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Beginning Teacher's Trajectory in the Figured Worlds of Reform and Traditional Instruction

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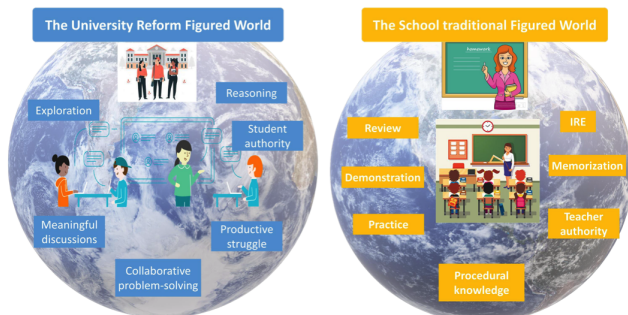
Rationale

- Beginning teachers transition from the world of reformed teaching of their teacher preparation program to the more traditional world of school teaching (Bjerke & Nolan, 2023; Gainsburg, 2012; NCTM, 2014).
- This transition involves developing identities and teaching practices that allow novice teachers to reconcile the two worlds (Horn et al., 2008; Ma & Singer-Gabella, 2011).
- Not enough is known about beginning teachers' long-term process of identity formation during the reconciliation of the two worlds.
- We can learn about identity formation by considering beginning teachers' narratives about their current pedagogical actions and desired actions (Heyd-Metzuyanim, 2013; Horn et al., 2008).

We follow the identity formation of one teacher, Olive, by examining her narratives about her current pedagogical actions and her desired ones, as she transitions from being a pre-service teacher (PST) to being an intern (INT) in a mentor teacher classroom, to becoming a new teacher (NT).

Conceptualization

Drawing on Holland and colleagues (1998), we conceptualize two *figured worlds*, each populated with their own specific actors, pedagogical valued actions, and valued outcomes.



Research Question: What was the trajectory of Olive's narratives about her current and desired pedagogical actions in relation to their alignment with the traditional and reform pedagogical actions?

Data collection

Pre-Service Teacher (PST)

- 4 Written reflections on 4 lessons Olive taught during a capstone course on reasoning and proof

Intern (INT)

- 2 interviews on 2 lessons Olive taught as intern in her cooperating teacher's (CT's) classroom.

New Teacher (NT)

- 4 interviews on 4 lessons Olive taught as a new teacher in her own classroom and 2 PLC meetings for new teachers

Findings

"I wanna just go along with what they're saying [...]. [As if saying to them,] 'let's just play with the rules for the day and' [...], show them [the students] why it doesn't make sense."

"I guess my hesitation [...] I'm playing devil's advocate in the situation, if I went and tried to go off on a conceptual tangent with each kid, I think that they would tune it out immediately [...] with so many kids [...] to try to circulate that room and have a deep conceptual conversation with each of those 28, I don't even think I'd have time in the block to do that."

"[In] undergrad and even as an intern [I] made some lesson plans that were just absolutely ridiculous in terms of what I expected the students to understand at a rate or pace that was absolutely unrealistic for the children [...] I've definitely become more, I like to consider it, realistic [...] sometimes I feel bad about it and sometimes I feel guilty about it. [...] I try to maintain high expectations, but I think I, I'm a little bit more realistic."

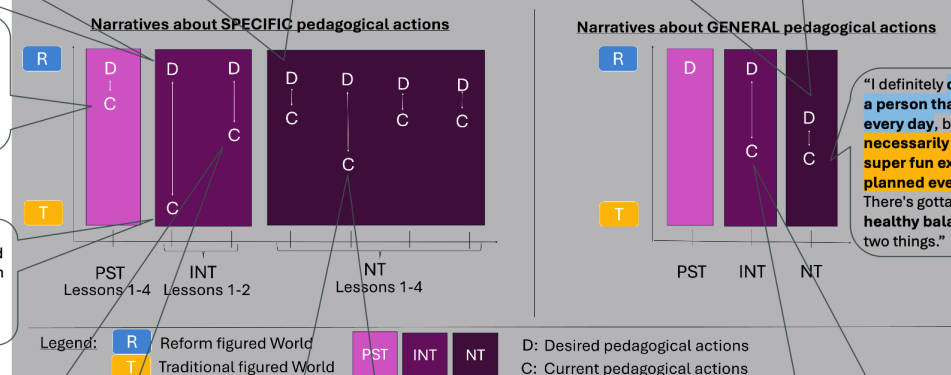
"Together [with the students] we defined a conditional statement and discussed how they occur in a variety of settings. I also asked for students to provide their own examples."

"I would feel accomplished if they [the students] understood how to combine like terms on two sides of the equation, moving chunks with the variable."

"I had decided to do that little, what I called an exploration in the beginning [of the lesson]. [...] I kind of pushed to do that [...] I wanted them to see it for themselves and to understand, using numbers, why that was the case."

"I liked that some of it [the lesson] felt exploratory, but then some of it definitely felt like a very telling way of teaching, like just kind of giving them the information as opposed to letting them figure it out."

"I'm really enjoying doing this project because I have been doing a lot of boring, I feel like, lecture-style things. And so, this is like an opportunity for me to stop talking, which is really wonderful."



Data Analysis



Discussion



- Olive's case revealed two main critical junctures along her trajectory of navigating between the university reform figured world and the school traditional figured world:

1. Internship – the opening of a gap between her narratives about her current traditional actions and her desired reform actions; attempting the close the gap by modifying current actions to align more with desired reform ones.

2. NT period – "lowering the bar", attempting to close the gap between current and desired actions by modifying the desired actions to be more "realistic" and include more traditional ones.

- Practically, it may be important for teacher educators to anticipate the possibility of a gap opening between current traditional and desired reform pedagogical actions during the internship period.
- It is important to provide continued support to beginning teachers and help them cope with the gap, to address their justifications for the gap, and to find ways to help keep the view of reform teaching "realistic" and desired.