Learning to teach literacy: A beginning kindergarten teacher's developing pedagogical content knowledge

Marla H Mallette
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LEARNING TO TEACH LITERACY: A BEGINNING KINDERGARTEN
TEACHER'S DEVELOPING PEDAGOGICAL
CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

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of the requirements for the

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Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College
ABSTRACT

Learning to Teach Literacy: A Beginning Kindergarten Teacher's Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge

by

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Dr. John E. Readence, Examination Committee Chair
Professor of Literacy Education
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This study focused on the learning to teach process of a beginning kindergarten teacher in the area of literacy through the investigation of her pedagogical content knowledge. Shulman (1986) described pedagogical content knowledge as "the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (p. 9). The purpose of the study was to explore how this teacher transformed her knowledge of literacy into pedagogy for the diverse students she taught. The participant in this study, Nancy Green, was a white female, aged 43 with two children. Data were collected using multiple data sources including interviews, observations, Nancy's literacy autobiography, and teaching evaluations. Data were analyzed qualitatively using both an analytic coding system and a descriptive coding system. Through the dual analysis of data, I was able to gain an understanding of how Nancy both constructed what it meant to teach literacy to diverse learners and explored the outside factors that both helped and hindered her development as a teacher of literacy. The findings indicated that, in attempting to understand Nancy's process of learning to teach literacy, pedagogical content knowledge was the very thing Nancy needed. While Nancy's pedagogical content knowledge did develop in some ways throughout the course of the study, there were many factors in the
structural organization of schools, based on power relations, that both inhibited and enhanced her growth. As a beginning teacher Nancy was marginalized and, thus, the development of her pedagogical content knowledge suffered. While Nancy is only one beginning teacher, the implications of this study suggest important considerations be placed on the decontextualized and fragmented nature of reading methods in teacher education, the placement of beginning teachers, and the support offered to beginning teachers.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Learning to teach is described by Carter (1990) as a phrase that "rolls easily off the tongue" (p. 291), yet one that lacks consistency in its usage. Learning to teach has been conceptualized as (a) the culminating effects of a teacher education program, (b) a result of one's past school experiences, and (c) a life-long process (e.g., Lanier & Little, 1986; Lortie, 1975). As a result of these varying and broad constructs, the research on learning to teach is vast; however, it is also quite disparate. That is, studies tend to cover particular phases of learning to teach (e.g., preservice teacher education, field experience). In addition, studies on learning to teach have historically been framed from the perspective of exploring what beginning teachers need to know and how they can be trained (Carter, 1990). More recently, though, learning to teach has been conceptualized as a process in which the learner plays an active role (Featherstone, Munby, & Russell, 1997; Schön, 1987). From this perspective teachers' knowledge can serve as a coherent framework in investigating how teachers learn to teach (Carter, 1990; Grossman, 1992).

The first year of teaching is a critical phase in the learning to teach process. "Few experiences in life have such a tremendous impact on the personal and professional life of a teacher as does the first year of teaching" (Gold, 1996, p. 548). Numerous studies have been conducted that have examined the first year of teaching from perspectives such as (a) a period of socialization (Kuzmic, 1994), (b) a time of transition (Corcoran, 1981), (c) mentoring and induction programs (Gold, 1996), and (d) the psychological aspects of beginning teachers, for example, their concerns (Fuller, 1969) and their attitudes (Hoy,
1968). However, it has only been in the last two decades that researchers have begun to explore the first year of teaching as an integral part of learning to teach.

For example, Featherstone et al. (1997) reported longitudinal studies of learning to teach which followed teachers from their teacher education programs through their first few years of teaching. The findings from these studies elucidated the importance of experience, that is, they suggested that "learning is in the experience" (p. 14, emphasis in original). Additionally, they emphasized the importance of voice in beginning teaching with their view that "giving authority to one's personal experience while learning to teach is central to understanding how and what one is learning from experience" (p. 3, emphasis in original).

While studies of learning to teach that examine teacher education programs are important, without following prospective teachers into their first year of teaching it is not possible to completely understand their learning to teach process. As McDiarmid (1990) has suggested, the only reliable way we can know about what teachers believe is by exploring what they do in their classrooms. However, very few learning to teach studies take on a longitudinal design which follows teachers from their preservice programs into their first years of teaching. In a recent review of the literature on learning to teach, Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) found only seven such studies. They suggested that this dearth of longitudinal research was representative of the fragmented nature of research on learning to teach.

This study explored the learning to teach process of a beginning kindergarten teacher in the area of literacy through the investigation of her pedagogical content knowledge. Shulman described pedagogical content knowledge as "the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). Thus, pedagogical content knowledge served as a useful heuristic in addressing the research question of how a beginning teacher teaches literacy. (See Appendices A and B for a definition of terms and a review of the literature, respectively.)
Grossman (1990) delineated four components that comprise pedagogical content knowledge. The first component includes the knowledge and beliefs about the purposes of teaching a specific subject at a specific grade level. The second component, knowledge of students, includes the understanding of students' understanding of the subject matter, that is, their conceptions and misconceptions of the content and their background knowledge, interest, and familiarity with the content. The third component, curricular knowledge, includes the knowledge of materials available for teaching specific subjects with an understanding of both the horizontal and vertical curricula. The fourth component includes the knowledge of strategies and representations for teaching a particular subject.

Pedagogical content knowledge has been a useful framework for understanding aspects of the learning to teach process in other curricular areas (e.g., math, social studies) of both preservice and inservice teachers. For example, Grossman (1989) conducted a multiple case study of six beginning teachers of English. While all six of the participants in the study had strong backgrounds in English, only three of the participants had backgrounds in teacher education. Grossman found that subject-specific coursework made a difference in the pedagogical content knowledge of the teachers. The teachers differed in their reasons for teaching secondary English, ideas regarding how to teach English, and knowledge of students' understanding of English. An implication of this study was that teacher education is an important part of teachers' developing pedagogical content knowledge.

Foss and Kleinasser (1996) studied the pedagogical content knowledge of preservice math teachers. They were interested in exploring whether preservice teachers reconceptualized their roles as math teachers after a semester in a math methods course. They found that the preservice teachers' conceptions remained consistent throughout the semester. The preservice teachers tended "to ignore the philosophical disposition of the course and rely on knowledge from their past" (p. 439). While they did see evidence of personal knowledge developing, they suggested that this knowledge developed out of
personal histories and not their experiences in the methods course. They suggested the
importance of following teachers into their first few years of teaching to further
document the relationship between beliefs, knowledge, and practice.

Studies of pedagogical content knowledge have been conducted in almost every
discipline, except in elementary literacy where no such research seems to exist. There are
several plausible reasons of why this line of research hasn't been conducted in elementary
literacy. First, one could question if elementary literacy is indeed a subject of its own.
From a content area literacy perspective, literacy is the vehicle used for acquiring content
(Readence, Bean, & Baldwin, 1998). However, if one considers that in primary grades a
large portion of the teaching day is devoted to the teaching of literacy (e.g., in the district
in which this study is being conducted 140 minutes of the school day are required to be
spent teaching literacy), then literacy would seemingly be considered a subject.

Second, and even more problematic, is the question of what constitutes the
knowledge base for literacy. While this knowledge base is controversial, there are
standards for reading professionals that delineate what teachers of literacy need to know
(International Reading Association, 1992). (See Appendix C for a brief discussion of the
knowledge base in literacy.) In addition, in the field of education there isn't an agreed-
on general knowledge base for beginning teachers (Kagan, 1992). This lack of
agreement is due in part to both the fluid and subjective nature of knowledge (Donmoyer,
1996). Although there haven’t been any longitudinal studies of learning to teach literacy
within the construct of pedagogical content knowledge, there have been a number of
studies conducted on knowledge, beliefs, and learning to teach in literacy.

Roskos and Walker (1993, 1994) conducted studies that explored preservice
teachers’ knowledge about students who had reading difficulties. In both studies they
used pre- and post-measures to determine knowledge growth of the prospective teachers.
While the frameworks they used to conceptualize knowledge in the two studies were
different, the results were similar. They found that in both studies preservice teachers’
knowledge about struggling readers increased, yet they could only speculate as to whether this was permanent or temporary.

Hollingsworth (1989) conducted a longitudinal study of learning to teach by following 14 preservice teachers through the teacher education program to their second year of teaching. In the article in which she presented the findings from the first year, in which the participants were still preservice teachers, Hollingsworth developed a model of learning to teach. She suggested that (a) students' preprogram beliefs served as filters for processing content and making sense of classrooms, (b) general managerial routines had to be in place before content and pedagogy became a focus of attention, and (c) these managerial routines had to be in place before teachers could focus on student learning from academic tasks.

Hollingsworth's proposed research closely resembled this study. However, Hollingsworth's research changed focus as her participants began teaching (Hollingsworth, 1994). Her data collection took on the form of conversation. She and the teachers with whom she was working met for dinner monthly and would discuss issues that were important to them. Much to the initial dismay of Hollingsworth, they didn't begin to talk about literacy until the end of the first year. Thus, Hollingsworth's study expanded from a focus on learning to teach literacy to many foci such as teacher-research collaboration and teaching within a feminist perspective.

Rationale for the Proposed Study

The first year of teaching is thought to be one of great importance in a teacher's career. While there is ample extant literature on beginning teachers, a relatively small part of this literature focuses on teachers of literacy. In addition, with the exception of Hollingsworth (1989) who devoted a portion of her study to pedagogical content knowledge, there seems to be no research on pedagogical content knowledge among elementary teachers of literacy. Thus, gaining a deeper understanding of the pedagogical content knowledge a beginning teacher brings to the teaching situation, along with
exploring how that knowledge develops throughout the beginning of a teacher’s career, is a needed and missing aspect in the research on learning to teach.

The focus of this study, therefore, was to explore the learning to teach process of a beginning teacher through an investigation of her pedagogical content knowledge of literacy. The questions that guided this study were:

1. How does a beginning teacher teach literacy (i.e., how does the teacher formulate and represent the subject matter of literacy to her students)?

2. How does the teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge develop throughout the year?

3. How do varying contexts influence the teaching of a beginning teacher?
CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Research Perspective

Critical Research

This study was aligned within the paradigm of critical research. While the umbrella of critical research encompasses various theories (e.g., neo-Marxism, critical feminism), there are several necessary aspects to all critical research. Critical research is grounded in the basic assumptions "that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994, p. 139) and, that for research to be considered critical, it must attempt to confront injustice and be action-oriented toward empowerment. In the construct of pedagogical content knowledge these basic assumptions could not be overlooked. That is, in attempting to understand a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge, it was necessary to place that construct within the broader socio-historical context in which it occurred. As I intended to gain a deeper understanding of how the participant taught literacy, I recognized the nature of her reality was shaped by political, social, and cultural aspects which become crystallized over time, and it is through the enactment of these realities that she gave meaning to her world. In other words, she gave meaning to her world within a dialectical relationship between herself and the socio-historical structure in which she existed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Neo-Marxism

The theory within the critical paradigm which informed this study was neo-Marxist theory as framed by the Frankfurt School's Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse.
(see Held, 1980, for a review). While each member of the Frankfurt School presented many concepts in their attempt to theorize the social world, the following focuses on those most central to the understanding of neo-Marxist theory and, thus, important in the conceptualization of this study.

"The Frankfurt School took as one of its central values a commitment to penetrate the world of objective appearance to expose the underlying social relations they often conceal" (Giroux, 1983, p. 8). Thus, the social world is one of contradictions that exist between what is and what appears to be. Critical theorists seek to uncover these contradictions through immanent critique, that is, criticism from within. Critical theory, through immanent critique, aims to assess "the breach between ideas and reality" by confronting "the existent, in its historical context, with the claim of its conceptual principles, in order to criticize the relation between the two and thus transcend them" (Horkheimer, as cited in Held, 1980, p. 183).

Another important concept in critical theory, one that differentiates it from other theories, is in the relation between subject and object.

Most other approaches to the study of society (for example, those typical of conventional sociology) duplicate, Adorno argued, the reified and opaque nature of society. They perceive society as an object to be understood through methods similar to the natural sciences. In contrast, critical theory seeks to understand, analyze, and enact in its very structure the subjective ground of society: society is not simply an object; it is a subject-object. (Held, 1980, p. 217, emphasis in original)

Adorno explained then that society is a subject because it is comprised of people who create it, and it is an object because of its underlying structure. He argued that object and subject are related, yet independent, and that reducing one to the other displays a "false identity" (p. 202).
Considerations of critical research

When conducting research within the critical paradigm there are certain aspects that require consideration. It is not enough to call research critical; critical research must be enacted. First, I considered how this research benefited the participant. This study benefited the participant by giving authority to her voice. As Lortie (1975) suggested the cellular structure of schools often leave teachers feeling isolated in a sink-or-swim situation. The teacher in this study had an opportunity to discuss her ideas with me, which gave her both authority and a sense of not feeling alone. Second, it was necessary to situate this study within socio-historical context of reading and reading instruction. That is, historically, reading instruction has been dominated by the scientific management approach to education. As Shannon (1990) explained within this approach, objectives were delineated which led to the creation of standardized tests to measure reading skills. From a political perspective, then, state departments could respond to public cries for accountability through the use of tests. In addition, publishing companies which represent a 400 million dollar a year business exert a powerful influence over literacy instruction through basal readers. (See Appendix D for a brief discussion on the history of reading instruction.) This historical perspective relates to the third consideration, the data collected were continually analyzed from the perspective that the participant existed in a world comprised of power relations. Furthermore, from a critical perspective the study was conceptualized within the notion that while the participant gave meaning to her world as a teacher, she did so in a dialectical relationship within the historically constituted structural foundation of her environment.

Research Design

This study was a naturalistic inquiry into the teaching of literacy by a novice teacher. The design for this study was a case study. Case study research is thought to be "an ideal design for understanding and interpreting phenomena" (Merriam, 1988, p. 2). Merriam suggested that the case study approach seeks to explore the characteristics of a
phenomenon as a single entity, the case. The phenomenon I studied was the development of a teacher's pedagogical content knowledge. Since, the variables of this phenomenon were inseparable from their context, a case study design was considered appropriate (Yin, 1984).

Validity

"There is no single interpretive truth...there are multiple interpretive communities, each having its own criteria for evaluating an interpretation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 15). In qualitative research, validity is related to descriptions and explanations, that is, how well an explanation fits a description (Janesick, 1994). For qualitative researchers, then, using multiple data sources and multiple methods of interpretation are done so the researcher can gain a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) referred to the researcher as a "bricoleur" and the research as a "bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collagelike creation that represents the researcher's images, understanding, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under investigation" (p. 3). They further suggested that qualitative research is emergent in design. That is, as new pieces are added to the puzzle, the research often takes on new forms, using different tools, methods, and techniques. Often then, methods cannot be set in advance because they reflect "what is available in the context, and what the researcher can do in that setting" (p. 3). Thus, the research design (i.e., data sources and procedure) used in this study both evolved and was modified throughout data collection.

Participant and Setting

The participant in this study was a beginning teacher in an urban district in the Southwest. She was selected to participate because (a) she was in a general first reading methods course in which I was her instructor, (b) she was in a second reading methods course, which focused on reading difficulties, in which I conducted an ethnography, (c) she was part of a preliminary study of teacher thinking during her student teaching, (d)
she had a unique assignment for her first year of teaching as a kindergarten teacher in that she taught in two different schools (half-day each), and (e) she agreed to participate. The participant and schools are referred to by pseudonyms.

During the time of the study, Nancy was a 43-year-old white female. She was married with two children. Her son was in high school and her daughter was in college. Throughout the study, her devotion to her family was always clear. She often began conversations with me which were about her children. She shared with me some of the problems she was having with her teenage son. In addition to all the responsibilities she faced as a first-year teacher, she devoted much of her energy to working with her son to insure he would graduate from high school.

In Nancy’s teacher education program she majored in elementary education with an area of emphasis in math. In literacy, she took the two required courses mentioned previously, along with a children’s literature course. She completed two practica; one was at a year-round school where she began in a first-grade classroom and ended in a second-grade classroom. The second practicum was in a fourth-grade classroom. Her student teaching was at Heather Elementary School, one of the schools where she was employed for her first year. She was in a team-taught second-grade classroom.

Nancy has wanted to be a teacher since she was a young child. While she chose to wait to pursue a degree in education until her family was financially stable, she revealed that she could have gone back to school 10 years ago; yet, she felt insecure about her ability to succeed in school. A very good friend of Nancy’s went back to school and convinced Nancy she could also do it. She talked with great pride of the notion that she and her daughter attended the same institution.

Nancy had always imagined herself as a third-grade teacher. She liked the idea of third grade because she felt the students were neither too old nor too young. Her reaction to being placed in kindergarten was quite a shock. In addition, her reaction to having a split assignment was one of great disappointment.
Nancy suggested that, after a few weeks of adjusting to her assignment, she had become more accepting of it. She realized that it was just for the first year and after that she could move. As with many new teachers, she discussed with me the importance of accepting the first position offered to her regardless of her feelings toward it. To prepare for this teaching assignment, she spent the summer planning with a neighbor who also taught kindergarten.

The two schools, Heather Elementary School and Blue Creek Elementary School, in which she taught were within a mile of each other. However, a major street, used by the district as one of its boundary streets, separated them. Thus, Heather Elementary, the school within the boundary, qualified for many services that Blue Creek Elementary did not receive. Nancy was assigned to Heather Elementary School in the morning and Blue Creek Elementary School in the afternoon.

**Heather Elementary School**

Heather Elementary School was a magnet site for math and science. Yet, this was only for grades 1-5. As a magnet school, the district required that the population of the school (585 students) was representative of the population of the district, 65% majority and 35% minority. Therefore, for grades 1-5, the process for getting into the school was a percentage lottery determined by ethnicity. The students in Nancy's class were neighborhood children, with 50% Hispanic and 50% African American. Many of the Hispanic students arrived at school with limited proficiency in speaking English. In this school, Nancy had a bilingual aide. There were no special services provided for second language learners. They were simply integrated into classrooms. However, beyond kindergarten, as part of the magnet school program, the percentage of second language learners was much smaller. The principal at this school hired bilingual aides for his kindergarten teachers to assist them in communicating with these students and their parents. The principal at this school had been in the district for over 30 years and basically allowed his teachers great autonomy.
Heather Elementary was one of the older schools in the district. It was built as an outside school; that is, the classrooms were connected by hallways outdoors. Thus, there were many ways into the school. I always entered in the back of the school where there were openings in a fence. I rarely checked in at the office, and usually my presence was not known by others at the school. Nancy’s classroom was in a portable. The kindergarten rooms were being used by another kindergarten class and the first grade class. In the portable Nancy had no water or bathroom facilities.

The classroom had three bulletin boards. One was used for calendar, and the two changed monthly. There were 28 students in the class. They were seated at tables of four to six students. The seating arrangement was decided after the first few weeks of school. It was changed periodically throughout data collection. In addition, students having difficulty working in groups were seated at isolated desks by the teachers’ desks.

Nancy had four computers in the back of the room, including a brand new Macintosh G-3. Nancy had very few materials at this school. There were two large garbage cans filled with large blocks, a scarce amount of manipulatives for math (unifix cubes and pattern block), and a few puzzles. Nancy brought in books for the room. Some of these books came from her personal collection, and some were bought from the library book sale.

In the back of the room, Nancy had a table used for art. There were two teachers’ desks in the front of the room with a sand table (which was used for storage of blocks) in front of them. The room was filled with furniture and, thus, left only a small space by calendar where the many students would sit for opening activities.

**Blue Creek Elementary School**

Blue Creek was also an older, outside school. However, this school had fences and gates all around it. When school was in session the only way to enter appeared to be in the front. I was required to sign in at the office and wear a badge with visitor printed on it. The school’s mission statement was displayed in the office:
The mission of Blue Creek Elementary School is to provide an atmosphere that will promote student learning and academic achievement in a positive environment.

Blue Creek had a total population of 525 students of which 40% were Hispanic, 35% were African-American, and the other 25% were predominately White with a very small percentage representative of other ethnic groups. The philosophy used at Blue Creek in working with second language learners was described as total immersion. However, the second language learners were isolated into their own classrooms. Nancy’s class was the English language learners (ELL) classroom for kindergarten. The school then had an ELL class at each grade level. Second language learners were tested each year as required by the district, and it was through this testing that they could be placed into the mainstream classroom. However, the ELL facilitator suggested to me that the test was so difficult it would be hard for a native English speaker to “competency out.” The principal at Blue Creek spoke with pride about their approach for ELL students. She told me they have tried other approaches but have found this one to be most successful. She told Nancy she should focus her year on getting the students to like school and that she shouldn’t be concerned about "harming the children."

Nancy was in a portable classroom at this school, too. The other kindergarten class and a special education class occupied the two kindergarten classrooms. Again, this left Nancy with no water or bathroom facilities.

Nancy started the year with 26 students. The decision to place students in Nancy’s room was determined by information the parents provided when enrolling their children. If they indicated that Spanish was the language they spoke at home, the students were placed in Nancy’s class. In the beginning of October seven students were moved from Nancy’s class to the other kindergarten class. The principal decided she had too many students in her room.
Nancy had many materials available to her in this classroom. She had unifix cubes, beads, pattern blocks, large and small blocks, toys, large and small puzzles, and a play kitchen equipped with food, dishes, and utensils. She had only two bulletin boards in this room. She used one for her calendar activity and the other changed monthly. There were very few books in the room. Again, she brought in some from home, but the bookshelf remained sparse throughout the year.

The students were seated at tables. She had just one teacher's desk in this room, two tables against walls, and a sand table which was filled with rice but never opened. With fewer students and less furniture, there was more room for an open space by the calendar bulletin board for the students to meet for opening activities.

**Researcher's Role**

My role in the study was one that continually changed and was negotiated by Nancy and myself. Prior to beginning the study I saw myself as a nonparticipant observer. I suggested that I was a nonparticipant in the sense that I would not have any role in teaching either of the kindergarten classes. However, this was never to suggest that my role wasn't an important part of the research. What became clear once the study began was that my role needed to fit the context. As a critical researcher, it was necessary for me to adapt my role to the needs of Nancy. As such, I became very much of a participant in both classes.

My role as a participant observer extended farther than merely my membership to the classroom community. My presence in the classroom and in the life of the participant was a large part of the study. Thus, the importance of self-reflexivity, how what I observed and what both Nancy and I did in the classroom, was in part a result of me being the researcher in the classroom and was essential in understanding the study (see Appendix E for a discussion of my self-reflexive role).

I recognized that I, as the researcher, was the main instrument of data collection and, thus, clung to the notion that, "there are no objective observations, only observations
that are socially situated in the worlds of the observer and the observed." I realized that all the data I collected and analyzed were "biographically situated" in my perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 12).

**My perspective**

My experiences as a former first-grade teacher and the knowledge I gained in literacy teacher education throughout my masters and doctoral programs shaped my conception of what early literacy instruction should look like and the subject-matter knowledge I believed Nancy should have.

My own thinking about literacy instruction is that the goal of literacy is not merely to teach students to read and write, but also to teach students how to use reading and writing to become informed, active members of society. Stemming from that goal, then, literacy instruction should be authentic so students see the value of literacy in their lives.

In early literacy I advocate both formal and informal instruction of literacy. In kindergarten I see value in informal literacy instruction through the use of centers (e.g., reading, writing, listening) and play settings (Neuman & Roskos, 1997). For example, a play kitchen needs to be equipped with materials for grocery lists, menus, ads from supermarkets, etc. In this way literacy is naturally interwoven with play. Formal literacy instruction in kindergarten should, I believe, provide students with many opportunities for reading and writing. This could be accomplished through journaling, free reading time, reading aloud to the students, shared book reading, books on tape, and the language experience approach. I think the teaching of the alphabetic principle should take place in the context of reading and writing real books and be extended as determined by students' needs. My strongest conviction about teaching literacy lies the importance of assessment. I believe assessment needs to be ongoing and should be the basis in planning for instruction.
My expectation when the study began was that Nancy would not know and/or believe what I knew/believed. However, as the instructor of her reading methods class, I began the study assuming she would have knowledge of many strategies to use in early literacy instruction, along with many assessment techniques as well as some knowledge of reading processes.

My thinking about ELL students expanded as the study progressed. As this was not a focus in my own studies, I began this research not sure of my thoughts about what instruction for ELL students should look like. Thus, I found I needed to learn more about these students. However, I did believe that the type of instruction I advocated for early literacy learners, which is supported by both research and theory, would be beneficial for all early literacy learners.

I made "no attempt to pretend that research is value free" (Janesick, 1994, p. 212). Instead, I acknowledged my perspectives and realized that it was my perspective. I was not there to measure Nancy’s knowledge against mine or to judge it as good, bad, right, or wrong. Instead, I tried to recognize my perspective as one of many that should not be privileged over others.

Data Sources

The data sources used for this study included: (a) data previously collected from the participant’s reading methods coursework and student teaching related to beliefs, planning, and the teaching of literacy, (b) field notes taken while observing her teaching of literacy, (c) semi-structured interviews with Nancy, (d) Nancy’s literacy autobiography, (e) documents Nancy received from the school district related to the curriculum, (f) lesson plans, (g) semi-structured interviews with both of Nancy’s principals and her aide, and (h) Nancy’s first formal evaluation. Each of these data sources will be explained within the procedure for data collection.
Procedure

Data gathered from the semesters during which Nancy was a university student, along with her literacy autobiography, were used to create a profile of her beliefs and knowledge about teaching reading. This profile was then used as a context in which to consider her teaching of literacy. That is, by reviewing and analyzing her literacy history as both a student and preservice teacher, I was able to contextualize her teaching of literacy.

The assignments in her methods courses included answering questions about her beliefs about teaching, learning, reading, and writing (both semesters), developing a model of how she would teach literacy in her own classrooms (semester 1), and refining that model for including how she would accommodate instruction for students with reading difficulties (semester 2).

During student teaching Nancy was observed for three consecutive days and then a fourth day several weeks later. After the third day of the consecutive observations, she was interviewed and talked about her teaching for the three days. She also wrote written reflections of her lesson plans detailing what she was thinking while planning.

These data were used to gain an understanding of her pedagogical content knowledge about reading instruction by considering, prior to instruction in her two classrooms, the importance she attributed to teaching literacy, her knowledge of literacy, her understanding of the students she was teaching, and her understanding of the literacy curriculum. Through the analysis of the data I created a picture of her thinking before the school year began. Important to note, however, was that I did not align her profile to a specific orientation (e.g., whole language, skills, traditional, progressive); instead, I created a bigger picture which encompassed her thinking about literacy, schooling, learning, and teaching.

Data collection for this study began in August 1998 and continued through February 1999. My decision to end data collection was based on several factors. One
factor, which typically signifies an ending point in qualitative research, occurs when "the researcher seeks indices of saturation" (Morse, 1994, p. 230). In this particular study saturation was related to the another factor that aided my decision to end data collection. Nancy received news she would have a position as a third-grade teacher at Heather the following year. With this news, Nancy’s investment to kindergarten decreased. Thus, her willingness to learn about teaching kindergarten diminished, leading to an index of saturation. However, this was not in relation to her integrity as a teacher. In other words, she did not lose interest in the education of her students. As a teacher she seemed to value her commitment to her students’ education.

During the months of August, September, and October observations of Nancy’s teaching of literacy were conducted 2-3 days per week in both classrooms. In the months of November, December, and January observations were conducted 1-2 days per week in both classrooms. For the month of February, observations were conducted 1 day every 2 weeks. In addition, I attended parties and field trips in the role of classroom helper.

During the observations I took field notes of her literacy instruction. Her classes were each 2 and 1/2 hours long. My observations were generally conducted for the entire time period. I conducted open-ended interviews at the end of each month by beginning with questions that arose from the observations and data analysis. I also interviewed both principals by beginning with the question, “what are your expectations for kindergarten?” From there I let their personalities guide the interviews. The interview with Nancy’s aide was conducted in the same manner. I also gathered other artifacts throughout data collection such as Nancy’s lesson plans, a copy of her evaluation, and the materials sent to her by the district that were to be used for planning.

In my proposed study I had planned to capture Nancy’s’ thoughts about planning in written think-alouds. However, once the study began, I came to know that Nancy’s formal planning was done after the teaching. She completed her plan books for each school by the dates they were to be turned in to the principal. Therefore, instead of think-
alouds, I tried to capture her thoughts about planning through discussions of her teaching. These thoughts became part of my field notes.

Data Analysis

The process for data analysis was continuous and ongoing. After each week’s visit with the participant, data were analyzed and dually-coded. The data from each data source collected from the week were coded using both an analytic coding system (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992) and a descriptive coding system (Huberman & Miles, 1994).

Analytic Coding

The data from each week were first coded using an analytic system. I looked for instances that could be classified according to the four aspects of pedagogical content knowledge delineated by Grossman (1990): (a) knowledge and beliefs about the purposes of teaching a specific subject at a specific grade level, (b) knowledge of students, (c) curricular knowledge, and (d) knowledge of strategies and representations. I then examined the data from each month to look at how her pedagogical content knowledge was developing throughout the study.

As I coded and analyzed that data, I realized that for this coding scheme I was focusing only on the literacy events that were occurring in the classroom. I centered this portion of the data analysis on the study of subject, that is, how she was constructing her knowledge of teaching literacy to diverse students.

Descriptive Coding

The data were also coded using open-ended, descriptive codes. Then, they were further examined as a data set and recoded, collapsing and changing categories, using a pattern-coding system. For example, in the descriptive coding I labeled various activities Nancy did with her classes by naming them (e.g., the Gingerbread man activity, the Grinch activity). Then, as I reduced the data, I placed these activities into a larger category entitled ideas. All of the data were then examined in relation to the original profile I created. I generated an interim case summary (every month) which synthesized...
what I knew about the case along with providing an agenda for future data collection. In continuing with the ideas example, I began to see a pattern concerning from where her ideas were coming and then focused my observations on ascertaining that information for the activities she taught.

I further reduced the data by centering the patterned data around the larger theme that emerged from all of the data. What became apparent was that each of these patterns was related to issues of power. I used this particular scheme for analyzing the data that related to the study of object. That is, the themes that emerged, which were related to power issues, all focused on the factors that both constrained and enhanced the development of Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge.

The dual-coding system provided a useful way to look at the data both systematically to investigate the phenomenon and to remain open to other happenings in the classroom. However, this approach to data analysis also organized the data in such a way that it deconstructed the relationship between subject and object. Thus, in my interim case summaries I always considered both schemes of data analysis to summarize my findings and consider plans for future data collection.
CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

In an interview with Nancy a few days before she was to begin teaching I asked her what her goals were for the year. She said, "survival." As a new teacher, this was not a surprising goal. However, this study sought to probe deeper into the experiences of a beginning teacher and thus go beyond the thinking of first-year teaching as a global and undifferentiated problem based merely on the idea of survival. This study focused on understanding Nancy’s learning to teach literacy through the exploration of her developing pedagogical content knowledge. Yet, this proved to be a difficult task because what I found was that pedagogical content knowledge was the very thing Nancy needed.

The following section will present the results of this study by first contextualizing Nancy’s entry into teaching. Following that I will present the results of Nancy’s developing pedagogical content knowledge throughout the year. The final section of the results will present the themes that emerged through the descriptive coding of the data. These themes (i.e., organization, ideas, and interruptions) all centered on the idea of power relations/authority and were instrumental in understanding Nancy’s developing pedagogical content knowledge.

I feel it is important to note that the results will be presented in a way that deconstructs the dialectical nature of Nancy’s developing pedagogical content knowledge. That is, the results reporting her pedagogical content knowledge represent the study of subject while the results reporting the other themes represent the study of object. Therefore, having noted that, the discussion will then juxtapose these parts, placing them
back into the dialectical relationship in which they existed, and thus provide a more holistic understanding of the study.

Entry into Teaching

As a non-traditional student, Nancy entered teacher education with both her own educational experiences and the educational experiences of her children as sources to draw upon in her conceptualization of teaching. As a child Nancy loved school. In her literacy autobiography she indicated that her love of school was the reason she wanted to be a teacher. Nancy did not identify any teachers as exemplar in her educational experiences; she simply stated that she was a good student and loved school.

Nancy’s memories of the role literacy played in her life as a child were rather vague. She did state that she never was read to as a child. She remembered her reading instruction centered on the use of “Dick and Jane readers.” She read outside of school for pleasure. She also wrote outside of school. At one point, she had wanted to be a writer and would practice by writing stories. As an adult Nancy saw herself as an avid reader. She told me she would read everything. That is, whenever she found a spare moment she would pick up anything in front of her and read it. This could be a box of cereal, the newspaper, or a magazine. Nancy enjoyed reading romance novels for pleasure, yet as a beginning teacher she found less time available for pleasure reading.

As a parent Nancy believed reading to her children was important and when her children were young she read to them every night. However, she wasn’t certain of why this was important. I asked her why she read to her children and she said, “it was just the thing to do and they liked it.” Her daughter developed into an avid reader who enjoyed reading both inside and outside of school. Her son, on the other hand, struggled as a reader. As he got older, Nancy’s nighttime reading with him changed from reading books for pleasure to helping him read in order to complete his schoolwork. She knew he hated to read and struggled with it so she developed a system where they would read his work
together alternating pages. She felt this was an effective technique in getting him to complete his schoolwork.

**Reading Methods**

In attempting to ascertain Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge throughout her reading methods courses, it was clear that Nancy thought about reading and writing in idealistic ways and talked about pedagogy with obscure language. On the first day of Nancy’s first reading methods course she was asked to complete an assignment pertaining to her beliefs about teaching, learning, reading, and writing. The following were her responses to these questions.

1. **What is teaching?**
   
   To instill the desire to learn. Present information so a student can analyze and synthesize. To make it theirs.

2. **What is learning?**
   
   Expanding your knowledge to broader horizons. To discover new and wonderful ideas, reasons, and apply that knowledge to your life.

3. **How would you teach someone to read?**
   
   I do not know, I only feel a student must be ready, not just in a certain grade, to read. Reading is more than saying the words on a paper, you must know what they mean and what they are saying.

4. **How would you teach someone to write?**
   
   To start out slowly, simply. It will follow along with reading. Hopefully I can model for the students.

As evident in these responses, Nancy was unsure of how to teach both reading and writing. She entered into teacher education with the belief that she would gain that knowledge through her coursework. However, in examining the work she completed for her two reading methods courses, it was apparent that she never moved beyond talking about reading pedagogy in ambiguous prose. For her final paper in the first reading
methods course, Nancy was asked to design a model of reading instruction to be used in her classroom. She began with her philosophy:

My philosophy is to integrate the best concepts of phonics and whole language, to create a well-balanced program for my students. There is a place for both concepts to help facilitate reading for the whole class. As with anything, both have their strengths and weaknesses. As teachers, it is up to us to determine which will be more effective for our classrooms.

What was notably missing from this response was substance. She never mentioned what was meant by phonics, whole language, and a well-balanced program, what she meant by indicating she would integrate the best concepts of each, and what she believed the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches/theories were. The remainder of her model paper was written in much the same way. She merely glossed over elements of a reading program without ever fully discussing their place in reading instruction.

Nancy’s final paper for her second reading methods course was quite similar. In this assignment she was asked to write about how she would plan for literacy instruction with the consideration of struggling readers. I found the instructor’s comment on her paper to be very telling of the contents. The instructor wrote:

This is pretty general still, Nancy. Okay for now, but you have a lot of thinking and planning to put this into action.

Nancy’s final paper, while quite unspecific on how to teach literacy, also was very much of reflection of her idealism. She began this paper by stating:

It might be said that reading is the most important part of the curriculum. I feel my most important job is to teach my students to be literate. If children master the art of reading, we as teachers are giving them the key to all other worlds of learning. The wonder, beauty and excitement of other subjects remain elusive to the student who cannot read.
Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge during the time she was in methods courses changed very little. She began student teaching uncertain about how to teach literacy. Nancy, like many preservice teachers, hoped to know how to teach literacy, but she was never able to internalize the knowledge she gained in her methods courses in ways that could transform that knowledge into pedagogy. Furthermore, in reading methods she did not move beyond conceiving literacy pedagogy in very general, obscure terms. However, she acknowledged this and seemed to be looking forward to growing as a teacher. In her final for her first reading methods course she wrote, “I hope my fellow teachers will give me some support when I begin teaching, I know their input will be a valuable asset to me.” She concluded her paper in her second reading methods course by stating:

As a new teacher I will seek out and use advice from my more experienced colleagues. I know I have a long way to go before I say I am experienced, and with guidance, enthusiasm, and knowledge, I hope I can give my future students the gift of literacy.

**Student Teaching**

Nancy student taught in a team-taught, second-grade classroom. Her cooperating teacher, Mrs. Jensen, assumed complete responsibility for Nancy. The other teacher in the room interacted with Nancy but assumed no responsibility in mentoring her. Mrs. Jensen had a unique style of teaching. She was very much a friend to her students and at times seemed very lax. However, for Mrs. Jensen this was an effective approach in that it worked. It was evident that her students respected her and knew when they went too far. Yet, this proved to be a difficult environment for Nancy to enter. She talked at great length with the other teacher about what appeared to be Mrs. Jensen’s lack of structure, and they both agreed that changes ought to be made.

Mrs. Jensen was supportive of Nancy, but she approached mentoring Nancy much in the same way she taught her own students. That is, she allowed Nancy a lot of
autonomy and, as far as Nancy was concerned, did not provide much substantive feedback. Mrs. Jensen often left the room while Nancy was teaching. Mrs. Jensen encouraged Nancy to use her experience as a time of experimentation. Thus, Nancy’s student teaching was a time to experiment with pedagogical content knowledge.

For reading instruction Nancy worked with a group of 12 students. They were the higher readers in the class. The other students worked with the cooperating teacher who was implementing a district-approved intervention for struggling readers. When Nancy first took over reading instruction she kept the routine the same. The students read one basal story a week. Each day they used different approaches for reading. For example, Monday they buddy read, Tuesday they read silently, and Wednesday they read as a group. Also, each day they completed worksheets based on the skills required as part of the second-grade curriculum. On Thursdays the students were given a test on the story which was comprised of comprehension questions designed by the teacher.

One week Nancy decided to change reading instruction. She felt that the students were just reading to do well on the test, which they were not accomplishing. Nancy wanted the students to “look more at the story as something to enjoy, try to get inside the story.” She chose to abandon the Thursday test and replaced it with a response journal. The response journal was designed by her and was comprised of questions for the students to answer. She felt these questions required thinking on the students’ part and weren’t questions “they could just open up to the page and find.”

She also changed the vocabulary instruction for the week. She introduced the students to word cards. In this activity the students were to place the vocabulary word in the middle of an index card. They then had to define the word, choose a symbol for the word, and use the word in a sentence. The final change she made in reading instruction for the week was to abandon the different approaches to reading the story. They were never assigned anything specific about reading the story. Nancy assumed that in order to do the work they would need to read the story first.
Nancy wanted to move the students into novels. She believed that introducing a few of the innovations first would be a good way to get them ready for reading novels. However, Nancy's plans were not met with success. She found the students' responses to the questions in their journals terse and incomplete. She did not feel they did any better on these questions than they had been doing on the test questions. From my observations of the students working on their journals I noted that they spent more time decorating the covers and gluing the questions onto the page than they did answering the questions.

The vocabulary strategy was met with resistance from the students as well. When the students met for reading group with the index cards they had in their desks, one student asked, "why are we wasting our cards on this?" Nancy told them they were developing their own word banks for vocabulary. However, she had selected the 10 vocabulary words. These words were also their spelling words for the week. I questioned her about her choice of words. I asked her if she selected words she thought would be new to the students. She said, "some of them." I then asked her how she thought they would be able to complete the word cards if they did not know what the words meant. She believed they should be using the dictionary. From my perspective this strategy was confusing. I was unsure of how she was teaching vocabulary, why the students were learning to spell words that they were first learning to use as part of their vocabulary, and knowing, for instance, that one of the words was airplane, why she thought they wouldn't know the meanings of some of the words.

Yet, what I found to be the most crucial element in understanding what happened with Nancy's implementation of these new approaches was the failure on the students' part to read the story. In the routine established by Mrs. Jensen for reading instruction the students knew which method to use each day to read the story. However, Nancy failed to explicitly assign any method for reading the story. It became very clear that on Thursday of that week, when the students came to read the story as a group, this was the first time a number of students would read the story.
Perhaps even more telling than the events I just briefly described was the well-remembered event (Carter, 1994) Nancy chose in talking about the week. During reading instruction, one of Nancy's requirements was to teach a skills-based lesson which could be coded to the second-grade curriculum. In the preceding weeks Nancy taught synonyms and antonyms. For this particular week Nancy chose to teach homonyms because she believed it was the next logical skill to follow. She did not consult Mrs. Jensen on this, for as Nancy described, "I am basically on my own." To prepare for the lesson she looked up the meaning of homonyms in a commercial publication.

Nancy taught the lesson twice. She approached the lesson the same way with both groups. She began by reviewing synonyms and antonyms. She asked the students for examples of each. Next, she told them "homonyms are word that sound the same but are spelled different and have different meanings." She asked the students to write sets of homonyms on the paper with which she provided them. The first group did this successfully. They went around the circle, and each gave an example of homonyms. She then sent them back to their seats to do a homonym worksheet. The second group did not respond the same. The following is a transcript of the part of the lesson where they were sharing their homonyms:

Student 1: March, march.
Student 2: glass, glass.
Nancy: But they are spelled the same.
Student 3: May, may.
Nancy: Alright.
Student 4: Spring, spring.

At this point Nancy stopped the sharing and told them she would share the examples she developed. She concluded the lesson by saying, "We will probably need to go over this again." When Nancy and I talked about this later that day, she told me at that point in the lesson she was thinking, "maybe I didn't know what I was doing. Maybe I
didn’t understand it clear enough to explain it to them.” She then told me she just wanted the lesson to be over. I asked her if she thought the examples the second group provided were indeed homonyms. She was not sure.

The events described in that week of Nancy’s student teaching provide some insight into her developing pedagogical knowledge. Nancy used her student teaching experience as a time to experiment with ways of representing the subject matter to her students. She selected strategies she learned from her teacher education program to implement in the classroom. However, the ways in which the events were played out demonstrated her lack of pedagogical content knowledge. Nancy randomly chose a skill to teach, thus, suggesting she was unsure of why homonyms were important to teach to second graders. Furthermore, the vocabulary/spelling words she chose demonstrated her lack of understanding of the goals of vocabulary and spelling instruction.

What appeared to be most noticeably missing in her pedagogical content knowledge was her lack of understanding of students. Nancy assumed that the students would read the story without being explicitly told to do so. In addition, she assumed that because she was implementing strategies she believed would engage the students, they would be motivated to do the work. Her lack of understanding of students coupled with her idealistic beliefs about education led Nancy to blame the students for her lack of success during the week. Nancy expected the students “to read the story and remember what they read.” When that did not happen, she blamed the students. On a number of occasions Nancy remarked to me, “they choose not to remember, they just don’t think about it.”

In summarizing Nancy’s entry into teaching it was evident that Nancy was entering the profession unclear about how to teach reading. She had some experience in planning for reading instruction, with the freedom to implement strategies of her choice; yet, she seemed to only have a superficial understanding of these strategies.
Nancy loved school and loved to read. She had high expectations for her students to want to do well in school and very idealistic beliefs about teaching and schooling. The following is how Nancy described her goals for reading instruction: "I love to read. I want them to grow in loving to read. If you can read you can do anything, be anything, be anyone."

**Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

A week before Thanksgiving I called Nancy on the phone. I asked her, "how do you teach someone to read?" She said, "you keep asking me that and I hate to say this, but I am not sure." In trying to document Nancy’s growth in pedagogical content knowledge about literacy throughout the first semester I observed Nancy’s teaching, I faced a barrier. Nancy, admittedly, did not know how to teach reading and, thus, her pedagogical content knowledge was very much a reflection her lack of understanding. Yet, as a participant in the research, I was not only interested in understanding how her pedagogical content knowledge developed, I was also concerned with my role in helping her to develop as a teacher. I believed it was my responsibility to intervene in her teaching in the hope that I would be able to help her to develop her pedagogical content knowledge and, thus, improve the schooling experiences for her diverse students.

The following presents the data I collected that related to both her teaching of literacy and the assistance I provided her in teaching literacy. Nancy’s teaching of literacy changed throughout the time of the study. Therefore, the results are organized chronologically. In addition, when Nancy began the school year, she approached teaching her two classes differently. Thus, the results from each class will be reported separately.

**August**

The school year began on August 24, 1998. I made five visits to each of Nancy’s classes during this short month. In my interim case summary I described August as the month of "coming to terms with her teaching assignment and trying to make sense of teaching diverse kindergarten students." I interviewed Nancy a few days before the
school year began. What was most striking in this interview was her perceptions of her students and her lack of pedagogical content knowledge.

She began the interview by telling me about Miss Pam. Miss Pam was going to come to her afternoon class the first few days of school to help her out. Yet, she had no idea who this person was.

Marla: Is she the ELL person for the school?

Nancy: Yeah, maybe something like that. Her name is Pam. She is here Monday and Wednesday and then she goes to another school.

I then asked her about the ELL program at Blue Creek. I reminded her that the school, which segregated the second-language learners into separate classrooms, espoused a theory of total immersion.

Nancy: Well, it is, but I guess you approach teaching them a little bit differently. You know, I guess you can’t expect them to go at the same pace as your regular students.

I continued to ask Nancy about the ELL program at Blue Creek, and she had very limited knowledge of it. She was not sure how many classes there were at each grade level or how the students got in and out of these classes. We then talked about the ELL program at Heather. She was unaware of any program at Heather for ELL students. Nancy described it like this “no, everyone is kind of like, everyone is in the same room.”

Clearly, when the year began Nancy was unfamiliar with ELL programs and curricula. However what troubled me most was her perceptions of the students she would be teaching. Nancy told me in the interview, “All I wanted was a regular class, normal kids.” Furthermore, when discussing an activity for the first day of school that she learned about in her new teacher orientation she concluded by telling me, “but you know I don’t think it would work here.”
**Heather Elementary School**

During the month of August, I observed two types of literacy events: reading aloud to the students and tracing lines. Each morning Nancy would read to the students. She introduced them to a bookmark she named Mr. Squiggles. She told the class that Mr. Squiggles came into the room at night and selected a book for her to read to them the next day.

Nancy read to the class with a lot of enthusiasm and expression. Her espoused love of reading was always evident when she read to the students. In addition, she tried to engage the students in the story by having them make predictions about the story and inviting them in the reading of the story. For example, when she read *The Three Little Pigs* she had the students join in for the repetitive part.

The tracing activity was conceived of as a prewriting activity. The students were given a worksheet with an object on it (e.g., a flower) and were required to trace the portion of the picture that had a dotted line. They then had to color the picture. Nancy asked the students why they thought they were doing this activity. Antonio answered, “to be good.” Nancy said, “well, yes, we are good but when we learn to write our letters some have straight lines and some have curved.” In a conversation with Nancy I suggested that perhaps these worksheets were not necessary. I reminded her that her students draw pictures all the time and they seemed to already be using curved lines and straight lines in their artwork.

**Blue Creek Elementary School**

During the month of August I observed the same two types of literacy events in this classroom except the materials were different and there was no Mr. Squiggles. In addition, Nancy requested my assistance in teaching this class. In this class Nancy recognized that she had only six fluent English speakers. Yet, since all of the students spoke Spanish, that was the language they used to communicate with each other.
Nancy read aloud to this class each day I observed. Again, I found her love of reading apparent as she read. She also introduced this class to line tracing as a prewriting strategy. However, she was unsure of what to plan for these second-language learners. I suggested she try total physical response (TPR). While I was not very familiar with this approach, I had asked experts in this area for some help. I shared with Nancy what I learned about TPR. I told her that basically she could introduce vocabulary to the students which would be action-oriented. For example, stand up, sit down, walk, and run could be acted out by the students. In addition, she could teach vocabulary by having them point to objects in the room. In a sense this was an approach to first develop receptive vocabulary and not focus on their English production. Nancy used this approach with the students. She would introduce new words to them each day. The words were objects in the classroom.

Miss Pam and I also both modeled reading instruction for Nancy in this class. I read the book Brown Bear to the class. In my reading I focused on demonstrating how the students could learn new vocabulary through the story and how to engage them in the story by having them join in on the repetitive parts. Miss Pam read a big book, Blue Cat, to the class which was both simple and repetitive. Nancy read the same book to the class the next day. She approached the book exactly like Miss Pam did. That is, she first reviewed the author and the illustrator, and then she pointed to the words as she read. She had the class join in for the repetitive part. Later in the day I suggested she might want to point to the pictures so that the students could better participate in the reading of the story.

Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge during the month of August was developing. She sought and used help from others to learn more about literacy pedagogy for diverse learners. In analyzing her pedagogical content knowledge within the four constructs described by Grossman (1990) it was clear that her knowledge was quite limited. Her beliefs and understanding of why specific content was important to teach at
that grade level reflected her lack of content knowledge. She believed she needed to teach her students to trace lines before they could make letters; yet, she watched them make both straight and curved lines each day they drew pictures. Her belief about the importance of reading to the students was more a reflection of her own belief system than her knowledge of literacy pedagogy. That is, she read to her students to develop a love of reading. She never discussed the importance of reading aloud as a means of developing comprehension or increasing vocabulary. Perhaps, though, those purposes were embedded in her intuitive style of engaging the students while she was reading. Her knowledge of materials available and the curriculum were also weak during this month. On the third day of school the reading specialist at Blue Creek, Mrs. Danzinger, came into Nancy’s room and asked her what materials she needed. Mrs. Danzinger told Nancy of all the materials (e.g., multiple copies of books, books on tape, big books) available at the school in their media center. Nancy replied, “I’ll go look. I am fine for now because I am not sure of what I want at this point.”

September

In the month of September I began to see even more of a separation between the two classes. In my interim case summary I referred to the morning class as “It is time to teach literacy” and the afternoon class as “a continuation of making sense of teaching diverse learners.” In an interview I asked her why she approached the two classes differently. Nancy shared her thoughts about her afternoon class:

... but you know I’ve kind of looked back and maybe my expectations for this class aren’t as high as I thought they’d have to be. Not that I don’t want to have high expectations for the kids but maybe I realized that my goals won’t be the same and they won’t be as high or as far as maybe the other class. I don’t know. It’s kind of like really starting from the beginning, the very beginning. So maybe I am a little more relaxed here than at the other school.
Heather

In the month of September the days centered on literacy instruction. In each of my observations Nancy read to the students. She introduced many new activities as well. She had the students act out a story she read with puppets. She changed students each day so they all had a turn in this activity.

Nancy began instruction in letter/sound relationships. She started with the letter s. She introduced the letter by using materials she found in her classroom. She had tubs containing objects that began with each letter. She began the first lesson with the whole group. She showed them the letter s and then told them the sound it makes. She then asked them to name each object in the tub. The students had some trouble with this. When she pulled out sunglasses and asked what they were, the students said “glasses”.

Nancy incorporated her teaching of sound/symbol relationships into her new organizational structure (i.e., centers) she set up. The centers were computers, math, reading, language arts, art, and phonics. In the phonics center the students were given a few worksheets to complete which required them to find the pictures that began with the letter s. The students were unable to complete this work independently. On the first day of this new routine Nancy worked with this group on completing the worksheets.

When Nancy and I talked later I suggested that maybe this activity was too difficult for the students to complete independently. I explained that she might want to consider having the center where they do these types of activities as one in which she was instructing them. I also offered the suggestion that she might back up and teach letter recognition first.

The next day Nancy abandoned the worksheets and had the students glue beans in a large letter s. The following week Nancy introduced the letter b. In her centers this week, for the letter b, the students practiced making the letter with clay. In addition, on Friday of that week the students made bread. They then ate bread, butter, and bananas.
Nancy also started having the students write in journals. The first day they started their journals they were to decorate the covers. The next day they began writing in them. Nancy told them to write or draw a picture. At one point Mrs. Gonzales, Nancy’s aide, asked what they were supposed to be doing in their journals. Nancy said, “they can write or draw.” When they finished, Nancy had them put their journals away. She never responded to them or even looked at what they were doing.

Toward the end of the month Nancy had attended what she described to the class as “a special meeting for teachers.” She purchased a CD with accompanying materials to make big books that went along with the songs on the CD. She introduced the song/book “I am a pizza” to the class. They first went through the pages of the story and talked about what was happening. Next, they listened to the song as they went through the book. The students asked to do it a second time and they did. Nancy continued to do this with the class each day. At the end of the week, they made their own pizzas.

September was an exciting month in Nancy’s morning class. The students were exposed to cooking experiences, provided with time for exploration, used the computers, and had time to read self-selected books. At the art center they worked on projects with Mrs. Gonzales and their work was displayed throughout the room. In considering Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge there were some definite indications of growth. She was using materials she found in the classroom for teaching, along with implementing new materials she received from an inservice on early childhood. Nancy was also demonstrating the ability to represent the subject-matter in meaningful ways to her students. That is, she provided them with tactile experiences in learning the letters and extended her instruction to cooking experiences. And, throughout the month, she continued to model her love of reading through her reading aloud to the class on a daily basis.
Blue Creek

During the month of September Nancy introduced some new literacy activities to this class as well, however, they did not cook, did not learn about letters, and had no centers. Nancy continued to read to them each day. She read Blue Cat several more times with them and, as I suggested, she pointed to the pictures. She also used the "I am a pizza" song/book with this class. Each time they sang the song the students would ask to sing it again. They would usually go through it three times in a day.

She also introduced journals to this class. On the day they began she told them, "we are going to go to the first page in our writing journals and we are going to write anything we want... write about what you drew. It doesn't matter what you put down, just put anything down." The students worked on their journals for one hour.

This was a common occurrence in this room during my observations. They would only do two to three tasks during their 2 1/2 hour day. Thus, I observed very few literacy events. Nancy's pedagogical content knowledge as it related to this class was quite different. She was unsure of what curriculum to teach and what materials to use. For Nancy it was not merely considering how to represent and formulate the subject matter in meaningful ways, it was trying to figure out what that subject matter should be. The following is an excerpt from an interview with Nancy regarding her schedule/plans for this class:

Marla: Now, your afternoon class.
Nancy: (laughs)
Marla: Do you feel like you have a set schedule for them?
Nancy: (laughs again) No.
Marla: No?
Nancy: Except in the morning (she means when they first arrive at school) with the opening and calendar which I need to add some more stuff to. But I don't know, they're just so, I waste, maybe I shouldn't call it wasting time, but I spend
a lot of time just trying to get them settled down to listen. That's like my biggest challenge, and it is impossible to do a lot during the day.

Marla: So do you have a lot planned in this class that you are not getting done? Do you have set plans for them?

Nancy: No. To tell you the truth I have not really done a lot of detailed plans. It is almost like everyday I come in and just play it by ear. I mean I have a general idea of what I want to do but nothing really detailed and specific.

In considering Nancy's pedagogical content knowledge as it related to this class, there were no signs of growth. Nancy was still trying to figure out the content and thus was not ready to think about pedagogy. At this point I gave her some reading materials about second-language learners. I also suggested she contact the district and ask for assistance from one of the ELL Teachers on Special Assignment.

**October**

I described the month of October in my interim case summary as time of change moving from "a focus on literacy to a focus on holiday-related projects." While this change was more prevalent in the morning class, it was still noticeable in the afternoon class.

**Heather**

October seemed to start out like September. Nancy was doing a unit on apples. During one of my observations she read the students three stories about apples. They discussed what apple trees needed to grow, how apple blossoms grow into apples, and the various types of apples you can find. She also told them of a local apple orchard where they could go and pick their own apples. Following the reading, she gave the students three types of apples to taste. She then asked them to talk with their neighbors about which apple they liked best. Following this discussion they went around the room and shared with the class which apple they liked best. They then made a graph on the bulletin board using colored paper apples to represent their choices.
As I considered this particular event in relation to Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge, at first it seemed her knowledge was continuing to grow. She was certainly representing the material in meaningful ways to her students. However, a closer look at the transcripts from that day suggested that she really had a very limited understanding of her students’ beliefs and understanding of the content.

Nancy: What else can we make with apples?
Noah: Apple sauce.
Marcus: Apple juice.
Audra: You have to wash them.
Nancy: Yes, you do, but right now we are discussing what we can make.
Isaac: Apple cider.
Nancy: It is almost like apple juice but a little bit tangier.
Carl: Apple juice.
Nancy: Yes, just like Marcus said.
Jose: Apple cider.
Nancy: What I was thinking of...
Natasha: Caramel apple.
Brielle: Apple cake.
Crystal: Apple bars.
Kyra: Apple candy.
Maurico: (doesn’t say anything)
Nancy: How about apple pie? That is like almost everyone’s favorite.
Noah: Sometimes when you pull an apple of the tree there can be worms inside.

Nancy assumed that they would come up with apple pie. In this dialogue it is evident that Nancy had a limited understanding of her students.

There were very few other literacy events in October. Nancy had them do a worksheet on color words. She wrote the words on the board and placed a piece of paper
of that color next to the words. However, she found the students did not use the board and struggled with this activity. I did not see Nancy read to her students on any of the other observations during this month. Instead, Nancy began doing a lot of projects with the students.

The projects she had them doing were rather elaborate and time consuming. For example, they made apple trees representing the four seasons. This was a two-day project. On the first day they had to make four arm/hand prints for the tree trunk and branches. The students worked with the teacher individually on this. Nancy rolled the paint on their arms/hands and then pressed their arms/hands on the paper. The second day, once the paint had dried, they colored each tree to represent each season.

In addition to the projects, the students started doing more worksheets. Nancy would have a worksheet waiting for them when they entered the classroom. She then would have them draw a picture on the back of the worksheet.

During this month, Nancy's pedagogical content knowledge seemed to regress. She had moved away from literacy instruction and began to focus on holidays. However, even within her new project curriculum her knowledge of her students was still very limited. After the positive experience in the month of September, I was taken by surprise at her lack of literacy instruction. I discovered that Nancy was not sure how to organize for instruction. I encouraged Nancy to use the district’s kindergarten handbook as a framework for organizing for instruction. I offered to sit down with her and go through the handbook and help her plan. Nancy agreed to meet with me. She also told me that she wanted to get back to centers.

**Blue Creek**

I observed only three literacy events in this classroom during October. The students were very excited about Halloween. Everyday they would ask Nancy if today was Halloween. One day she asked them to brainstorm ideas for their Halloween party. She wrote their ideas on a large paper. That was one of the literacy events I observed.
She began teaching the alphabet to this class. She had them practice writing the letter a. However, she never showed them how to form the letter. She just gave the students graph paper with an a on it and asked them to fill each square with an a.

The third literacy event I observed this month was reading aloud. Nancy chose a chapter book to read to this class. The irony in this choice was that she told me she was not reading to them as much because they don’t listen. She read only the first chapter.

An additional literacy event that occurred this month was one in which I was involved. Toward the end of the month Nancy lost her voice. She asked me to read a Halloween story to the class. As I read aloud, I focused much of my attention to trying to engage the class in the reading. I also was very cognizant of the attention level of the class. Since Nancy was becoming frustrated with what she described as her students’ inability to pay attention, I wanted to be sure to model patience and strategies for keeping the students attending to the story.

Nancy and I talked afterwards. I tried to point out to her that I was able to keep the class engaged in the story, and that I used strategies like saying their names while reading to keep them on task. Nancy agreed that my reading was successful and that I did keep the students’ attention the whole time.

The very few literacy events that occurred in October were a result of both the focus on holiday projects and the limited amount of planning Nancy did for this class. Just like in September, Nancy would only accomplish 2 to 3 tasks per day. The following was our conversation about this:

Marla: You do really different things in the morning and in the afternoon.
Nancy: Yeah, well, I can do more with them in the morning.
Marla: So you feel you can do more with them in the morning?
Nancy: No, I can. No, I mean it took me a long time before we even started to paint. I mean painting is . . .
Marla: Is it because there isn’t another adult in the room?
Nancy: Well, I really didn’t think they were under control enough. . . I really needed them to listen, to get under control, before we could paint.

* * *

Marla: Did you ever consider planning the same thing?

Nancy: Well, I considered it, but I can plan one thing and it might take me the whole class to do it in here, but you know how long it takes to do anything.

Following that comment I suggested to Nancy the alternative, that is, perhaps the reason they were not getting a lot done was because they didn’t have a lot to do. I suggested that she might be providing too much time to complete one task. I told her she should consider having more activities for the students to do.

The month of October proved to be very unsuccessful in examining Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge because she seemed to lose focus on literacy instruction. I felt it was my responsibility to try to focus her back on the importance of literacy instruction. At the end of the month we agreed to get together and plan for instruction. I also tried to get her to think about instruction by asking her in an interview what she thought she had taught her students thus far in the year. The following is her response to this question:

Nancy: Sometimes I sit there and I think we’ve been in school eight weeks, and I don’t think I have taught them anything. I mean there are days when I actually think that I am doing a really bad job, and there are other days when I think that they must know more than they did before. So I must be teaching them something. Although maybe I just can’t narrow it down to tell you exactly what it is. I don’t know. They can write their names. I taught them to recognize their names. I think I have increased their vocabulary a little bit and exposed them to things they haven’t been exposed to.

Marla: Like?
Nancy: Art projects, books. I don’t know how many have ever had a book read to them. Just interacting with other kids, manners, structure.

November and December

I am reporting the results of November and December together because they both were short months. November had a few holidays and a week of half-day classes due to parent-teacher conferences. In December was winter break. November and December were described in my interim case summary as “holiday projects.”

Heather

The literacy events I observed during this time generally related to the holiday projects the students were working on. It was clear that the project dominated the curriculum, not the literacy event. In November the student made turkey books. Thus, the book itself was secondary to the project. They worked on this project for an entire week. The book covers were made out of paper plates which required the students to color them. They then had to glue Popsicle sticks on the bottom of the books for legs. The day they completed the project was the first time they read the story. They read it once as a class. Then Nancy asked them, “Do you need to know the words to read? No, because you can just look at the pictures and tell them what it is about. This is a very cute thing to make. I’m sure your parents will like you to read it to them.”

She did a similar project in December. This project focused around the book How the Grinch Stole Christmas. She spent two days reading the story to them. The project was for them to make a Grinch and in the middle of it explain how they “would make a Grinch grin.” They brainstormed ideas, and she wrote them on the board. When the students finished making their Grinches, they were to copy one of the ideas from the board.

During this time period Nancy showed a renewed interest in journaling. The students had their journals at their tables. Yet, even so, they only wrote in their journals 4 to 5 times each month. In addition, Nancy never responded to their writing.
November was the first time Nancy assessed the students. She did this to prepare for parent conferences. She tested them on their colors, letters, shapes, and numbers. While she individually tested students, she had the other students doing worksheets at their seats. She still did not return to centers.

In the middle of November Nancy and I finally got together for our planning meeting. We planned to go back to centers/literacy stations. We discussed having literacy stations where the students could use literacy in authentic ways. In addition, I suggested she start using big books with her classes. I also reminded her of the language experience approach. I encouraged her to start using nursery rhymes for literacy instruction. I gave Nancy two more professional books that dealt primarily with teaching literacy in kindergarten. We spent a lot of time talking about things to do; yet, we never actually made any concrete plans. Nancy told me that she felt she was now ready to do that. When this didn’t happen in December, Nancy suggested that she would begin once they returned from break.

Blue Creek

The months of November and December were even more discouraging at Blue Creek in considering Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge. In this class she also did many holiday-related projects; however, these projects rarely involved literacy. They made five different turkeys in November. In December they made ornaments and Christmas trees.

They also journaled in this class but, again, it was only 4 to 5 times per month with no response from Nancy. They continued to work on the alphabet. She would give them worksheets with all the letters of the alphabet, and the students practiced writing their letters, again with no formal instruction on how to form the letters. She also tested these students with the same assessments she used at Heather. She then used the information she gained as a stimulus for her parent/teacher conferences.
I did observe her reading a story to the class. As always, she read with a lot of enthusiasm and truly worked hard at engaging the students. Yet, just as in her morning class, the transcripts of her reading aloud attest to her lack of understanding on her students. On December 10, 1999, she introduced this class to Mr. Squiggles. He was in the book, Blue Bug, that she read to them. The book was about Christmas. Nancy explained to the class what garland and tinsel were. When they reached the end of the book, Blue Bug was standing on the star to be placed on the top of the tree. The following is a transcript of this part of the story:

Nancy: Is Blue Bug shining?
(Nobody answers)

Nancy: What is missing from the tree?
(Nobody answers)

(Nancy reads the page and reveals that it is a star.)

Nancy: Where do you think it will go?
(Nobody answers)

Nancy: It will go on top of the tree just like your trees at home.

This brief event clearly depicts the limited understanding Nancy still had of her students. She was not familiar with their experiences and assumed her students experiences were similar to her own. Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge did not develop in these two months because again she wasn’t focused on literacy instruction.

January

I described the month of January in my interim case summary as once again “a change in focus,” although this time it was a change “from projects back to literacy”. Nancy was beginning to think about literacy instruction, and her pedagogical content knowledge was once again expanding.
Heather.

The month began with projects. On my first visit the students were making snowmen. Yet following this project, the students wrote in their journals. Nancy invited them to her desk to respond to their journals. She asked them to read to her what they had written and then wrote back to them.

During that same observation Nancy read the students a story. It was a book with a lot of repetition, and she invited the students to join in for the repetitive parts. They did. Following the reading of the story, Nancy introduced them to the daily news. She told them she would choose one student each day to share news. She wrote their news on a large piece of paper, and they then read it together.

On another visit in January, Nancy continued with the daily news. She was pleased at how much the students enjoyed this. However, her other literacy events were put on hold because she once again had to assess the students. This time she needed to prepare for report cards. She used the assessment provided by the district which tested for letter recognition, sounds, sight words, numbers, shapes, types of print, concepts of print, parts of a book, rhyming words, writing letters, and recitation of students' names and addresses. This assessment was extremely time consuming and, therefore, she had the students doing seatwork. She told the class, "I told you today we are doing some testing and tomorrow, too. You are going to have a lot of seatwork to do. It is hard to teach you and test you at the same time."

Nancy was certainly refocusing her attention to literacy instruction. Her pedagogical content knowledge seemed to once again begin growing. She was implementing strategies that focused on engaging the students in meaningful literacy events. Her planning changed focus from literacy events that were related to a project, to literacy events that were authentic.
Blue Creek

For the first time in Nancy’s teaching of this class, literacy seemed to be a focus in her plans. She was responding to the students’ journals in this class, too. She also introduced the daily news in this class. In addition, she began to teach sound/symbol relationships to this class. However, her low expectations for this class were still present. The following is a transcript from a lesson reinforcing her teaching of the previous day.

(Nancy writes the letter m on the board.)

Nancy: Does anybody remember what letter this is?
Class: m

Nancy: Good, you remembered. I am surprised. Who remembers what sound this letter makes?
Class: /mmm/mmm/mmm/

Nancy: You remembered everything. I am so happy!
Alex: Monkey.
Jesus: Moon.

Nancy: I am sure you guys have been practicing last night!

(Nancy then gave them a paper with both the upper and lower case m.)

Nancy: You are going to trace over the dotted lines. We are going to do this together because I want you to do it right.

Nancy continued to show them how to form the letter m. However, the irony in this lesson was that she was forming them incorrectly. She finally realized that and changed her instruction.

In a subsequent lesson on the letter m Nancy was reviewing with the class words that began with the /m/ sound. She wrote words on the board and then went over them with the class. When she got to the word marshmallow, she asked the students if they knew what that was. Nobody responded. Nancy explained, “a marshmallow is that white square food that you take with you when you go camping to roast on the fire.”
While it was evident that Nancy was finally thinking about literacy pedagogy with this class, her knowledge of her students still remained limited. While she was finally teaching them about letters, she was doing this without the expectation they would learn. In addition, she still demonstrated that she lacked an understanding of their background experiences.

**February**

During the month of February I conducted only a few observations of Nancy’s classrooms. However, one thing was clear, Nancy had established a similar routine in both schools. She was now very focused on teaching sound/symbol relationships. She was teaching the same lessons to both classes. Her instruction was now very much centered on her phonics books. She would introduce a letter and discuss the sound that letter makes. She would go through the objects in the tub that began with that sound. She would write words on the board that began with the sound. The students would then, as a whole class, complete the pages in their phonics workbooks that corresponded with that letter. Once those pages were completed, she had the students do other worksheets incorporating the letter they were learning. Each time she introduced a new letter, she would first review the old letters they learned.

Nancy continued to have the students write in their journals, although she only responded to them occasionally. She continued with the daily news, yet, like the journals they only did this once or twice a week.

I talked with Nancy about her planning similar instruction for both classes, and she told me she thought it was working well. She was pleased with her teaching of sound/symbol relationships, and she told me, “some of the students just aren’t there yet, but for the most part they are getting it.” Nancy continued to do everything in both classes in a whole group. She never went back to centers, although she told me, “I will once I get organized.”
In an interview in February I asked her if she used the information she gained from her individual assessment of the students in planning her instruction. She said, "No... administering the one-on-one assessment gave me a sense of what they know because in class they all seem to know." Nancy planned to continue to teach each letter to the class as a whole.

**Nancy's Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

I began this section of the results by suggesting that what I found in this study was that pedagogical content knowledge was the very thing that Nancy needed. I conclude this section of the results with that finding. Nancy did show indices of growth in her pedagogical content knowledge in that she did find ways to represent and formulate her subject matter in meaningful ways. However, she had a very limited understanding of the students with whom she was teaching. She rarely utilized the many materials available for teaching her subject and wasn't familiar with the curriculum.

The results reported thus far have examined the what, which was Nancy’s construction of pedagogy and literacy and, thus, looked at the study of subject. However, in critical research it is necessary to explore subject and object. Therefore, the following section of the results will report the study of object, or the why. That is, I will explore the various factors that both constrained and enhanced Nancy’s developing pedagogical content knowledge. I have organized this final part of the results section, which centered on the issue of power relations/authority, by looking at how the themes of organization, ideas, and interruptions were tied to these issues and thus both enhanced and constrained Nancy’s developing pedagogical content knowledge.

**Power Relations/Authority**

Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge developed within the structural domains of schools which were centered on power relations. Nancy gave authority to the people responsible for her future: her principals. As a first-year teacher Nancy was considered
probationary. It was required that she be evaluated four times in the first year. Nancy needed these evaluations to be satisfactory in order to continue her career as a teacher.

The development of Nancy's pedagogical content knowledge was very much related to this power structure. I interviewed both of Nancy's principals. What I found from these interviews was they had different views of kindergarten. Mr. Hill, the principal at Heather, believed that kindergarten teachers should be just like all the other teachers in the school. They needed to teach their students according to the curriculum. He was very focused on academics as he saw education as the key in helping his at-risk students to become successful.

Mrs. French, the principal at Blue Creek, had very different views of kindergarten. She told me, "We are doing kindergarten all wrong here." She believed kindergarten was a time for exploration and developing social skills. However, she also indicated that she believed kindergarten was not thought of as a high priority in the district and, as wrong as she believed this to be, kindergarten was not a high priority for her either.

Nancy's different approaches to teaching literacy seem closely related to her principals' differing perceptions. As Nancy commented on feeling more relaxed at Blue Creek, this could be a reflection of the lack of demand placed on her, unlike at Heather where she felt she was expected to teach her kindergarten students to read. Perhaps even more telling of the impact these principals had on Nancy's thinking was the statement she made to me in October about what she thought kindergarten was about. She said this to me while we were talking about her afternoon class.

Kindergarten is the very first taste of real school, and there is no way I am going to make them hate it. They really need to enjoy the first year because this is like the foundation that everything else builds on. I mean if they hate their first year they are certainly not going to go to first grade thinking good thoughts about it and it is only going to compound until they hate school.
Nancy’s thinking was clearly being influenced by her principal, Mrs. French, and, thus, her teaching of literacy to her afternoon class was a reflection of this type of thinking. Mr. Hill had an even greater influence on Nancy’s teaching. Heather was designated as her home school, and he was responsible for her evaluations. For Nancy’s first evaluation, he observed her teaching only once. He collected her lesson plan book twice during that time period. The following are a few excerpts from her first evaluation.

At the outset of the school term Ms. Green took an assessment of her students’ levels of development and used the information in setting up her program. She has a good understanding of the role test data plays in meeting the educational need of her students.

***

Ms. Green creates a learning environment that is warm, friendly and positive. The specifics are listed below:

- Efficient classroom routines maximize instructional time
- Expectations are high, yet attainable by all
- Student self-responsibility is evident . . .

Those are just a few examples of the items Mr. Hill included in Nancy’s evaluation. What was apparent was that Nancy’s evaluation was based more on the type of instruction Mr. Hill perceived should be occurring in Nancy’s classroom than the actual instruction she provided. This evaluation provided Nancy with authority. The only person who had control over Nancy’s career commended her teaching and led Nancy to believe that she was doing a great job. Nancy’s evaluation was solely based on her morning class. Mrs. French never entered Nancy’s classroom during the entire duration of the study. This sent an additional message to Nancy. She was free to do as she pleased in her afternoon class. The goal of kindergarten, as described by Mrs. French, was “to get the kids to like school.”
Nancy's pedagogical content knowledge was developing in an institution that was laden with relations based on power. Thus, the examination of these relations were crucial in attempting to ascertain how Nancy's knowledge developed. In addition to the power relations that existed within the school, the following themes were also tied to issues of power.

**Organization**

In considering the theme of organization it would appear that Nancy's lack of organization was a reflection of her construction of teaching. However, I placed organization as part of the study of object because it was the structural aspects of schooling that placed her in the position to go through her entire first year lacking organization. As a new teacher Nancy was sent into the classroom to sink or swim. Her principals reviewed her lesson plans on specified dates and made the assumption she was swimming. The cellular structure of schools described by Lortie (1975), which places teachers in isolation in their classrooms, was very much a reality in the organizational structure of Nancy's two schools.

Nancy's espoused lack of organization was clearly a factor that continually emerged through data collection and greatly hindered her ability to develop pedagogical content knowledge. The most salient element within her lack of organization was her neglect of formally planning for instruction. Nancy did not write lesson plans in her plan books until after she taught. In both of her schools, her lesson plan books were collected and evaluated by her principals several times throughout the year. However, she was given the dates by both principals of when the plan books would be collected. Thus, she entered plans into her plan book the weekend before they were collected.

Nancy always conceived herself as a very organized person. She told me “being unorganized is so unlike me. When my son was little, I used to organize his legos by shapes and colors.” However, in the classroom she just couldn't get organized. I recorded
her sharing with me her concerns about organization many times throughout the first few months of school.

8/24: What to do?

What am I going to do with these kids?

What to do now?

9/1: I just can’t get organized!

9/8: I just can’t get started. I don’t know where to begin.

9/11: I see myself as wanting to have a schedule. I think in the morning sort of almost like a schedule.

9/22: I am so unorganized this week!

10/23: (about centers) I keep thinking about it. I want to do it. I don’t know when.

When I get organized . . . Not next week. A lot of it is getting organized.

11/5: I don’t even have anything planned for them. It is such a hectic week.

In addition to the concerns she mentioned about her lack of organization, my observations of her teaching continually documented this phenomenon. Her lack of organization manifested itself in many ways. Since Nancy did not do any formal planning before teaching, the general ideas she came to school with each day were very vague and limited. She had only a few tasks for the students to do each day. This lack of activity led to her establishment of pacing. She paced the student based on the slowest workers in the class. Thus, many students spent a lot of time coloring while they waited for the rest of the class to finish.

She also exhibited her lack of organization by not coming to class prepared. Each month when the students made new journals, they would be constructed in class. Nancy would use her class time to staple papers inside their journals. She also used her class time to prepare for parent/teacher conferences and to do her report cards.

While more apparent in her afternoon class, she often used her lack of organization as a means of flexibility within her teaching day. For example, one
afternoon the students came in the room talking about pets. She then spent an hour of the day having the students draw their pets. Yet, most of the time her lack of organization seemed to contribute to what I described as wasting time. On at least three different occasions Nancy spent 1/2 hour trying to figure out whose homework belonged to whom. The following transcripts provides an example of one of these occurrences in her afternoon class at 12:45 p.m. on January 8:

(Nancy is sorting through the papers. She comes across two papers that have no names on them. She then went back through them to try to figure out who turned in their homework. She looked through various piles. She works on this for 20 minutes. )

Nancy: You know you guys are making it really hard. All right, listen, I have two homework papers that I don’t have names for. These are the people I don’t have stickers for (reads a list of names). If you know you gave me homework, come up here. Manuel, look at me, one of these must be yours. Did you give me homework or is it still at home?

Manuel: You said bring it back?

Nancy: Yes, I keep telling you to bring it back Friday.

Manuel: Friday?

Nancy: Yes, today is Friday!

(Then Nancy asks Juan. )

Nancy: Which one is your paper? Look at them. Look at all the papers. I probably will have to guess and say this one is yours. Juan, how hard can it be? Is that yours?

(It was now 1:15. Nancy gave up and moved onto the next task.)

Nancy’s problems with organization were in part a result of her inability to make the time to organize. However, these problems were compounded due to the structural aspects of schooling and her unusual assignment. Nancy interacted with very few
colleagues as she spent her prep/lunch time moving from one school to the other. Thus, her concerns about organization went unnoticed by others at both schools.

**Ideas**

Another theme that emerged throughout the data collection was related to ideas, that is, where Nancy's ideas came from and how she used these ideas based on her perceptions of authority. Many people offered Nancy ideas throughout the study. Nancy selectively chose to use some of these ideas as she negotiated their authority as well as her own.

**Mrs. Gonzales**

At the beginning of the year Nancy perceived Mrs. Gonzales as an authority on kindergarten instruction in a diverse setting. Mrs. Gonzales had been an aide in that particular classroom for the past three years. She worked with the former teacher, Mrs. Johnson. Nancy tried to gain information about Mrs. Johnson's teaching from Mrs. Gonzales.

Nancy: Should they practice fire drills?
Mrs. G: Yes, and they also need to learn to be quiet when there is an announcement.
Nancy: Thanks.

***

Nancy: I am going to give them a few minutes to go play. Should I send them by table?
Mrs. G: Yes.

***

Nancy: (about cutting). When should they start? Maybe I should get paper with straight lines for them to cut.
Mrs. G: No curves.
Nancy saw Mrs. Gonzales as an authority. However, after just a few weeks into the year, Nancy stopped asking Mrs. Gonzales how to proceed and began to merely ask her opinion on things. For example, when Nancy decided to begin centers she asked Mrs. Gonzales what she thought of centers. Mrs. Gonzales was not really in favor of doing centers, yet Nancy implemented them anyway. Further into the year, Nancy took on the role of authority in this relationship and instead of asking Mrs. Gonzales about what they would be doing, Nancy informed her of the plans for each day.

**Myself**

I offered Nancy many ideas about teaching literacy. In trying to ascertain Nancy's perception of me I am reminded of her comment after I modeled shared reading in her afternoon class. I asked her what she was thinking while I was reading. She told me, "Now there is an experienced teacher." Nancy seemed to have regard for both my teaching experience and my knowledge. While she may have viewed me as an authority, she never seemed to use my ideas.

For example, I encouraged her at least once a week to use centers. She did this for only two weeks. I also continually reminded her of the importance of responding to her students' journal. She did eventually do this; however, her implementation of responding followed a new teacher training where journaling was one of the foci. I also tried to help her plan for instruction; yet, she never implemented these plans.

**Other Teachers/Staff Development**

Nancy's pattern of using ideas temporarily, as she did with mine, remained constant with the ideas she gained from other teachers. However, related to the issue of authority, Nancy was selective in whose ideas she used. In a "new teacher training" required by the district at the beginning of the year which focused on literacy, Nancy found the sessions dealt with grades higher than kindergarten. She found the sessions to be a waste of her time in that "there was no relation to kindergarten."
Nancy did, however, respect the expertise of other teachers and as she stated before she began teaching, “As a new teacher I will seek out and use advice from my more experienced colleagues.” Her use of ideas she gained from other teachers was an apparent part of her teaching. However, she rarely fit these ideas into any permanent type of instruction. For example, the CD she purchased from the early childhood workshop was used only twice. She did the pizza song and a Halloween song. The big books given to her by Miss Pam were used only for the reading of Blue Cat. The idea to respond to journals and daily news, which came from a “new teacher training,” were done only once or twice a week.

These ideas all contributed to Nancy’s developing pedagogical content knowledge. It was clear that she believed she was gaining advice from experts. Yet, she was unable to successfully implement any of these ideas on a regular basis in her classroom. The ideas in which Nancy found the most authority were her own, that is, when these ideas were substantiated by an authority figure.

Nancy

Nancy almost always expressed her uncertainty about teaching reading. I asked her how to teach reading at every interview and sometimes in our day-to-day conversations. On one occasion, though, she did answer the question. It was during an interview in October. Nancy was telling me about the pressure from the first-grade teachers in getting her students to read.

Marla: How do you see that happening? How are you going to get there?
Nancy: Wait, I think I feel a migraine coming on.
(We laugh)
Nancy: I don’t know... Let’s see, how do I get them to read?... Well, let’s see. You have to know that letters have sounds and that the sounds together make parts of words, put the parts together to make whole words. I don’t know. It is
almost like instinctually you know what to do, but you don’t know how to say what to do.

This was the only time throughout the study that Nancy shared any knowledge of how she thought she should teach reading. She believed this was implicit knowledge. However, she gave authority to this knowledge through comparing it to what the other two kindergarten teachers were doing. They both approached teaching literacy through a letter-of-the-week type curriculum. This made sense to Nancy. This became the authority she needed to justify her approach to literacy instruction. The ideas I offered her, along with the ones from Miss Pam and the other teachers she interacted with at teacher staff development could be discounted because the two other kindergarten teachers were teaching their classes very much like Nancy. From Nancy’s perspective they were the true experts on literacy instruction in kindergarten.

Nancy discussed her teaching of literacy with the two other kindergarten teachers. At the time of report cards, when Nancy received an assessment packet from the district, she felt overwhelmed with all that was required of her. She discounted the importance of completing all these assessments by stating that “the other kindergarten teachers agree that to fully do the testing they want is impossible. It is too intense and time-consuming.”

The authority Nancy awarded herself was evident only during the last two months of the study. In January I asked her to get together and plan with me. Nancy told me, “I think it is time I do this by myself. I need to do that.” She also rejected help from Miss Pam. Since Miss Pam finished testing all the students at Blue Creek, she offered to come into Nancy’s classroom two afternoons a week and help out. The first day she came in Nancy basically ignored her presence and went on with her lesson. When Nancy finished, it was time for Miss Pam to go. Miss Pam and Nancy decided that she would only come to Nancy’s room at her request.

Clearly, the one with the most power in Nancy’s life was Mr. Hill. On Nancy’s second evaluation, she once again was evaluated very favorably. Interestingly, this
evaluation was based solely on the collection of Nancy’s lesson plans. Mr. Hill never observed Nancy during this time period. Yet, he told Nancy she was doing well, and, therefore Nancy believed him. She now was able to view herself as an authority and thus rejected any additional support.

**Interruptions**

The final theme that related to power relations/authority was what I referred to as interruptions. While this theme is centered around only one event, and, thus, may appear limited, it was essential in understanding Nancy’s development as a new teacher. Therefore, I felt it was important enough to be regarded as a theme. The interruptions, which occurred during every single observation, resulted from the classrooms in which Nancy worked.

At Heather Nancy’s classroom was out in a portable. The school had two kindergarten classrooms. One was being used by the other kindergarten teacher, and the other was being used by a first-grade teacher. The kindergarten classrooms have their own bathrooms and sinks.

At Blue Creek Nancy’s classroom was also out in a portable. It was the only portable at the school. This school also had two kindergarten classrooms. One was being used by the other kindergarten teacher. The other, which was originally assigned to Nancy, was taken away from her just four days before school started. The room was given to a special education class. The two kindergarten rooms were connected by bathrooms, and each had their own sink.

The theme of interruptions, which related to issues of power in this case, was simply that every day Nancy had to take her class on an outing to the bathroom and for drinks of water. This outing would take anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes. The power issue was simple; because Nancy was a new teacher she was marginalized in her room assignments. It would seem logical that kindergarten rooms were designed especially for kindergarten classes. However, as a new teacher Nancy had no voice in this situation.
This theme became very important in considering Nancy's development as a teacher. As Clandinin (1989) suggested, experienced teachers hold “a rhythmic knowledge of teaching around the cyclic temporal structure of classrooms and schools” (p. 122). As a beginning teacher, continually having this flow interrupted was a great obstacle in her ability to develop this cyclical knowledge. Thus, this greatly hindered her ability to develop in her pedagogical content knowledge.

**Power Relations/Authority in Nancy's Teaching**

Nancy faced many obstacles in her first year of teaching. As a new teacher she was marginalized. She was assigned to teach at two schools with children whom she knew very little about their backgrounds. Furthermore, she was placed in classrooms that were not appropriate for kindergarten children.

Nancy also faced another form of oppression as a new teacher: her age. During the first week of school, Mrs. French called me into her office. She was concerned about Nancy because on the second day of school Nancy entered Blue Creek in tears. Mrs. French asked me if I knew what was wrong with Nancy. I suggested to her that Nancy was a bit overwhelmed with her ELL class. Mrs. French told me, “She should know better; she is mature enough to know to ask for help when she needs it.” Nancy received no support from her principals. Mrs. French never entered Nancy's room, and Mr. Hill observed her only once in six months.

The organizational structure of the two schools at which Nancy taught, along with assumptions made by her principals and colleagues served as important factors in understanding the development (or lack) of Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge. Nancy constructed what it meant to teach reading, yet she did this within a very powerful institution comprised of relations based on power.
CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

This study explored the learning to teach process of a beginning teacher through an investigation of her pedagogical content knowledge of literacy. In the following section, I will discuss the results of this study by returning to the questions that guided the study. I will then consider both implications for teaching and teacher education and suggestions for future research. However, I will first discuss the limitations of the study.

Limitations

The greatest limitation in this study was that the findings were subjectively situated in both Nancy and myself. Nancy is only one beginning teacher, and her experiences were context-specific. Therefore, it is essential to consider the findings as inseparable from the context in which they occurred.

I also would suggest that I am a limitation of the study. I was the only researcher who collected and analyzed the data. Therefore, all the data were filtered through my lens, that is, my experiences, beliefs, and interpretations.

An additional limitation was the subjective nature of using pedagogical content knowledge as the framework for understanding learning to teach. While I began the study with the presumption that I was not trying to judge Nancy’s teaching of literacy against my own beliefs, I did have to make judgments on her teaching. That is, implicit in the definition offered by Shulman (1986) of pedagogical content knowledge was a value statement. He defined pedagogical content knowledge as "the ways of representing and
formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (p. 9). I was the one who determined whether or not the subject-matter was comprehensible to others.

While these limitations certainly color the interpretation of the results, I have made no attempt to suggest that this research was value-free. Actually, I suggested from the onset of the study that this research was value-laden. However, I have been up front about the nature of the research, documented my self-reflexivity throughout the research, and make no attempt to try to generalize the results to other settings and/or participants. While considering these limitations, I now return to the questions that guided the study.

How Did Nancy Teach Literacy?

When Nancy did teach literacy she used multiple ways of representing the subject matter to her students. The most powerful representation I observed was her reading aloud to the students. However, I was not always certain she knew she was teaching literacy when she was reading aloud.

She also used journals as a means of teaching writing. Again, though, I am not certain of what she thought she was teaching them through this technique. Nancy did not respond to their journals until January. For Nancy, it may be that journaling and reading aloud were just strategies that were used to provide students with experiences she assumed they may not have already had.

Ultimately, though, the way Nancy represented her subject matter of beginning literacy instruction was through direct instruction in letters and sounds. She taught her students as a whole group with no consideration of individual differences. I talked with Nancy about this after she finished her testing for report cards. I questioned her on whether the information she gained from doing the one-on-one testing had any impact on her instructional plans. She told me no. She justified this by suggesting that, “most kindergarten teachers don’t” and that it is “good to know where they are at,” but she was planning to continue teaching to the whole class.
Nancy’s teaching of literacy was based on empowering herself. She accomplished this through gaining authority in her voice by substantiating her teaching through both comparing it to other kindergarten teachers at her schools and accepting her formal evaluations as truth. Nancy’s teaching of literacy was situated in the power relations at both her schools. While many people offered her suggestions for teaching literacy, Nancy’s selectivity on choosing which ideas to accept were based on whom she deemed as both experts and in authority.

Nancy’s teaching of literacy was also fragmented. She would implement new ideas in her teaching, however they never seemed to be consistent. Nancy would try things and even when she felt they were very successful, she was unable to make them routine. The daily news is perhaps the best example. She was very excited at how well her afternoon class liked this activity, yet she only did this with them about two times a week.

As a new teacher with an unusual assignment for her first year, Nancy conformed her literacy instruction to what she saw around her. Nancy seemed very typical of a new teacher who faced occupational socialization. Yet, what she didn’t learn about were the many other ways literacy was being taught at her schools. I had the opportunity to interact with other teachers at Blue Creek; Nancy did not. During these interactions, the teacher bragged about all of the wonderful innovations they were using in their literacy instruction. They assumed Nancy was doing the same. They never questioned her instruction. They never entered her classroom. This suggests Nancy was marginalized. There was this belief at Blue Creek that, because Nancy always appeared happy (except the second day of school) and never asked for assistance, she was not only doing just fine, but that she was teaching in the ways that these other teachers taught.

By February it was my assumption that Nancy also believed she was doing just fine. She was pleased with her literacy instruction. Most of the students were able to recognize the letters she taught them. Most of them also knew the sounds she taught them. Yet, on a visit to Heather at the end of February, she had only taught five letters: s.
t, m, c, and a. On this visit, Nancy was reviewing the letters. The students were given two clay-like pipe cleaners and asked to make each of the letters they had learned, one upper case and one lower case. Once they finished, Nancy told them they could make any letter they chose. The students were making all the letters of the alphabet. Nancy then had the students hold up their letters, and she guessed what they had made. Marcus made the word go. When she called on him he said, “I made a word.” Noah also made a word. He made the word no. Clearly, Nancy was only teaching to the 1/3 of the class that needed instruction with letters. Some of the students were beyond her instruction and, as evident from my observation, some of the students were not ready for her instruction. From my perspective, however, Nancy was not doing just fine.

In order to further understand Nancy’s teaching of literacy, the following section will discuss the development of her pedagogical content knowledge. This section will be organized around the four constructs offered by Grossman (1990).

How Did Nancy’s Pedagogical Content Knowledge Develop Throughout the Year?

Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge both developed and stagnated throughout the year. By deconstructing her pedagogical content knowledge, a clearer picture of both how and why this happened becomes evident.

Knowledge/Beliefs About Teaching a Specific Subject at a Specific Grade Level

Nancy’s beliefs about the importance of literacy in general were very obscure and idealistic. She believed that literacy was the key to her students’ future. She further believed that literate individuals could accomplish anything in their futures. In addition, she wanted her students to develop a love for reading similar to her own. However, in order to make sense of her beliefs about literacy instruction at the kindergarten level, Nancy had to ground her thinking. She did this by believing her role in literacy instruction was to provide her students with literacy experiences and reading and writing readiness skills.
Nancy believed she had to get her students ready to read for first grade. She felt that the most logical way to do this was to break reading down into the most tangible, concrete parts possible. Thus, she taught letters and sounds. By February, she believed she could now teach her students a few words. She told them after they learned the fifth letter, \( a \), they were now ready, “to make a few words.”

In considering the interview from October, when Nancy revealed for the first and only time how she thought she should teach students to read, it appeared that she did have implicit beliefs about reading instruction. However, these beliefs seemed to be grounded in her logic. That is, she never considered the knowledge she gained from her reading methods courses that countered her beliefs.

Nancy held similar beliefs about getting her students ready to write. As evident in her initial writing instruction, Nancy was having the students first trace straight and curved lines before they could write their letters. She then focused most of her writing instruction of letter formation. She believed it was necessary, again, to make writing instruction as concrete as possible.

Yet, counter to her beliefs in early literacy instruction was her belief about the importance of providing her students with experience. Thus, her reading aloud to the students and journaling were a reflection of this belief.

Nancy’s beliefs about the importance of her subject-matter vacillated throughout the course of the study. She began the school year believing she would need to get her students (at Heather) ready for first grade. However, after the first month of school, her beliefs were challenged. She soon realized that her instructional approach was not working. She then abandoned formal literacy instruction. However, she recommitted herself to her beliefs about literacy readiness in January at both schools.

**Knowledge of Students' Understanding of the Subject Matter**

Nancy’s understanding of her students’ conceptions and misconceptions of the content and of their background knowledge, interest, and familiarity with the content was
the area in which there was the least amount of growth. Nancy both began and ended the study with limited knowledge of the students she was teaching. She continually used examples that did not relate to their background experiences. While Nancy seemed to believe that many of her students needed to be provided with a variety of experiences, her instructional language never reflected this belief. This was consistent throughout the entire study.

Nancy talked of events from her own Eurocentric perspective as if the students would be able to relate. For example, she talked about camping, baking cakes, pies, and bread, going to the library, and decorating the Christmas tree. Yet, while she had extremely high expectations for her students to understand her experiences and be able to relate to them, she had extremely low expectations in her students’ ability. These expectations were based on language differences.

The day after report cards went home at Blue Creek, Santiago’s mother came to see Nancy. She did not speak any English. Nancy called another teacher (who was semi-fluent in Spanish) in the room to help her communicate. Nancy marked on Santiago’s report card that he did not know the letters of the alphabet. Santiago’s mother was livid. She had spent many hours at home working with Santiago on his letters. In Spanish, he knew them all. His mother proceeded to have him write each letter in front of Nancy as she called them out in Spanish.

Clearly, throughout the year, Nancy failed to gain an understanding of her students. Yet what complicated this issue was the concern she had for them. She wanted them to have a positive experience in school. She did get to know her students on a personal level. Since she had them do a lot of coloring, she became very familiar with what they would draw. When they would bring their pictures to show her, she would remark with things like, “Oh, Maricella, did you make another shopping mall?” She also continually gave them praise. The conclusion that could be drawn in terms of Nancy’s
understanding of her students was that on a personal level, she genuinely liked her
students, yet on an academic level, she just did not understand them.

Curricular Knowledge

Nancy’s curricular knowledge, which includes the knowledge of materials
available for teaching specific subjects with an understanding of both the horizontal and
vertical curricula, was an area in which she both grew and stagnated. Nancy did indeed
learn about the kindergarten curriculum. At the beginning of the year, Nancy was unsure
of how to start. Yet, throughout the year she began to make sense of the curriculum. She
gained knowledge of the curriculum through report cards and limited interactions with
the other kindergarten teachers at both teacher training sessions and at her school. She
developed an understanding of what needed to be taught in kindergarten. She became
familiar with the vertical curriculum through learning the expectations for entering into
first grade.

Nancy’s development in this area also stagnated because she was selective in
choosing the curricular areas in which to focus. She was basing her instruction on the
areas of the report card she believed she should be teaching. For example, in the area of
concepts about print, Nancy marked on the students’ report cards that this was “not
introduced.” This alludes to her lack of content knowledge. Nancy did introduce many
concepts about print. Reading aloud and journaling provided instruction in, for example,
directionality and concept of word. However, since she did not formally assess these
areas, she believed she could not evaluate her students.

Nancy’s knowledge of curricular materials available for teaching did not change
throughout the year. Nancy failed to utilize the many materials available for her teaching
of literacy. Miss Pam gave Nancy a commercial material set which included many big
books along with planned units of instruction designed for second-language learners.
Nancy only used the book Blue Cat. In addition, Nancy and I visited the materials center
at Blue Creek which contained many big books along with books on tape. Nancy never
returned to this center to check out materials. The materials Nancy used came from books she purchased, and they were worksheets. Additionally, most of the materials Nancy had in her room remained on shelves throughout the year.

**Knowledge of Strategies and Representations for Teaching a Particular Subject**

This was the most difficult area in which to gauge Nancy's development. At times, it appeared that she regressed in her knowledge of representations. In considering her instruction at Heather in September, it was clear that she was utilizing many ways of representing the subject matter to her students. In teaching letters, Nancy had her students involved in tactile experiences with the letters and involved them in cooking experiences related to the teaching of beginning consonant sounds. Yet, when she returned to instruction in sound/symbol relationships, she placed much of the emphasis on direct instruction. She was having the students complete many worksheets to reinforce her teaching. In addition, Nancy was writing words on the board that began with the letters she taught; however, these were words that the students could not read and at times were not familiar to them. Nancy did continue to use tactile experiences for her students. However, at this point in the year, the students who were familiar with the letters did not need these experiences.

Nancy received many ideas of ways to represent the subject matter to her students. Yet, Nancy was very selective and inconsistent in which ideas she chose to use. Thus, her knowledge in this area certainly grew, but her ability to successfully use this knowledge did not.

**Nancy's Developing Pedagogical Content Knowledge**

Nancy constructed what it meant to be a teacher of early literacy within an institution based on relations of power. Nancy entered into her teaching situation unprepared. The schools failed to support her and, thus, in many areas, Nancy failed to grow. Mr. Hill gave Nancy a false sense of security. He led her to believe she was doing an outstanding job of teaching her kindergarten students. This gave power to Nancy's
voice. Mrs. French also gave Nancy a sense of security. By not ever visiting Nancy’s classroom, she sent a very clear message to Nancy, that is, she reinforced her own ideal that kindergarten education for ELL students was not important. Nancy should just do her best and not worry about “harming the kids.” Thus, Nancy did not need outside assistance from me or Miss Pam. By February Nancy had established a routine for teaching literacy. She grounded this routine in her own beliefs which conformed to the instruction delivered by the other kindergarten teachers.

While I had hoped to see more growth in Nancy’s pedagogical content knowledge, I was not totally surprised by the findings. Given the power structure within the school setting, I came to understand why my voice was not heard by Nancy. From Nancy’s perspective, my advice was often decontextualized. What mattered most to Nancy was that she felt she was accomplishing her goals for getting the students ready for first grade and providing them with a positive experience. By February, Nancy felt successful.

How Did Varying Contexts Influence Nancy’s Teaching?

Clearly, nothing was more evident in this study than the ways in which the two contexts shaped Nancy’s teaching. Nancy began the school year believing she was teaching two very different groups of students at two very different schools. Thus, Nancy planned very different instruction.

The context in which she worked at Heather provided both structure and freedom. The freedom came from the climate of the school. Mr. Hill basically left his teachers alone. He spent a lot of time interacting with the students and was very much a part of maintaining the magnet program at the school. However, from Nancy’s perspective, this school lacked structure. There was a sense of openness to the school. This was related not only to culture established by the members of the school but also by the setting of the school. For example, I was able to park right behind Nancy’s portable, enter her classroom through an open gate, and have my presence at the school remain unknown.
The constraints Nancy felt at this school was more a result of the power relations within the school. Nancy felt pressured by the first-grade teachers to get her students ready for first grade. At one point, a first-grade teacher gave Nancy a list of sight words that the students were expected to know by the end of kindergarten. Additionally, Nancy felt the pressure from her probationary status which remained at the discretion of Mr. Hill. This pressure diminished after Nancy’s first evaluation. Mr. Hill evaluated Nancy very favorably and, thus, Nancy was no longer concerned with her status.

Blue Creek presented almost an entirely opposite context. There was both freedom and structure. However, at Blue Creek, the structure was very much a part of the climate of the school and the freedom was awarded to Nancy in terms of her instruction. Mrs. French was very knowledgeable of school happenings. Each time I spoke with her this was obvious. She knew of events that occurred in Nancy’s room when other teachers were present, for example, Miss Pam.

Nancy sensed the freedom awarded to her at this school and felt “more relaxed” with these students. Yet, Nancy also put pressure on herself to go beyond the expectations of Mrs. French. Thus, by January Nancy began to teach her students at Blue Creek in the same manner she taught her students at Heather. In January and February it was clear that Nancy no longer was separating the two contexts. She was teaching her students at both schools the same content.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of the learning to teach process by using pedagogical content knowledge as a framework for examining this process. The extant research on learning to teach has provided many models and stage theories of this process. However, as suggested by Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996), they have the tendency to treat learning to teach as a “global and undifferentiated process” (p. 79). Thus, this study probed deeper into this process in order to explore how a beginning teacher learns.
Nancy was in many ways like other beginning teachers. She felt unprepared to teach literacy (see, e.g., Rust, 1994), had a limited understanding of students (see, e.g., Kagan, 1992), and was selective in whom she chose to ask for help (see, e.g., Knowles, 1994). However, Nancy’s experiences also differed from many beginning teachers. That is, Nancy did not focus all of her energy on classroom management (see, e.g., Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1991; Veenman, 1984).

While Nancy held a very custodial orientation (Hoy, 1968) regarding the nature of school, she rarely focused her attention on issues related to classroom management. This is not to suggest that she did not complain about the behavior of her students; that she did quite often. What this does suggest is that she never explicitly addressed these issues. In Hollingsworth’s (1989) model of learning to teach, she suggested that general managerial routines had to be in place before content and pedagogy became a focus of attention. This was not at all the case for Nancy. Nancy never had managerial routines in place. Thus, this again points to the importance of closely examining what happens in the first year of teaching.

Nancy’s first year of teaching elucidated the processes she went through in learning to teach. There was no doubt that Nancy did learn to teach in her experiences. While she may not have learned what I had wanted her to learn, she certainly did learn. Featherstone et al. (1997) suggested that “giving authority to one’s personal experience while learning to teach is central to understanding how and what one is learning from experience” (p. 3, emphasis in original). In Nancy’s case this was quite clear; yet, in addition to considering how and what Nancy was learning, it became crucial to consider from whom she was learning.

Implications for Teaching and Teacher Education

Clark (1989) suggested that research on teachers’ thinking will not provide teacher educators with well-defined prescriptions for how to educate teachers, “yet it can help teacher educators improve their own practice by asking thoughtful questions about
the process and content of their work” (p. 6). I feel this statement exemplifies the implications for this study. My intention was not to use the findings from this case study to generate prescriptive implications for teacher education; yet, I believe from this study considerations and questions about teacher education emerge.

One consideration relates to the decontextualized and fragmented nature of reading methods in teacher education. Preservice teachers learn many strategies and theories in their methods courses, however they are often asked to consider these ideas in a manufactured reality. That is, methods courses are absent of the realities of classroom life including the structural organization of schools as institutions laden with relations of power. When considering Nancy’s experiences, along with the many preservice teachers who enter teaching feeling unprepared to teach literacy, the question that comes to mind is: How can methods courses better contextualize literacy instruction?

Another consideration involves the placement of beginning teachers. As suggested by Darling-Hammond (1996) new teachers are often placed in situations that require the most experienced teachers. Thus, new teachers are often marginalized as a result of their novice status. Nancy’s placement as a first-year teacher is representative of this unfair type of placement. In considering the education received by her students the question that arises is: How can preservice teachers be better prepared for placements at schools with diverse populations?

A final consideration that emanates from this study relates to the levels of support offered to beginning teachers. Lortie (1976) described more than 30 years ago the isolation found in the structural organization of schools. In considering Nancy’s experiences the question that emerges is: How can schools promote a more equitable environment for their beginning teachers? In addition, other questions that come to mind from this consideration relate to mentoring. While universities may involve themselves in the mentoring of new teachers, the questions become: What happens once power relations are removed? Have beginning teachers inscribed the power relations situated in
the learning process to the extent that once the power relations are removed they withdraw?

Suggestions for Future Research

The study of pedagogical content knowledge in the field of elementary literacy is a new line of research. Thus, additional research is needed in this area. The findings from this study suggest the importance of exploring the pedagogical content knowledge of experienced teachers through the same critical lens. This type of research would provide a better framework for understanding the expert teacher of literacy along with the many factors that influence their expertise. Additionally, more studies are needed that examine development of pedagogical content knowledge in beginning teachers. These studies could help generate theory on how this type of knowledge develops by critically exploring beginning teachers in varying contexts.

Another line of research that is needed involves studies of the learning to teach literacy process framed within other constructs. Pedagogical content knowledge provides one framework for understanding this process. Studying the learning to teach literacy process through other frameworks, such as teachers’ thought processes, would provide multiple perspectives of this phenomenon.

A final suggestion for future research that stems from the findings of this study is to explore more closely the literacy instruction provided to linguistically-diverse students. While limited in scope, the results of this study suggest that this particular population of students was not receiving instruction that promoted their learning of the English language, let alone providing them access to literacy learning.

Another line of research that is needed involves studies of the learning to teach literacy process framed within other constructs. Due to the subjective nature of pedagogical content knowledge, alternative frameworks for understanding this process seem needed. One such framework would be to look at the learning to teach literacy
process through exploring beginning teachers' thought processes (i.e., beliefs, planning, and decision-making).

A final suggestion for future research that stems from the findings of this study is to explore more closely the literacy instruction provided to linguistically-diverse students. While limited in scope, the results of this study suggest that this particular population of students was not receiving instruction that promoted their learning of the English language, let alone providing them access to literacy learning.
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APPENDIX A

A DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

**Beliefs.** Rokeach (1968) defined beliefs as "any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person does or says, capable of being proceeded by the phrase, I believe that..." (p. 113).

**Critical research.** Critical research is grounded in the basic assumptions "that all thought is fundamentally mediated by power relations that are socially and historically constituted" (Kinnceloe & McClaren, 1994, p. 139) and, that for research to be considered critical, it must attempt to confront injustice and be action-oriented toward empowerment.

**English Language Learners (ELL).** English language learners are students whose first language is not English.

**Formal knowledge.** Formal knowledge is thought to have the epistemic import necessary to justify it as knowledge. It is produced through scientific study which is believed then to be empirical. Formal knowledge is also thought of as **knowing that.** (Fenstermacher, 1994)

**Learning to teach.** Learning to teach is the process by which one acquires the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teaching. It is thought to begin with one's own educational experiences (Lortie, 1975) and continue to be a life-long process (Carter. 1990)

**Neo-Marxism.** Neo-Marxist theory is derived from the work of the Frankfurt School's Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse (see Held, 1980, for a review). This theory is

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considered neo-Marxist because it builds on Marx's theory of historical realism, however, it moves away from determinism. That is, subject and object exist in a dialectic relationship.

**Pedagogical content knowledge.** Shulman (1986) described pedagogical content knowledge as "the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (p. 9).

**Practical knowledge.** Practical knowledge is implicit knowledge that is directly related to action and often thought of in terms of scripts, images, routines, and rules (Calderhead, 1988).
APPENDIX B

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review examined the extant literature most relevant to this study within the construct of learning to teach as it is related to (a) beginning teachers, (b) knowledge, and (c) literacy. Independently, research in each of these areas provides a theoretical framework in which the study was situated. As will be evident at the conclusion of this review, the juxtaposition of these areas of research suggests the need for this study.

Learning to Teach

Traditionally, learning to teach has been thought of in terms of one's educational program. That is, it begins with foundations courses, followed by methods courses, and concludes with field experience. From this perspective, learning to teach is viewed as first gaining formal knowledge and then having opportunities to apply that knowledge in the field (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996).

However, this view is limited in several ways. For instance, "learning to teach is not synonymous with teacher education. Teacher educators intervene in a process that begins long before teachers take their first education course and continues afterward on the job" (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996, pp. 64-65). Thus, learning to teach begins with one's own experiences in school and continues to be a life-long process (e.g., Carter, 1990; Lortie, 1975).

In addition, this traditional view of learning to teach fails to take into account the active role of the learner (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). The novice teacher can no longer be regarded as "the ghost in the machine" (McNamara, 1990, p. 148), but as an active participant in the process of learning to teach. From the mid-1980s until the
present, research on learning to teach has begun to be conceptualized within this construct; that is, "knowing what good teachers do, how they think, or what they know is not the same as knowing how teachers learn to think and act in particular ways and what contributes to their learning" (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996, p. 63).

Kagan (1992a) conducted a review of the literature of learning to teach studies conceptualized within this framework. She reviewed only those studies that were conducted between the years of 1987 through 1991. Her review consisted of 40 studies which employed predominantly qualitative methods. Based on the themes she found consistently in the studies reviewed, she developed a model of learning to teach. Some of the key points in this model included the notions that beginning teachers: (a) enter into teacher education with inflexible beliefs about teaching, (b) have limited knowledge of pupils, (c) use newly acquired knowledge to reconstruct themselves as teachers, (d) develop procedural knowledge that they did not acquire in teacher education (e.g., classroom routines), and (e) face extraneous factors that affect when and how (and if) these developmental factors occur.

In a more recent review of the literature Wideen, Mayer-Smith, and Moon (1998) critically analyzed studies of learning to teach. They were exploring both what the research in this area has found and how this research has advanced the field. They reviewed studies that were conducted after 1990 suggesting that there were already reviews of the literature prior to that date. Their review consisted of 97 studies which they grouped into the following categories: (a) prior beliefs, (b) program monitoring, and (c) first year.

While their findings were in support of the existing literature which suggests that beliefs play an important role in learning to teach, they suggested that “beliefs should remain an open question rather than an accepted assumption until the impact of the more robust programs of teacher education has been fully explored” (p. 145). Their findings as related to program intervention suggested that long-term interventions had more of an
effect on beliefs than short-term interventions. However, they questioned this finding due to the longevity of the specified changes.

The studies they examined of first-year teachers were selected on the basis of two criteria: (a) they were longitudinal in that they followed teachers from preservice teacher education into their first year of teaching and (b) the researchers used their results to inform the process of learning to teach at the preservice level. Based on these criteria they only found seven studies. Their findings from these studies support the extant literature by suggesting that teachers did not feel that their preservice program prepared them for teaching. Another common theme they found in these studies was that beginning teachers found that they learned how to teach once they entered their classrooms.

Wideen and his colleagues suggested that the research on learning to teach has contributed to the field by demonstrating that teachers’ beliefs may not be as inflexible as once presumed. They also suggested that long-term interventions have a positive effect on the learning to teach process. However, they also suggested that the fragmented nature of many of these studies does not provide a complete enough understanding of just what the learning to teach process is. In addition, they seriously questioned the role of the self-fulfilling prophecy in this line of research. That is, does change occur because the researchers are looking for change? They suggested that future research needs to be more comprehensive and that researchers need to take a more self-critical stance.

The studies described by Kagan (1992) and Wideen et al. (1998) constitute a portion of the research conducted in this area over the past decade. As research in this area is extensive, especially when considering that any study of teacher education and/or novice teachers could be classified as learning to teach, I have chosen to examine more closely only the research most relevant to this study, specifically the literature on learning to teach as it relates to beginning teachers, knowledge, and literacy.
Beginning Teachers

The first year of teaching is thought to be one of critical importance in both the learning to teach process and in teachers' professional careers. Feiman-Nemser (1983) suggested that "some go so far as to argue that what happens during the first year of teaching determines not only whether someone remains in teaching but also what kind of teacher they become. This assumes that the first year is the critical year in learning to teach" (pp. 157-158, emphasis in original). Due to the paramount role the first year of teaching plays in one's teaching career, the following section will review the research on beginning teachers as related to the learning to teach process.

Concerns of Beginning Teachers

Fuller (1969) posited a developmental model of the nature of concerns of beginning teachers grounded in the studies she conducted. She characterized the first phase, the pre-teaching phase, as teachers having non-concerns. She found that preservice teachers tended not to have concerns directly related to teaching. She suggested that the concerns the teachers described were often "parroted somewhat unconvincingly, rumors they had heard, or else their responses were vague and difficult to classify" (p. 219).

The second phase, early teaching, was related to concerns with one's self. Fuller characterized this phase around the beginning teachers' question of adequacy. She suggested that, while adequacy as it relates to the ability to control the class was a well-documented concern of the beginning teacher, concerns about knowledge of subject matter were also evident at this stage.

The final stage Fuller described, late concerns, was one in which the teachers began to be concerned about pupils. She suggested that there was very little data on the nature of this stage and, thus, her conclusions were only tentative.

Fuller's developmental model serves as a solid framework in considering research on beginning teachers. For example, Weinstein's (1990) research on preservice teachers fits into phase one, non-concern. Weinstein examined the effects of an introductory
course on preservice teachers' beliefs about good teaching. It was a general introductory course to teacher education which included a field component. Weinstein found that prospective teachers entered into teacher education programs with unrealistic optimism. That is, they were quite confident they would be successful teachers.

Weinstein found that at the end of the semester there was a statistically significant decrease in the confidence levels of these prospective teachers; yet, they were still very optimistic. Although at the end of the semester students began to see the importance of such things as meeting the needs of individual students, there still was a strong emphasis on interpersonal relationships which linked a good teacher to someone who was warm and caring.

As teachers transition from Fuller's (1969) first phase, in which they lack concerns and are confident about their ability to teach, to Fuller's second phase where they begin to question their adequacy, they often experience shock and disillusionment (Veenman, 1984). A poignant example of research on this transition is a case study of a student teacher conducted by Corcoran (1981). She described the transition shock a beginning teacher experienced as she went from student to teacher. This shock, as Corcoran called it, is possibly a result of the unrealistic optimism meeting the real world. Corcoran discussed how this shock resulted from the paradox of not knowing and wanting to appear competent which in turn led to a paralysis for the teacher in this study. This paralysis was intensified when the teacher's beliefs did not match the advice given to her on how to handle her situation. After six weeks of feeling paralyzed, the teacher was forced into a decision to change what she was doing and act on her mentor's beliefs.

Studies on the first year of teaching, often conceptualized as this transition period, have reported similar findings in that teachers often feel alone and insecure during this phase (Lortie, 1975; Rust, 1994). In Rust's study of two beginning teachers he found that they became very disillusioned after finishing their first year of teaching. They felt that
their teacher education programs did not prepare them for the realities of classroom life, yet they had no one to whom to turn as they wanted to appear competent.

Knowles' (1994) case study of Natalie, a beginning teacher in a secondary school, also described the notion of isolation. As Natalie's problems increased, she began to isolate herself from other faculty members. Natalie also became disillusioned. She eagerly anticipated the ending of the school year as she tired of devoting so much of her time to discipline. Hargreaves and Jacka (1995) reported similar findings in their study of a beginning teacher whose enthusiasm about using cooperative learning in the classroom eventually changed to disappointment and disillusionment.

In Veenman's (1984) review of the literature on perceived problems of beginning teachers, he found that "classroom discipline was the most serious perceived problem area of beginning teachers" (p. 53). In Bullough, Knowles, and Crow's (1991) description of six case studies of beginning teachers they suggested that management problems for the teachers began early and intensified through the first few weeks of school. For three of the teachers these problems lasted until the end of the year: "The central challenge was associated with gaining and maintaining classroom control and proved to be nearly overwhelming, driving them to consider seriously whether or not they should remain in teaching" (p. 77).

Hoy (1968) conducted a study on the ideological orientations of beginning teachers. Using an instrument called the Pupil Control Ideology Form, Hoy compared the responses of 162 teachers from before and after their first year of teaching. He found that as a result of their teaching experience, first-year teachers held statistically significantly more custodial orientations toward their students. That is, teachers believed schools should provide a "rigid and highly controlled setting concerned primarily with the maintenance of order" (p. 313). He attributed this to the context of their teaching. He found that most teachers equated good teaching with good discipline.
The research on beginning teachers suggests that much of the first year of teaching is spent learning. As Ryan (1970) described, "the first year of teaching is a patchwork of the known and the unknown, the anticipated and the unanticipated, the familiar and the unfamiliar" (p. 170). First-year teachers both teach and learn to teach (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). Successful beginning teachers confront their optimistic visions of teaching by reconstructing their own images as teachers (Kagan, 1992a). Featherstone, Russell, and Munby (1997) elucidated the importance of experience and voice in learning to teach: "Giving authority to one's personal experience while learning to teach is central to understanding how and what one is learning from experience" (p. 3, emphasis in original).

Clandinin's (1989) study of a beginning kindergarten teacher's personal practical knowledge supports the importance of voice in understanding beginning teachers. Using a narrative method, Clandinin explored how this beginning teacher's knowledge developed. She found that through the year he reconstructed his image of himself as a teacher and in doing so was able to begin developing rhythm in understanding the cyclical organization of time within the structure of schools.

Returning to Kagan's (1992a) and Wideen et al.'s (1998) findings on the studies reviewed of learning to teach and comparing them to both Fuller's (1969) model and the other research reviewed, several points are salient. Beginning teachers enter into their first year of teaching overly confident and unprepared for the realities of day-to-day classroom life. The paradox of wanting to appear competent, yet not knowing, results in a transition shock. They tend to become overwhelmed with issues of management. Beginning teachers tend to isolate themselves and are extremely selective in whom they choose to ask for support. In addition, they often have limited knowledge about students.

While these issues all have ample support in the literature, they have the tendency to treat learning to teach as a "global and undifferentiated process" (Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996, p. 79). That is, these studies tend to focus on survival as opposed to the
development of beginning teachers. Furthermore, knowing what a competent beginning teacher needs to know (see Reynolds, 1992) does not provide the understanding of how a beginning teacher becomes competent. Feiman-Nemser and Remillard (1996) suggested that research on how knowledge of first-year teachers develops (e.g., Clandinin, 1989) is a promising line of work that will advance previous research in this area.

Knowledge

Knowledge has always played an essential role in learning to teach; yet, the nature of this role has changed throughout the decade (Shulman, 1986). Shulman discussed how in previous decades content knowledge was viewed as the important knowledge for teachers to have as evidenced by the content of competency tests for teachers. By the 1980s, however, a distinct shift in the type of knowledge being assessed was evident. The shift was toward knowledge of pedagogy. Shulman argued that neither knowledge of content nor knowledge of pedagogy is sufficient in the preparation of beginning teachers; instead, he called for a focus on pedagogical content knowledge, "the particular form of content knowledge that embodies the aspects of content most germane to its teachability" (p. 9).

In this part of the review, I will begin by first locating various types of knowledge epistemologically. Next, I will situate pedagogical content knowledge within this framework. I will conclude by reviewing studies that have explored the role of pedagogical content knowledge in learning to teach.

Types of Knowledge

Fenstermacher (1994) distinguished between two types of knowledge: formal and practical. He suggested two differences between these types of knowledge. First, formal knowledge is thought to have the epistemic import necessary to justify it as knowledge. That is, formal knowledge is produced through scientific study which is believed then to be empirical. The second difference he cited is that formal knowledge is knowing that

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while practical knowledge is knowing how. However, Fenstermacher suggested that while these two types of knowledge are not irreducible to one, they are interdependent.

**Formal knowledge.** Formal knowledge is generally thought of as knowledge of subject-matter, curriculum, materials, teaching methods, and children. This type of knowledge represents a knowledge base that informs and guides teacher education programs. That is, it is assumed that beginning teachers need to acquire this knowledge (Calderhead, 1988). However, that doesn’t mean there is an agreement on what this knowledge is (Kagan, 1992b).

Subject-matter knowledge was/is produced within its discipline. This type of knowledge is conceptualized as both the knowing of the concepts and principles within a discipline and knowing how this knowledge is organized. Shulman (1986) suggested that teachers need to understand the structural organization of their discipline to be able to effectively explain ideas to students.

**Practical knowledge.** Practical knowledge is knowledge that is directly related to action (Calderhead, 1988). This type of knowledge can be thought of in terms of scripts, images, routines, and rules. Practical knowledge is thought to be implicit (Kagan, 1992b). As Schön (1987) described, knowing-in-action is the know-how revealed in intelligent action. It is revealed by the skillful execution of a performance which we often cannot make verbally explicit. Yet, Schön also contended that through reflection of this knowing we can describe it and, thus, it becomes knowledge-in-action.

**Knowledge Base**

For the past century researchers have tried to establish a knowledge base for teachers (Donmoyer, 1996). In part, problems of establishing this knowledge base rested in its scientific ideology. It was assumed that if research could determine what effective teachers know and do, then this knowledge could be transmitted to prospective teachers (Barnes, 1989; Donmoyer, 1996). However, there have been several problems in establishing this knowledge base.
The first is in the nature of transmission; that is, it ignores the active role of the learner. The prospective teacher brings knowledge to the learning situation and that prior knowledge affects how and what the prospective teacher learns (Richardson, 1996). A second problem with developing a knowledge base is that "no knowledge is objective; all knowledge, whether we are talking about the folk knowledge of ordinary people or the formula knowledge generated by research, is subjective; it reflects the conceptions and metaphors of the knower" (Donmoyer, 1996, p. 101).

While a knowledge base for beginning teachers is still considered an important part of learning to teach, the nature of this knowledge base has been reconceptualized. In the past, the scientific knowledge of a subject was thought to be sufficient for teachers. However, more recent research has suggested that expert knowledge of a discipline isn't enough; teachers need to understand their subject matters in ways that promote learning (Grossman, Wilson, & Shulman, 1989). Thus, the knowledge base for beginning teachers is comprised of both formal and practical knowledge. Donmoyer (1996) suggested that a knowledge base is not a set of formulas that dictate what professionals do, but rather a heuristic that guides practice.

Pedagogical Content Knowledge

Studies that have explored knowledge in teaching have also shifted. Researchers have moved away from trying to find relationships between teacher knowledge and student achievement. Instead, researchers have begun to "focus their energies on exploring the nature, form, organization, and content of teacher knowledge" (Grossman et al., 1989, pp. 25-26). For example, the Knowledge Growth in a Profession Project at Stanford University was comprised of multiple investigations of teachers' pedagogical content knowledge (Grossman et al., 1989; Grossman & Shulman, 1994; Wilson, 1992). Shulman (1986) described pedagogical content knowledge as "the ways of representing and formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (p. 9). Pedagogical content knowledge is thought of as both formal and practical knowledge and, as such,
"melding these different domains of knowledge is at the heart of teaching" (McDiarmid, Ball, & Anderson, 1989, p. 194).

Grossman (1990) delineated four components that comprise pedagogical content knowledge. The first component includes the knowledge and beliefs about the purposes of teaching a specific subject at a specific grade level. The second component, knowledge of students, includes the understanding of students' understanding of the subject matter, that is, their conceptions and misconceptions of the content and their background knowledge, interest, and familiarity with the content. The third component, curricular knowledge, includes the knowledge of materials available for teaching specific subjects with an understanding of both the horizontal and vertical curricula. The fourth component includes the knowledge of strategies and representations for teaching a particular subject.

In Reynolds' (1992) review of the literature on competent beginning teachers, she suggested that beginning teachers understand the need for creating appropriate lessons for their students, yet she found that they tended to do this in superficial ways. She further suggested that beginning teachers don't have a strong enough foundational knowledge of their subject matter to enable them to explain it to their students.

Pedagogical content knowledge, how teachers choose what to teach and how they represent their chosen content to their students, is an essential part of teaching which is thought to develop over time (Cochran, DeRuiter, & King, 1993). Research that has focused on the learning to teach process has begun to explore how this knowledge develops.

Research on the role of pedagogical content knowledge. The Knowledge Growth in a Profession Project at Stanford University explored the role of subject matter knowledge in the planning and instruction of beginning secondary teachers (Grossman et al., 1989). The many studies that comprised this project used multiple data sources including interviews, coursework, think-alouds, and observation cycles. The findings from these studies suggested that knowledge of subject matter affected both how and
what teachers taught (Grossman et al. 1989; Grossman & Shulman, 1994). In addition they found that: (a) subject matter knowledge alone is not sufficient knowledge for teachers, (b) pedagogical content knowledge is linked to other types of knowledge, and (c) teachers' knowledge both shapes and is shaped by the context in which they teach (Grossman et al., 1989).

As part of this Project, Grossman (1989) conducted a multiple case study of six beginning teachers of English. Three of the participants entered into teaching through an alternative licensure program without any courses in pedagogy. The other three participants graduated from elite institutions with degrees in education. However, all six of the participants had very strong backgrounds in their subject area which was English. Grossman found that subject-specific coursework made a difference in the pedagogical content knowledge of the teachers. The teachers differed in their: (a) reasons for teaching secondary English, (b) ideas regarding how to teach English, and (c) knowledge of students' understanding of English. For example, two of the participants from the non-teacher education group entered into teaching as a means of sharing their love of literature. They had hoped that their secondary students would discuss literature much in the same way they did as college students. However, they learned early on that this was not the case. The participants from the teacher education group used strategies and ideas they gained from their teacher education program. An implication of this study suggests that teacher education is an important part of teachers' developing pedagogical content knowledge.

Wilson (1992), another member of the research team at Stanford, conducted a case study of a beginning secondary teacher, George. She found that George's subject matter knowledge developed with experience. "The ability to do something with the content of instruction depended...on a sensitivity to the interaction of pedagogy and content: an understanding of the ways in which the nature of the subject matter shapes the nature of the pedagogy and vice versa" (p. 68). She concluded that George's preparation
as an English major helped his pedagogical thinking; however, it wasn't enough for his teaching of English to be successful.

Foss and Kleinasser (1996) studied the pedagogical content knowledge of preservice math teachers. They were interested in exploring whether preservice teachers reconceptualized their roles as math teachers after a semester in a math methods course. Foss and Kleinasser found that the preservice teachers' conceptions remained consistent throughout the semester and that they "tended to ignore the philosophical disposition of the course and rely on knowledge from their past" (p. 439). While they did see evidence of personal knowledge developing, Foss and Kleinasser suggested that this knowledge developed out of personal histories and not experiences in the methods course. They suggested the importance of following teachers into their first few years of teaching to further document the relationship between beliefs, knowledge, and practice.

Hashweh (1987) studied the pedagogical content knowledge of six science teachers, three biology and three physics. Each of the teachers was asked to plan units in both subject areas. Hashweh found that within their fields the teachers were more knowledgeable about the preconceptions their students might have and the ideas their students might find difficult. However, when planning lessons outside their fields, the teachers were found to be less organized.

Pedagogical content knowledge is thought to differentiate the "expert teachers in a subject area from subject area experts" (Cochran et al., 1993, p. 263, emphasis in original). The studies reviewed in this section suggest that beginning teachers develop pedagogical content knowledge through their classroom experiences. As they prepare to teach their subject, they search for effective ways to represent that subject matter to their students. These studies add to the knowledge base on learning to teach by answering questions of how: "how do teachers decide what to teach, how to represent it, how to question students about it, and how to deal with problems of misunderstanding?" (Shulman, 1986, p. 8). However, these studies have focused predominantly on secondary
teachers. These questions still remain unanswered for elementary teachers, especially in the area of literacy.

**Literacy**

The learning to teach process in literacy has been an area that has received little attention in the research. While this statement may appear ironic in that there is a growing number of studies on teacher education and literacy (Readence, Barone, Roskos, Risko, & Vukelich 1998), only a few studies have been conceptualized within the framework of examining how the learning to teach process occurs, a process which places the learner as an active participant in the learning and extends beyond teacher education courses. Studies of learning to teach literacy have generally been focused on the learning that occurs during one's teacher education program and field experience.

In the final part of this review I will first discuss learning to teach literacy at the preservice level. Following that, I will review studies that have examined the process of learning to teach literacy in preservice teacher education. I will conclude this part of the review with the few studies of beginning teachers' learning to teach literacy.

**Preservice teachers' learning to teach literacy.**

Research on learning to teach literacy at the preservice level has been structured around rethinking the nature of literacy teacher education. Literacy methods courses have been redesigned in ways that "invite prospective teachers to participate in experiences of inquiry which support continual, lifelong, self-regulated learning" (Fox, 1994, p. 394). In an analysis of trends in literacy development, Swafford, Chapman, Rhodes, and Kallus (1996) determined that content knowledge was important for effective instruction and simply telling preservice teachers about current trends in reading instruction was not adequate. The real opportunities for learning came when students were asked to work in the field, make decisions about instruction, and have the time to interact with others to reflect and build knowledge and beliefs related to the area of literacy. In this way the preservice teachers played active roles in their own learning.
An important aspect that has been considered in the restructuring of literacy methods courses is in the nature of learning. Prospective teachers are now viewed as active participants in the learning process, an idea grounded in the notion of situated learning (Lave & Wegner, 1991). That is, "people learn from acting in authentic contexts" (Armbruster, Anderson, & Mall, 1991, p. 21).

Literacy methods courses designed within this framework move beyond the idea that prospective teachers need to master content and then apply it in the field. Instead, they view learning as a social construction stemming from the interaction of methods courses and field experiences. The result of this perspective in learning has led to the development of many field-based courses (Arbruster et al., 1991; Cox et al., 1998; Mosenthal, 1996; Newton, 1997). These courses differ from the traditional literacy methods courses in that learning is not viewed as linear, rather learning is situated in context.

**Research on preservice teachers' learning to teach literacy.**

The studies that follow represent research on learning to teach literacy at the preservice level. They focus on both the role of the learner and the acquisition of knowledge.

Risko, Yount, and McAllister (1992) designed a reading methods course that utilized video cases. They suggested that video cases provided a way to create shared learning experiences, and they could serve as a bridge from college coursework to classroom experience. A goal of this project was to actively involve students in their learning. They found video cases to be a useful in creating an inquiry-oriented approach to learning. That is, the preservice teachers generated their own questions and possible solutions instead of these ideas coming from the professor.

In a subsequent study, Risko, Peter, and McAllister (1996) explored how, through the use of video cases, three preservice teachers used newly acquired knowledge in making decisions in practicum experiences. The researchers found that the three
prospective teachers went through four stages in their development: (a) the point where they began the semester, (b) conceptual change, (c) the problem (i.e., where what they learned didn't match what they were seeing in their practicum), and (d) resolution of the problem. The video cases allowed the students to construct and integrate knowledge in order to apply it to a real situation.

Roskos and Walker (1993, 1994) conducted studies looking at the development of preservice teachers' knowledge of students who have reading difficulties. In their first study Roskos and Walker (1993) looked at preservice teachers' ways of knowing. They had their students respond to a case study describing a struggling reader at the beginning and end of the semester. They categorized statements made by the students into the four categories borrowed from Women's ways of knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986). Throughout the semester students engaged in various interactive activities designed to facilitate their learning. They then compared the results of the pre- and post-measures given. They found that preservice teachers' thinking advanced from a lower level of knowing to more of a balance between that level and a higher level of knowing; yet, they could only speculate whether or not the participants internalized these ways of knowing.

In a subsequent study, Roskos and Walker (1994) again explored preservice teachers' pedagogical concepts of problem readers, but they framed this study within Vygotskian theory of spontaneous and scientific concepts. In this study the preservice teachers responded in writing at the beginning and end of the semester to a case study of a problem reader very much like the case studies provided in the previous study. While the researchers found this framework a useful one in exploring the development of pedagogical concepts, the results were inconclusive. It appeared that students may have developed pseudo-concepts that they used in responding to the case studies. That is, these concepts were more likely used for communicating their ideas than in their own pedagogical thinking.
Research on the development of preservice teachers' knowledge in teacher education courses provides the groundwork for understanding how this knowledge develops. However, as Roskos and Walker (1993, 1994) suggested, it was difficult to determine if this knowledge was internalized. As discussed previously, the first year of teaching represents an important phase in the development of knowledge. Therefore, research on learning to teach/knowledge development needs to be extended throughout this period.

**Research on beginning teachers' learning to teach literacy.**

Hollingsworth (1989) conducted a longitudinal study of learning to teach by following 14 preservice teachers through their teacher education program to their beginning years of teaching. In this article in which she presented the findings from the first year, while the participants were still preservice teachers, Hollingsworth offered a model of learning to teach. She suggested that: (a) students' preprogram beliefs serve as filters for processing content and making sense of classrooms, (b) general managerial routines had to be in place before content and pedagogy became a focus of attention, and (c) these managerial routines had to be in place before teachers could focus on student learning from academic tasks.

Using data collected from two of the teachers in this study during their first year of teaching, Hollingsworth (1992) further refined this model of learning to teach as one of complexity reduction. She suggested that beginning teachers can only attend to a few skills at a time and that once they developed basic classroom routines they were able to reduce the complexity of teaching and attend to more complex issues of pedagogy.

In Hollingsworth's (1994) comprehensive analysis of her study, which included the data she collected from five of the teachers from the time her research began until their fifth year of teaching, she discussed how her research had expanded in its focus. In this case her data collection took on the form of conversation. She and the teachers with whom she was working with met for dinner monthly and would discuss issues that were
important to them. Much to the initial dismay of Hollingsworth, they didn't begin to talk about literacy until the end of the first year of teaching. Thus, Hollingsworth's study expanded to other foci such as teacher-research collaboration and teaching within a feminist perspective.

Hollingsworth's work, even within these new frameworks, still remained an inquiry into the process of learning to teach literacy. As she followed these beginning teachers into their classrooms for several years, she began to see the importance of voice in understanding this process (cf., Featherstone et al., 1997). She offered many recommendations for the restructuring of teacher education including the importance of educating prospective teachers about the political nature of education.

Conclusion

This review examined the extant literature on the learning to teach process as it is related to beginning teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and literacy. The research reviewed suggested that learning to teach is a process in which the prospective teacher is an active participant. This process is thought to begin long before teacher education and to continue into one's teaching career. An integral part of understanding this process is done by examining the pedagogical content knowledge of the teacher. To date, in literacy, the only studies of this kind this researcher could locate were conducted by Hollingsworth (1989, 1992, 1994). However, the aspects of Hollingsworth's research that focused on learning to teach led to a developmental model which explored more about complexity reduction than knowledge growth. Grossman (1992) suggested that developmental models of learning to teach provide only one lens in which to view this process. Others view this process though the lens of subject matter knowledge or through moral and ethical issues.

The focus of this study, therefore, was to add to the literature by exploring the learning to teach process of a beginning teacher through an investigation of her pedagogical content knowledge of literacy. The questions guiding this study were:
1. How does a beginning teacher teach literacy (i.e., how does the teacher formulate and represent the subject matter of literacy to her students)?

2. How does the teacher’s pedagogical content knowledge develop throughout the year?

3. How do varying contexts influence the teaching of a beginning teacher?
APPENDIX C

A KNOWLEDGE BASE IN LITERACY

The following is a compilation of ideas regarding a knowledge base in literacy. Based on the thinking of Donmoyer (1996), a knowledge base is not a set of formulas that dictate what professional do, but rather a heuristic that guides practice. Thus, the knowledge base described here does not consist of specific content knowledge; rather, it consists of general principles regarding literacy instruction.

In Building a Knowledge Base in Reading, Braunger and Lewis (1998) synthesized the multitude of research on reading into the following 13 principles as core understanding in learning to read:

1. Reading is a construction of meaning from written text. It is an active, cognitive, and affective process.
2. Background knowledge and prior experience are critical to the reading process.
3. Social interaction is essential in learning to read.
4. Reading and writing develop together.
5. Reading involves complex thinking.
6. Environments rich in literacy experiences, resources, and models facilitate reading development.
7. Engagement in the reading task is key in successfully learning to read.
8. Children's understandings of print are not the same as adults' understandings.
9. Children develop phonemic awareness and knowledge of phonics through a variety of literacy opportunities, models, and demonstrations.
10. Children learn successful reading strategies in the context of real reading.

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11. Children learn best when teachers employ a variety of strategies to model and demonstrate reading knowledge, strategy, and skills.

12. Children need the opportunity to read, read, read.

13. Monitoring the development of reading processes is vital to student success. (pp. 80-105)

The International Reading Association (1992) developed standards for reading professionals. They suggested that reading professionals need to be knowledgeable about (a) philosophies and theories of reading instruction; (b) language development, cognition, and learning; and, (c) the reading process. They further suggested that reading professionals should demonstrate these competencies through (a) knowledge of instructional strategies, (b) knowledge of assessment principles and techniques, (c) communicating information about reading, (d) planning and enhancing programs, (e) organizing and planning effective instruction, and (f) creating a literate environment.
APPENDIX D

A BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Throughout the 20th century the scientific management approach to reading instruction has dominated the field. While other approaches such as humanism, social reconstruction, and child-centeredness have all vied for influence, scientific management has endured. Shannon (1990) attributed the domination of this approach to both political and economic factors. In addition, it was reading experts who supplied the knowledge base to this type of instruction by delineating objectives and creating standardized tests to measure reading skills. From a political perspective, then, state departments could respond to public cries for accountability through the use of tests. In addition, publishing companies which represent a 400 million dollar a year business exert a powerful influence over literacy instruction through basal readers.

Thus, the approach of scientific management, which has dominated reading instruction for this entire century, has unduly influenced teachers' instructional approaches to reading. For example, in a study of four beginning teachers' understanding of curriculum decision-making, O'Neal and Hoffman (1984) found that: (a) teachers' decision-making was found to move further away from the classroom, and (b) teachers found their responsibilities toward decisions about reading curriculum diminishing.

Furthermore, Shannon and Goodman (1994) contended that the use of commercial programs (basal readers) deskill teachers; that is, they suggested that the use of packaged programs for reading instruction denies teachers opportunities to think. However, other
research has suggested that teachers do think and make decisions about specific uses of texts (Baumann & Heubach, 1996; Sosniak & Stodolsky, 1993).

In addition to commercial materials, the nature of teacher education has both a historical and social role in understanding the teaching of literacy. Duffy (1991) argued that "instructional power lies not with the minds of the teachers but, rather, with programs, procedures, or theories that we create for teachers to follow" (p. 3). He suggested that teachers are not empowered because they are encouraged to be passive. They are encouraged to learn the theories and methods presented in their teacher education programs. However, if they are not provided opportunities to decide when and if to use these ideas, "they are nothing more than technicians following a procedure indiscriminately" (p. 13).

These problems increase when they enter student teaching. At this point they are apprenticing a craft from a master teacher. Unfortunately, there is no requirement that master teachers be taught how to apprentice their craft (Austin & Morrison, 1963) and, thus, they tend to overrely on firsthand experience at the expense of theory which makes apprenticing the trade problematic (Roskos, Risko, & Vukelich, 1998). Student teachers tend to emulate the practices of their master teacher which, as Lortie (1975) described, perpetuates the cyclical conservative nature of teaching. As Johnson (1979) suggested, "the pedagogy of reading has remained essentially unchanged for the past 150 years" (p. 646).

The nature of commercial materials, teacher education, and student teaching have both a historical and social hold over teachers' approaches to literacy instruction. Thus, the proposed study was conceptualized within this context.
APPENDIX E

SELF-REFLEXIVITY

What seems to be noticeably missing from the reporting of this study is my voice. The irony of this statement is that the whole study is situated in my perspective. Yet, this only provides the reader with my interpretations. My thoughts and experiences throughout the study remain with me. For this reason, I have chosen to document my experiences in the research. As Larreau (1989) suggested, the actual process of data collection remains a mystery for the reader. Since I entered into the this study acknowledging that my role in the data collection was imperative, I feel I must share that role with the reader. Yet, instead of sharing my comments and thoughts from each observation I made, I have chosen to provide snippets of my thinking as a means to provide insight into understanding my thoughts as I conducted this study.

In thinking back on the study I feel that I failed in my role as a critical researcher. While on the one hand I do believe I remained true to my commitment to “penetrate the world of objective appearances to expose the underlying social relations they often conceal” (Giroux, 1983, p. 8), I don’t believe I was successful in helping Nancy’s students. And now that the research is written up, I feel as if I betrayed Nancy. Nancy welcomed me into her classroom and into her life. I feel as if I just said these horrible things about my friend. I like Nancy, and I truly believe she likes teaching. I also believe that the ways in which she was marginalized inhibited her growth as a teacher.

When the study began I was filled with excitement. The following is a segment from my field notes prior to the beginning of school:

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As I walk around the school I feel the excitement of the start of a new year. It makes me wish I was teaching. I just can’t wait until Monday.

Yet, only moments later, I knew I was facing a large obstacle. As Nancy and I walked to her classroom, she told me, “I just wanted a class of normal children.” I responded in my field notes with these thoughts:

What does that mean? White, middle class children? I am afraid so. I don’t know how I will ever get her to look at the injustice that presents itself for her students. I think I am getting ready for the coloring curriculum. I know her expectations are low for what these kids can do. How will I nudge her? When do I start? I guess I’ll wait until the first week is over. I know in my heart I, like Maralee, think what is really unethical is allowing her to play her part in social reproduction.

That fear remained with me throughout the entire study, and as I now complete the study, I feel she did in many ways play her part in social reproduction. So now I am left asking myself, how did I let this happen?

I felt like I walked a fine line between being the researcher and being a mentor. I wanted to help Nancy, but I didn’t want to be intrusive. I thought I should wait, nudge, and be subtle. Now I only wish I was more forceful. Yet, what I keep reminding myself is that is was not as if I didn’t try.

Each day I left her room I told her to call me if she wanted to talk. She called me once during the entire study. I called her quite often. I would ask how she was and if there was anything she needed. She never seemed to want anything from me. I modeled instruction in her classrooms. I even did this in subtle ways. One day in October at Heather when the most of the students were waiting for a few students to finish their work, I called Marcus over to me and read a simple, repetitive book with him several times. I then had him read it to Nancy. I thought maybe she would get the hint, that she would see she needed to do more with her students.
During the month of November I was very depressed. Partly due to Steve Kile and partly due to what was happening in this study. I was so sick of the project curriculum. I kept writing in my field notes, “teach them something, please!” Yet, I never knew quite how to tell her that. I just kept doing the same things, that is, offering to help her plan and offering many suggestions whenever we talked. By the end of the month I felt my loyalties were changing. I was more concerned with the students than Nancy.

On a visit to Heather at the end of November, as soon as I entered the room, Gigi ran up to me, and in her extremely whinny voice said, “Mrs. Mallette will you read to me?” I said, “We’ll see. I think Mrs. Green is going to read with you.” That was the day they were making the turkey books. They had spent so much time constructing the book without reading the story that I was disgusted. Finally, at the end of the day they read the book—one time. I even wondered if the only reason they were reading it was because I was there. I called Gigi over and told her to bring her book, and I would read it with her. We read through it three times. In my field notes I wrote the following:

How sad can I feel? I have this student begging me to read with her. Is that crying out or what? Yet, I have to snap out of this and get on track. I just totally disregarded Nancy. I wasn’t even paying attention to what the students were supposed to be doing. I gave Gigi permission to be off-task to read with me.

Things were even more depressing at Blue Creek. The students didn’t seem to do anything. I would constantly have conversations with Nancy about the importance of pacing and timing. I told her she was spending too much time on one thing and the kids were losing interest.

I convinced myself that somehow we would make it through December and then, in January, I would try to make this work. Yet, in January, Nancy found out that she might have the opportunity to go to third grade the following year. Nancy was excited about this, and I felt she gave up her investment in kindergarten. It was at this point that Nancy told me she did not want to plan with me.
I think the issue that I had the most trouble with throughout the study was trying to help Nancy understand that the language difference between her and her students were very real. Sometimes, I would write in my field notes that maybe I am the one underestimating their abilities. Maybe they do understand more English than I am giving them credit for. But then I look at some of the transcripts and just sense that she really did not know how to communicate with her students. I'd like to share one such transcript along with my comments.

**January 12, 1999: Blue Creek**

Nancy has just passed out their new journals for the month. She has placed a calendar inside the front cover for the students to record the weather each day (of course, they did not do this everyday).

Nancy: Okay, now we are going to start writing pictures in all the squares to show what the weather is like outside. What should we draw if it is sunny outside?

Claudia: Sun.

Nancy: Okay. (She writes sunny on the board and draws a sun.) What other kinds of weather do we have?

Jorge: Triangle.

Nancy: What?

Jorge: Yellow.

Claudia: Snow.

Nancy: Well, we won't use this one too much. (Nancy draws a snowflake on the board). What other kinds of weather do we have outside?

Ricardo: Cold.

Nancy: What kind of picture can we draw for the cold?

Jesus: A kid.

Nancy: Well, we could draw a person, or we could write brrr. (Nancy shakes while she says that.) What other kind of weather do we have?
Maria: Night.
Nancy: Well, that is not so much the weather. That is the time of day. What is it doing outside today?
Claudia: Sunny.
Ricardo: Cold.
Nancy: But what else? What is blowing?
Several students: Wind.

* * *

Nancy: What other types of weather? What are those big puffy things in the sky?
Jorge: Plants.
Nancy: No, not plants.
Earnesto: Birds.
Nancy: No, not birds.
(Nancy finally gets someone to say cloud. Then she tells them hot.)
Nancy: Can we draw a fan for hot?
Mateo: A tree?
Nancy: No, not a tree.
(Now Mateo is saying snake in Spanish. Nancy asks what he is saying, and a student tells her snake.)
Nancy: What does a snake have to do with hot?
My comments: Wow! This is something. It is January. Why doesn’t Nancy believe me when I tell her that there are so many students in this class that aren’t fluent in English? I will bring this point up again when we talk.

Nancy and I did talk about language a few day later, yet she brought it up. She told me that she was worried about some of the kids in her morning class, “because they would end the year without being able to speak English.” I was surprised by this statement. I mean for all this time she has been trying to convince me that they
understand and, then, how was she deciding what they would be able to do at the end of the year in January? I then asked her about the afternoon class. She said, “Well, yeah, them too. I was just thinking about the morning class.”

I think the most difficult part of this study was trying to figure out how to work with Nancy. I couldn’t tell her what to do, yet I am not sure I always told her what I was thinking. I didn’t share my concerns about her teaching. Instead, I just gently tried to nudge her and offer my advice. Obviously, my voice was powerless.
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