up questions:
   a. Why do they think the stories were shared?
   b. Did any formal or informal reflection occur?

**Questions added in response to data previously collected:**
1) Describe how your fall is going?
2) Where are you doing your practica observations?
3) Please describe your thoughts about the panel presentation in September.
   a. Are there any panelists or stories that you remember in particular? That you felt more of a connection to/with?
   b. What impact did the written or focus group reflection have on your thinking about the stories?
4) What was your original impression of the four schools represented on the panel? Did that change how you listened to each narrator and their stories?
   a. Do you feel pre-service teachers can learn more from the stories of experienced teachers who work in schools or classes similar to the ones those pre-service teachers want to work in? or does the type of school/class matter?

**\* This interview also included questions that were individual to each pre-service participant and based on their previous, individual responses. All relevant data elicited by these questions are included in the results section.**
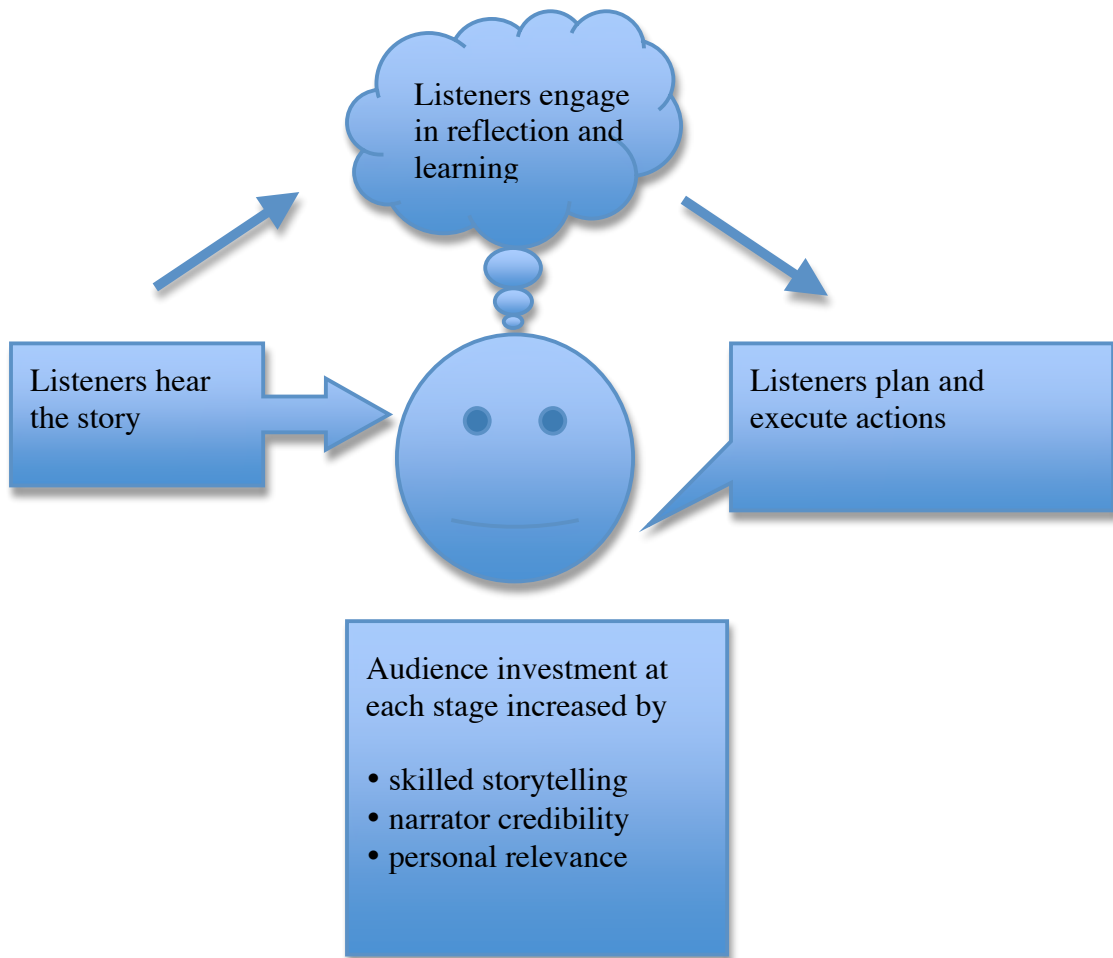
Appendix T:

Pre-service Interview Three (Stage D)

**Questions intended from outset of the study:**
 (1) What has had the most impact on your actions in your current classrooms or your plans for future classrooms?

(2) What stories do you remember from the fall?

(3) How often and when do you recall those stories?

(4) Have those stories had any impact on your actions in your current classrooms or your plans for future classrooms?  If so, which stories and what impact?

(5) Do you believe there are reasons stories do or do not impact you?  Do other elements of your teacher training influence who you listen to or how you hear the stories?  How would you compare the impact of hearing select stories in a formal setting with guided reflection with the impact of hearing various stories in other settings?

(6) Have you experienced any of the same "oh no" or "aha" moments that were detailed in the stories you heard in the fall?  If so, please answer the following questions:
   a)  What did you learn in that moment?
   b)  Do you believe that learning could have occurred in any other way during your pre-service training?  If so, how?  and
   c)  Will you share the story of that moment with other teachers?  Why or why not?


(7) Think about the experience of hearing from a teacher panel and engaging in the structured reflection afterwards.  How would you compare the impact of that experience with the impact of hearing stories in other settings?  For example, in which setting are you more likely to listen to the story, engage in reflection and learning, or have actions influenced by the story?

(8) Look at this figure.  Is it an accurate representation of the impact that hearing experienced teachers' stories had on you?  If it is *not* an accurate representation, what would you change?  (This was the next-to-last question asked, followed only by the "tardy story question" at the end of Appendix T, which was moved to the end due to length.  In an effort to limit external influences on responses to this pathway question the citations were not included on the draft of figure 1 shown to pre-service participants.)

*Figure 1: Potential Pathway (proposed at outset of study)*
(based on ideas in Preskill, 2001, Akerson, 2004, Witherell & Noddings, 1991, Phillion, 2005)



Listeners engage in reflection and learning

Listeners hear the story

Listeners plan and execute actions

Audience investment at each stage increased by

• skilled storytelling
• narrator credibility
• personal relevance

**Questions added in response to data previously collected:**

(1) What are your plans for next year?

*Impact Questions*
(2) Question inspired by quotes from the chapter 2 literature review, including quotes by Charon, 2004 and Steiner, 2005) Do you believe that stories have the power to
 - bridge theory and practice?
 - elicit empathy that leads to 'enlightenment' without reliving another's 'tragedies'
 - gain "essential clinical and humanistic skills" (Charon, 2004, p. 862)
 - persuade
 - represent "main themes and important variations" (Steiner, 2005, p. 2903)
 - motivate
 - facilitate understanding
 - provide examples
 - instill values
 - establish expectations
 - introduce real world situations
 - teach how to avoid veterans' mistakes
 - build a different type of knowledge? "personal, practical knowledge" (Phillion, 2005, p. 2 citing Connelly & Clandinin, 1988)?


(3) If I were to tell you that you were going to have a student with autism in your class next year, would that trigger memory of any stories you heard? If so, what thoughts/actions does that trigger?

(4) Have you experienced any "oh no" or "aha" moments during your student teaching? If so:
   a. What did you learn in that moment?
   b. Do you believe that learning could have occurred in any other way during your pre-service training? If so, how?
   c. Think back. Were there any stories you heard that were trying to teach you that very lesson or provide that same insight? Is there a reason you had to 'learn it the hard way'?
   d. Will you share the story of that moment with other teachers? Why or why not?

(6) Question given to pre-service participants on a sheet of paper: (Note: To prevent influence by the number of texts supporting each perspective, sources were not included in the draft given to pre-service participants.)

*Figure 2: Question about debate in the literature*

---

*There is debate about whether or not stories can really have an impact on a pre-service teacher.*

*One perspective:*
*Some say that people can learn from the stories of others only to the extent that the story causes them to rethink or reexamine their own experiences, and they emphasize that pre-service teachers don't have classroom experiences yet. This limits the pre-service teacher's ability to learn from a story, and means that a pre-service teacher might find a story unbelievable, or might not be able to connect with a story on a personal level (Szabo, 2006).*

*Another perspective:*
 *Others say that stories are particularly important for pre-service teachers because they allow pre-service teachers to imagine their future classroom lives, provide a look at real classrooms (Phillion, 2005), add intensity to communication, and create personal connections to the teller and content (McLean, 1993).*

*What do you think about those arguments?  Do you think stories can impact a pre-service teacher?*

---

*Analysis: Influence of narrator credibility and environment*
 (7) Are the following elements important in terms of the impact a story will have on you?
- whether or not you are invested?
- skilled storytelling?
- knowledge of the teller's credibility? If so, what would make someone 'credible' in your eyes? Years of experience?  Teaching at a particular type of school?  Whether they have taught at the grade level you are interested in? A direct connection to your personal plans?  (i.e. teaching in the state or school where you plan on teaching or are doing student teaching?)
- are there things that would turn you away?

(8) Are there elements of your teacher training that influence who you listen to or how you hear the stories?

(9) Do you feel that you are more or less receptive to stories with advice now than before your student teaching?

(10) How has student-teaching impacted your confidence?  And does that affect how you hear things?

*Conclusion: Ideal role of stories in a/your teacher education program*
(11) What is the role of stories in this teacher education program?  (verbal or written stories)

(12) Should stories be part of a/your teacher education program?  What role should they play?

(13) If the ideal role is larger, is there time, or would they have to take the place of something else?  What could be removed?

(14) Are there stories you want to hear that you are not hearing?  Questions you want answers to at this point in your training?

(15) Are there opportunities for you to give feedback on what is working and what is not in the MAT program?

<u>Impact question: (but keep at end, due to length and read aloud to pre-service participants)</u>

(16) What is the tardy policy for your class?  If you get to design the policy as a lead teacher (i.e. it is not completely controlled by the school), what will your policy be?  (i.e. when is someone tardy?  A bell rings – do they have to be in the room?  Seated?  Working? What are the consequences of 1 tardy?  2?  3?  Any warnings or straight to the consequences?)

## Now the story: "Tardy Policy" Story[16]

I thought my tardy policy would create order. It was clear, and I would be consistent about enforcing it. If you weren't in your seat when the bell finished ringing, you were tardy. First tardy of the quarter meant a warning. Second tardy — a fifteen minute detention. Third tardy — a phone call home. And on the fourth tardy of the quarter, school rules dictated that the administration would become involved. Surely, I thought, the policy would encourage students to begin class on time and in a calm fashion.
It turned out I was completely wrong.

Instead of signaling quiet, the bell was a trigger for chaos. Some students would hear it and dive toward a desk, pushing aside smaller classmates. Amid the confusion, I would hear loud exclamations, "*@#%! I thought I had time to sharpen my pencil before the bell rang!" Also, once a student realized that the ringing had stopped, there was no more incentive to take a seat with any degree of efficiency. "The teacher is already marking me tardy," a student would think. "I might as well finish my conversation with Amanda before settling in for the day."

Something had to change. We had to begin class promptly, but this wasn't working. The chaos stirred up in our first five seconds set a horrible tone for the rest of the day. What could I do to get us off on the right foot as we began our class experience? I wanted the bell to signify the beginning of order. How could I use it to inspire both punctuality *and* civil behavior? My current policy had turned it into a starting gun, signaling an out-of-control, two-second race.

## Time to settle in

A good solution would require my students to maintain their "I must get there" mentality while introducing the idea that "I can behave civilly and still get there on time." Perhaps the best way to achieve both goals was to alter the bell's meaning for my students. Maybe the bell could serve as a thirty-second warning. When my students heard it, they would also hear me begin a countdown.

There's the bell. In thirty seconds, I expect you to be seated. Once seated, you should read and follow the instructions that are written on the board. We're at twenty seconds now…now down to ten…in five seconds everyone should be reading the instructions…two…one…and now, if you are not seated and focused, your tardy will be marked down.

When introducing the idea to my students, I told them the extra thirty seconds of "settling-in" time was part of an exchange I was offering. They could have that extra time to

---

[16] The source of this story was not shared with participants.  It was written by the researcher (a revised version of Smith, 2005, The thirty-second system.).

get to their seats and get started. In return, I expected them to be completely focused when that thirty-second count wound down.

The difference in my room was remarkable. Instead of catching students off guard and inspiring mass panic, the bell became a force that moved students into their desks. My willingness to invest thirty seconds in the new approach actually saved us time on a daily basis. Under the previous system, it had taken us several minutes to recover from the chaos created by the bell.

## Countdowns for classroom management

The countdown method was so effective that I began using it to manage other moments in my classroom. Whenever I needed students' attention, I would give them a set time to conclude their current activities.

I realize that you are all working on your essays, but in thirty seconds I'm going to need your attention. Finish up the sentence you're writing and then please focus on me. In thirty seconds, I'm going to give your group its next set of instructions. Finish what you're saying now or make a note of what you need to continue discussing. You can return to that topic once we've gone over a few points as a class.

All of a sudden, instead of writing and whispering while I was giving essential instructions, my students had time to quickly finish a thought or activity then turn their attention to me. At its most fundamental level, it was a response to respect. I was giving them a few seconds to bring an idea or statement to conclusion. Most would do so, then focus on me.

Of course, no system is perfect. I still have students who receive tardies on a regular basis, and I still have a few who want to continue talking to group members when I need them to listen to me. However, there is a critical mass of students who will follow instructions when they feel respected and when those instructions are reasonable, and that critical mass can have a powerful impact on the rest of the group.

So consider providing your students with a little time to transition into quiet attention. You may find that those few seconds are easily recovered through improved productivity, and that even a small investment of time can lead to a new atmosphere of calm and respect. In my room, the countdown approach has made for smoother starts and much more effective transitions. This has enhanced both our classroom environment and my students' performance. It has also made classroom management more manageable for me as a teacher.

Follow up questions:
Does this story/advice change your thinking or your plans at all? Does it have the potential to? Is the story part important, or would just the advice be enough?

**\* This interview also included questions that were individual to each pre-service participant and based on their previous, individual responses. All relevant data elicited by these questions are included in the results section.**

# REFERENCES

Akerson, V.L.  (2004) Designing a science methods course for early childhood pre-service teachers. *Journal of Elementary Science Education*.  Retrieved April 17, 2008 from The Free Library Web site: www.thefreelibrary.com

Andrews, Adena. (2007, Sept. 27).  *Rookie orientation: Welcome to the NBA, newbies*. Retreived February 2008 from http://sports.espn.go.com

Bargil, T.  (2005, Oct. 19).  *Rory Sparrow and the NBA Legends Easing Rookie Transition*. Retreived February 10, 2008 from Legends of Basketball Web site:  www.nbrpa.com

Beck, H.  (2007, Sept. 21).  A Lesson in Gambling From One Who Knows.  Retrieved February 11. 2008 from The New York Times: http://www.nytimes.com

Begley, S. (2008, Feb. 2).  *Happiness: Enough Already*.  Newsweek.  Retrieved April 16, 2008 from www.newsweek.com.

Bemis, D. G. (1999) *Effects of mentoring programs on new teacher retention in selected suburban schools*.  Boston: ProQuest Digital Dissertations.

Berthelot, D. H.  (1996).  The value of storysharing.  Retrieved April 17, 2008 from Berthelot Consulting Web site: www.berthelotconsulting.com/drdolly/story.htm

Binks, E., Smith, D.L., Smith, L.J., & Joshi, R. M.  (Fall 2009).  Tell me your story: a reflection strategy for preservice teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*.  36(4), 141-156.

Buehl, M. M. & Fives, H.  (2009).  Exploring teachers' beliefs about teaching knowledge: Where does it come from?  Does it change? *The Journal of Experimental Education*. 77(4), pp. 367-407.

Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. K.  (1982). Qualitative research for education : an introduction to theory and methods. Boston : Allyn and Bacon.

Boreen, J. & Niday, D. (2003). *Mentoring Across Boundaries: Helping Beginning Teachers Succeed in Challenging Situations*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Breaux, A. (1999). Easing the way for new teachers. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*.  (pp. 13-18).  Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Brighton, C. M. (1999). Keeping good teachers: Lessons from novices. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*. (pp. 197-201). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Brooks, M. (1999). Mentors Matter. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*. (pp. 53-59). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Brown, Deborah. (1994, March 17). *Using Interviews To Discover Students' Perceptions and Perplexities*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (45th, Nashville, TN, March 16-19, 1994).

Charon, R. (2004, Feb. 26). Narrative and Medicine. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. 350, 862-864.

Chenail, R. J. (December 1995). Presenting Qualitative Data. *The Qualitative Report*. (2) 3. Retrieved on March 3, 2010 from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-3/presenting.html

Christians, C. (2000). Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y (Eds.) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2nd Ed*. (pp. 133-155). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. Introduction. In Connelly, F. M. & Clandinin, D. J. (Eds.), Shaping a professional identity: stories of educational practice (pp. 1-5). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Danin, R. & Bacon, M. A. (1999). What teachers like (and don't like) about mandated induction programs. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*. (pp. 202-209) Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Davidson, M.R. (2004). A phenomenological evaluation: using storytelling as a primary teaching method. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 4, 184-189.

Denning, S. (2004, April 6). *New England Journal of Medicine Endorses Narrative*. Retrieved February 10, 2008 from The Website for Business and Organizational Storytelling: www.stevedenning.com/SIN-111-narrative-medicine-Charon.html

Ellis, C. & Bochner, A. (2000) Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y (Eds.) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2nd Ed*. (pp. 733-768). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Ferguson, P. (1989). Preferred modes of inquiry among prospective social studies teachers: the implications for preparing reflective practitioners. Paper presented to the College and University Faculty Assembly at the annual meeting of the National Council for Social Studies. (St. Louis, MO, November 10, 1989).

Fine, M., Weis, L, Weseen, S. & Wong, L. (2000) For Whom? Qualitative Research, Representations, and Social Responsibilities. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y (Eds.) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2nd Ed*. (pp. 107-132). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Fontana, A. & Frey, J. (2000). The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y (Eds.) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2nd Ed*. (pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Fryer, B. (June 2003). "Storytelling that moves people. A conversation with screenwriting coach Robert McKee." *Harvard Business Review* 81.6 (June 2003): 51(5). Retrieved February 10, 2008 from Expanded Academic ASAP. Gale. UNC Chapel Hill: http://find.galegroup.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/itx/start.do?prodId=EAIM

Frykholm, J. & Meyer, M. R. (1999). Encouraging innovation in an age of reform. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*. (pp. 145-156). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Garmon, M. A. (April 1993). *Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions of the First Year of a Teacher Preparation Program*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).

Glazer, M. (1982). The threat of the stranger: Vulnerability, reciprocity and fieldwork. In J. Sieber (Ed.), *Ethics of social research: Fieldwork, regulation and publication*. New York: Springer-Verlag. 49-70.

Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming Qualitative Researchers* (3rd Ed.) New York: Longman.

Goodson, I. & Walker, R. (1995). Telling Tales. In McEwan, H. & Egan, K. (Eds.), *Narrative in Teaching, Learning, and Research* (pp. 184-194) New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Graham, R. J. (1995). Stories of teaching as tragedy and romance: When experience becomes text. In McEwan, H. & Egan, K. (Eds.), *Narrative in Teaching, Learning, and Research* (pp. 195-210) New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Gudmundsdottir, S. (1995). The narrative nature of pedagogical content knowledge In McEwan, H. & Egan, K. (Eds.), *Narrative in Teaching, Learning, and Research* (pp. 24-38) New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Halford, J. M. (1999). First things first: How to set up an induction program. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*. (pp. 34-39). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Hatton, S. D. (2005). *Teaching by Heart: The Foxfire Interviews*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Hannum, W. (2004). *Instructional Theorists: D.P. Ausubel*. Handout in EDUC 252.

Haven, K. (2007) *Story proof: the science behind the startling power of story*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Heidkamp, A & Shapiro, J. (1999). The elements of a supportive induction program. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*. (pp. 40-46). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Hicks, C. D., Glasgow, N.A. & McNary, S.J. *What Successful Mentors Do: Research-Based Strategies for New Teacher Induction, Training, and Support*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Holt, Nicholas L. (2003). Representation, Legitimation, and Autoethnography: An Autoethnographic Writing Story. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(1). Article 2. Retrieved October 2006 from http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/2_1/html/holt.html

Jackson, P. W. (1995). On the Place of Narrative in Teaching. In McEwan, H. & Egan, K. (Eds.), *Narrative in Teaching, Learning, and Research* (pp. 3-23) New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Kizlik, B. (Updated Feb 13, 2010). *Ideas About Becoming a Good Social Studies Teacher*. Retrieved March 2010 from www.adprima.com/socialteach.htm

Kohler, F., Henning, J.E., & Usma-Wilches, J. (2008). Preparing preservice teachers to make instructional decisions: An examination of data from the teacher work sample. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 24: 2108-2117.

Lawrence, M. (2003, Sept. 30). *LeBron, rookies learn from Kobe's example*. Retrieved February 10, 2008 from http://sports.espn.go.com

Lederman, N. G., Ledermen, J. S. & Abd-El-Khalick, Fouad. (2007, April 13). Teaching Science in the 21st Century: Alternative Certification: An Alternative Perspective. Retrieved April 21, 2008 from NSTA WebNews Digest: http://www3.nsta.org

Leventhal, R. & Green, K. (2002). Introduction to the Second Edition: Ten Reasons to Tell Stories in the Classroom. In Brody, E., Goldspinner, J., Green, K., Leventhal, R. & Porcino, J. (Eds.), *Spinning Tales, Weaving Hope* (pp. x-xv). Gabriola Island, British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers.

Mack-Kirschner, A. *Powerful classroom stories from accomplished teachers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Maggs-Rapport, F. (2000). Combining methodological approaches in research: ethnography and interpretive phenomenology. Journal of Advanced Nursing. 31(1), 219-225.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. (2006). *Designing Qualitative Research* (4th Ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Martin, S. & Robbins, K. (1999). Induction: The first five days. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*. (pp. 27-33) Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Mason, H. (1996). *The Power of Storytelling: A Step-by-Step Guide to Dramatic Learning in K-12*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Mathison, C. & Pohan, C.A. (Spring 2007). Helping Experienced and Future Teachers Build Professional Interaction Skills through the Writing and Reading of Narratives. Issues in Teacher Education 16(1), 61-73.

Maxen, M. V. (1990) *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. London: State University of New York Press.

McDonald, D. (Summer 2009). March of the not-so-perfect penguins: storytelling as pedagogy. Kappa Delta Pi Record. 45(4), 180-183.

McDrury, J. & Alterio, M. (2003). *Learning through storytelling in higher education*. London: Routledge.

McEwan, H. & Egan, K (1995). Introduction. In McEwan, H. & Egan, K. (Eds.), *Narrative in Teaching, Learning, and Research* (pp. vii-xv). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

McLean, S. V. (1993). Learning from teachers' stories. Childhood Education. 69(5), 265-268.

Meyers, S. A. & Martin, Matthew, M. (2006). Understanding the Source: Teacher Credibility and Aggressive Communication Traits. In Mottet, T. P., Richmond, V. P. & McCroskey, J. C. (Eds.), *Handbook of Instructional Communication: Rhetorical & Relational Perspectives* (pp. 67-88). Boston, MA: Pearson, Education, Inc.

Miller, J. (1990). *Creating Spaces and Finding Voices: Teachers Collaborating for Empowerment*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Miller, J. (August 27, 2006). School is Out. *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved December 9, 2006 from www.boston.com/news.

Moon, J. & Fowler, J. (Feb 2008). "'There is a story to be told...'; A framework for the conception of story in higher education and professional development. *Nurse Education Today* 28.2 (Feb 2008): 232(8). Retrieved February 10, 2008 from Expanded Academic ASAP. Gale. UNC Chapel Hill: http://find.galegroup.com

Nelson, M. H. (1993). *Teacher Stories: Teaching Archetypes Revealed by Analysis*. Ann Arbor, MI: Prakken Publications, Inc.

*Orientation Week: 2003 NBA Rookie Transition Program Overview*. (2003). Retrieved February 10, 2008, from http://www.nba.com/news/rtp_030919.html

Phillion, J. (2005). Narrative in Teacher Education. In Miller, P.C. (Ed.), *Narratives From the Classroom: An Introduction to Teaching*. (pp. 1-11). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Piotrkoskwi, C.S. (1978). "Work and the Family System: A Naturalistic Study of Working-Class and Lower-Middle-Class Families." New York: The Free Press, pp. 287-320.

Porcino, J. (1991) Stories, the Teaching Tool: Using and Creating Follow-Up Activities. In Brody, E., Goldspinner, J., Green, K., Leventhal, R. & Porcino, J. (Eds.), *Spinning Tales, Weaving Hope* (2002) (pp. 11-24). Gabriola Island, British Columbia, Canada: New Society Publishers.

Preskill, S. L. & Jacobvitz, R.S. (2001). *Stories of Teaching: A Foundation of Educational Renewal*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Radencich, M.C. & Barksdale-Ladd, M.A. (Spr 1998). Strong back, legs, feet, and a good pair of shoes: connecting stories of inspiring teachers to coursework in teacher education. *The Teacher Educator*. 33(4), 230-247.

Rotanz, L. (2001, Feb/Mar) Breaking free of the puppeteer: perspectives on one practice teacher's experience. *The High School Journal*. pp. 19-25.

Schriever, A. K. (1999). "I Am SO Excited!": Mentoring the student teacher. In Scherer (Ed.), *A better beginning: supporting and mentoring new teachers*. (pp. 77-84). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Schubert, W.H. (1991). Teacher lore: a basis for understanding praxis. In Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (Eds.) *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (pp. 207-233). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Schwarz, G., Alberts, J. & Hudgens, S. (2001). *Teacher Lore*. Bloomington, Ind: Phi Delta Kappa Fastbacks. 447, 7-79.

Schweitzer, K. (nd) *Business School Case Studies*. Retrieved February 10, 2008 from http://businessmajors.about.com

Seifert, K. (2005). *Learning about peers: A missed opportunity for educational psychology*. The Clearing House, in press.

Shank, M. J. (2006). Teacher storytelling: A means for creating and learning within a collaborative space. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 22, 711-721.

Shuman, A. (2005) *Other People's Stories*. Chicago: University of Illinois Free Press.

Smith, K.J. (November 5, 2005). It's November: Do you know where your energy is? . *The First Year*. Retrieved December 10, 2006 from www.learnnc.org.

Smith, K.J. (November 13, 2005) James and the Giant Pencil: Lessons in Classroom Management. *The First Year*. Retrieved December 10, 2006 from www.learnnc.org.

Smith, K.J. (January 22, 2006). The thirty-second system for managing tardies and misdirected attention. *The First Year*. Retrieved February 3, 2010 from www.learnnc.org.

Sorrell, J.M. & Redmond, G.M. (1995). Interviews in qualitative nursing research: differing approaches for ethnographic and phenomenological studies. Journal of Advanced Nursing 21, pp. 1117-1122.

St. John, E. P. (1910-1919). Stories and Story-Telling in Moral and Religious Education. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London.

Steiner, J. F. (2005, Dec. 14). The Use of Stories in Clinical Research and Health Policy. Journal of American Medical Association. 294(22), 2901-2904.

Stodolsky, S. S. (1988). *The Subject Matters: Classroom Activity in Math and Social Studies*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Szabo, S. (Spr 2006). Can Using Teacher Stories Enhance Teacher Candidates' Teaching Knowledge? Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin. 72(3), 5-7,13)

Waghorn, A. & Stevens, K. (1996). Communication between theory and practice: How student teachers develop theories of teaching. *American Journal of Teacher Education*. 21(2), pp. 70-81.

Wallace, D. K. (Ed.) (1996).  *Journey to school reform : moving from reflection to action through story telling*.  Washington, D.C.: NEA Professional Library.

Waldron, P. W., Collie, T. R., & Davies, C. M. W.  *Telling stories about school: an invitation*.  Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.

Wallace, D.K. (1996). A guide for connecting reflection and action for student success.  In Wallace, D. K. *Journey to school reform: Moving from reflection to action through storytelling*. (pp. 49-73).  Washington DC: National Education Association Professional Library.

Weber, S. (1993).  The narrative anecdote in teacher education.  19(1), 71-82.

*What is pre-service training?*  (1999).  Retrieved April 17, 2008 from http://www.sil.org

*Why qualitative methods are usually best for engagement work*.  (July 2006).  Retrieved December 10, 2006 from www.dialoguebydesign.net.

Witherell, C. & Noddings, N.  (1991). Epilogue: Themes remembered and foreseen.  In Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (Eds.) *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (pp. 279-280). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Witherell, C. & Noddings, N.  (1991). Narrative and notions of the self and the other.  In Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (Eds.) *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (pp. 79-81). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Witherell, C. & Noddings, N.  (1991). Prologue: an invitation to our readers.  In Witherell, C. & Noddings, N. (Eds.) *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education* (pp. 1-12). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.