Am I Wearing the Right Hat? Navigating Professional Relationships Between Parent–Teachers and Their Colleagues

Eliana Lipsky, Ilana Dvorin Friedman, and Rebecca Harkema

Abstract

Utilizing organizational role theory and cognitive role theory as a theoretical framework, this phenomenological study examined the experience of parent–teachers and colleague–teachers in small educational settings and their perceptions of these dynamic relationships and potential areas of conflict. Findings highlighted perceived strengths, yet tensions and challenges persisted as teachers used a variety of management techniques to navigate their unique intrapersonal and interpersonal roles. Discussed are the themes that emerged from the data collected regarding role conflict, boundary crossing, boundary blurring, and management of the related tensions. The researchers argue that open communication concerning this phenomenon is important to improve a school's culture and organizational health. This study explored a small sample of voices at three small but distinct schools spanning early childhood through college level. The researchers believe this study begins a much needed dialogue about the impact parent–teachers in small school settings have on their respective school communities.

Key Words: organizational role theory, cognitive role theory, small schools, boundary setting, parents, teachers, colleagues, professional relationships, private, religious schools, early childhood, elementary, college

Introduction

Teachers in small schools are more likely to experience teaching their own children or teaching their colleagues' children (Tyack, 1974). Teachers who have children attending the same school in which they teach may choose that school for a variety of reasons, including the school's family-like conditions, matching religious ideology, convenience, or financial benefits. This article aims to present findings from a qualitative study conducted by the authors. Though the sample size is small, themes emerged across an early childhood setting, an elementary school, and a small college, indicating the need for further discussion, theoretical considerations, and research on this topic. Thus, this article also aims to begin this discussion.

Teachers belong to a cultural group whose role has multiple demands such as collaborating with other teachers as school colleagues, advocating for the students, creating partnerships with parents, and maintaining professionalism throughout each of these responsibilities. Merton (1957) coined the term "role set" to describe these multiple social demands on the teacher by distinguishing a role set as a "complex of roles associated with a single social status" (p. 111). Competing demands in a single role are common and usually referred to as intrapersonal role conflict (Horton, Bayerl, & Jacobs, 2013; Michaelian, 2005; Tiri & Husu, 2002). For example, a teacher may be placed in a difficult situation in which he or she must choose between advocating for a student or retaining a colleague's positive judgment. Such a situation would place the teacher's role demands of student advocate and colleague at odds, creating intrapersonal or intrarole conflict for that teacher. In contrast, when the teacher disagrees with the school or another person within the school, it is known as interpersonal or interrole conflict (Horton et al., 2013).

Matters are further complicated when a teacher belongs to other social groups within the school community. For example, a teacher who is also a parent in the school is a member of both the school's teacher and parent bodies. This represents a dual membership and, therefore, dual role within the school community. Research already exists on the benefits and challenges experienced by teachers who are also mothers (Claesson & Brice, 1989; Michaelian, 2005). In a small school setting, a teacher who is also a parent of a student enrolled in the school has to balance the many expectations and competing demands of being a teacher with the many expectations and demands of being a parent. This particular dual role can introduce potential conflicts of interest for the individual and school community. People who identify in their school community as both teachers and parents are likely to face different challenges than teachers who do not have that dual community membership. Ultimately, those

with more than one role have an increasing potential for intrarole conflict, becoming even more complex as additional challenges may arise between each role they play within the school community.

Definition of Terms

In this article we focus on the specific roles of parent and teacher within a school community. For ease of reading, we define two new terms: *parent–teacher* and *colleague–teacher*. The parent–teacher differs from the parent and teacher relationship. Parent–teachers are people who teach at the school in which their child is enrolled. Their children could be students in their own classes or students in their colleagues' classes. The colleague–teacher refers to people who do not have children enrolled in the school but serve the school through teaching and/or other administrative work. The colleague–teacher, who may or may not teach a child of a parent–teacher, is a colleague of a parent–teacher.

Literature Review

Schools and parents do not always agree about the best means to educate a child (Smit, Driessen, Sleegers, & Teelken, 2008) and may have very different perspectives on a child's academic and social potential (Karkkainen & Raty, 2010). Since the 1980s, especially after the publication of "A Nation at Risk" in 1983, some researchers have viewed promoting parental involvement in schools as a way to decrease the miscommunication between parents and teachers (Smit et al., 2008). However, the tensions in navigating parent and teacher relationships continue to surface. Miretzky (2004) found that when teachers and parents hold negative assumptions about one another, the negative assumptions inhibit the two groups from interacting with each other beyond required times, such as parent and teacher conferences. Yet, optimally, parents should perceive they are partners with teachers and that they can be collaborative problem-solvers (Vickers & Minke, 1995). Healthy parent and teacher relationships are essential to developing a healthy school culture.

Well-meaning professionals and families, acting with great intentions, blur the professional–family relationship. In a 2004 study, families believed collaborative partners acted more like family members than professionals (Nelson, Summers, & Turnbull, 2004). Research is needed to determine if more line blurring exists in a small school setting than a large school setting and results in a greater number of small schools self-identifying as "a close-knit family." Teachers make ethical choices when in conflict with parents that are dependent on the "desires, needs, and the aims of the particular teachers" (Tiri & Husu, 2002, p. 78). An ethical dilemma arises when there are conflicts between

teachers and their colleagues. Do teachers act in a way that protects the student or maintains loyalty to their colleagues (Tiri & Husu, 2002)? This also raises the question: What happens when these conflicting identities are further complicated for a colleague who is also a parent–teacher?

Role Conflict, Boundaries, and Boundary Crossing

Coverman (1989) defines role conflict as the construct that exists when individuals fulfill multiple roles and experience "pressures within one role that are incompatible with the pressures that arise within another role" (p. 968). Shumate and Fulk (2004) view roles as "the results of a negotiation between the focal person and those with whom he interacts" (p. 58); since roles are in constant negotiation with one another, "communication is necessary not only for establishing roles, but also for maintaining boundaries among an individual's multiple roles, such as worker versus parent versus spouse" (p. 58). When a person's multiple roles are not in sync with one another or there is a communication breakdown internally or externally, that person experiences role conflict. Horton et al. (2013) found role conflict contributes to identity conflict, arguing that individuals or organizations experience identity conflict when their multiple identities, values, beliefs, norms, and role expectations clash. Thus, role conflict exists at varying degrees in each person or organization because of the multiple identities a person or organization holds or has held, daily and throughout the lifespan.

As previously mentioned, there are two types of individual role conflict: interrole and intrarole (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Horton et al., 2013; Shumate & Fulk, 2004). Interpersonal role conflict is the conflict that exists between people or between a person and her organization. For example, the parent–teacher identifies with two important school bodies, teachers and parents, groups which may disagree over the educational vision for the school's student body (Smit et al., 2008). Intrapersonal role conflict is the tension that exists between two or more of a single person's identities. For example, a colleague–teacher may feel conflicted about which of his professional identities takes precedent, student advocate or colleague, while a parent–teacher might have trouble deciding between the best interests of the school and the best interests of her own child. These dual roles also increase chances for interrole conflicts between parent–teachers and colleague–teachers due to the dual relationship that many colleague–teachers have with the parent–teachers as both coworkers of the parent–teacher and as a teacher of the parent–teacher's child (see Figure 1).
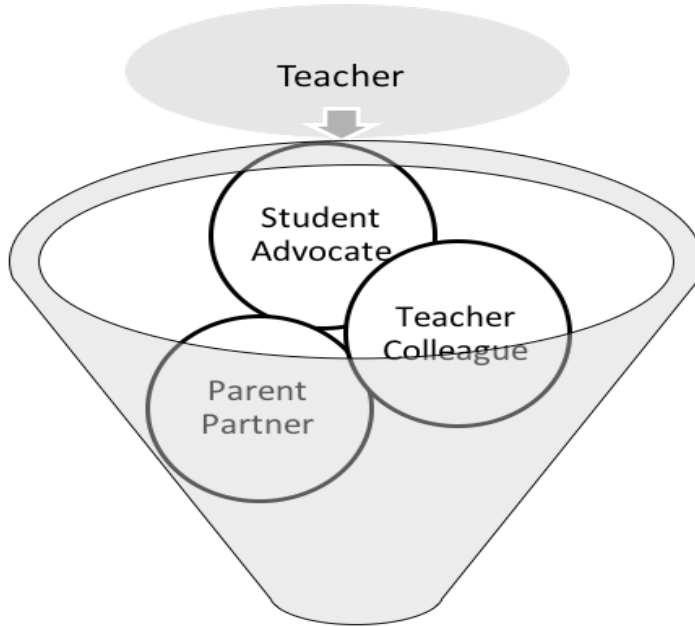
Figure 1. Competing demands of a teacher's role.

To manage their multiple roles, people become experts in transitioning between their roles and identities through boundary crossing (Ashforth et al., 2000). Boundary crossing is defined as the transitioning activity or activities one goes through to switch from one role to another (Ashforth et al., 2000; Shumate & Fulk, 2004). Extending upon Ashforth et al.'s work, Shumate and Fulk (2004) add that the rites, rituals, and scripts used to boundary-cross also "communicate to the role set the limits of their expectations" (p. 63). By boundary crossing, individuals are provided with cues as to how they or their social counterparts should behave in a particular setting.

Teachers believe parental involvement is key for cooperative partnerships as long as that parental involvement does not threaten a teacher's professional authority (Addi-Raccah & Arviv-Elyashiv, 2008; Landeros, 2011). For parent–teachers, the expectations of their role as a parent and their role as a teacher may conflict for any given situation while at school. This also applies to colleague–teachers because they may perceive their relationship with a parent–teacher differently depending on which "hat" or identity, that of parent or that of teacher, the parent–teacher is wearing in a given situation. Such a relationship requires multiple role transitions throughout the day and potentially even within a given conversation between a parent–teacher and colleague–teacher. Acknowledging that such interrole and intrarole conflicts exist for teachers is an important step in understanding parent and teacher relationships, colleague relationships, and school culture.

Theoretical Framework

Role theory illuminates the uncertainties and conflicts that occur naturally within individuals and organizations who are trying to maintain and negotiate multiple roles. In 1979, Biddle poignantly remarked that the use of role theory "preserves the humanity of humans and allows them to examine the social problems that concern us all" (p. 3). Social interactionists, also referred to as cognitive role theorists, focus more on individual and group roles, expectations, and social norms and how these interact to engender certain behaviors (Biddle, 1986; Schmidt, 2000). Social interactionists view the individual as "someone who fulfills a role within the parameters of a relationship to others whose actions reflect roles with which the individual must identify" (Schmidt, 2000, p. 830).

Several branches exist within the theoretical framework for role theory, providing researchers the ability to focus on specific interactions at the individual, communal, and organizational level. Organizational role theory attends to role conflicts within an organization due to role ambiguity and lack of clear expectations of a role (Boles, Wood, & Johnson, 2003). Much literature in organizational role theory focuses on the tensions people encounter as they transition to and from their home and workplace (Ashforth et al., 2000; Boles et al., 2003; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Horton et al., 2013; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006), with increasing research into existing challenges that come with a shared home and work space. Organizational role theory reminds us that the lived worlds of our participants' experiences do not occur in a vacuum and are very much situated in and influenced by the educational institutions within which they work.

Embedded within role theory are role conflict, identity conflict, boundary setting, and boundary crossing. Coverman (1989) asserts that role conflict can be measured subjectively by asking those experiencing role conflict to express ways in which they perceive that the expectations of one specific role may be at odds with the expectations of a different role. The investigation of role conflict in our study led us to use a phenomenological research design. Ashforth et al.'s (2000) work on boundary crossing instructed us to pay close attention to possible language regarding teachers' experiences both interpersonally and intrapersonally with respect to transitioning between their roles of parent, teacher, and colleague within a small school setting. By combining elements of social interactionist theory, general role theory, and organizational role theory, we aim to create much needed discussion about the relationships between the individuals in small schools with considerations of how these might impact their school communities.

The Research Study

All three authors were in the process of pursuing doctoral degrees in education or child development at the time this study was conducted. Each author has past experience with at least three years of experience teaching in small school settings and has been a colleague–teacher. Together, our teaching experiences span early childhood, K–12, undergraduate, and graduate level teaching. For us, the challenges of being a colleague–teacher were quite evident, and we openly shared those with each other. This study is a result of having experienced these tensions firsthand. Moreover, each of us had conversations prior to this study with various colleague–teachers and parent–teachers in our respective institutions; in those conversations we have heard about the tensions and pressures that can exist because of the inherent interrole and intrarole conflicts for colleague–teachers and parent–teachers.

To mitigate our preconceived notions and biases of this phenomenon, the practice of reflexivity was essential for this study. As Merriam (2009) describes in her work, reflexivity allows the researchers to explain "their biases, dispositions, and assumptions regarding the research undertaken" (p. 219). Because this was a familiar issue and one about which we feel strongly, we entered the study with expectations that both colleague–teachers and parent–teachers would speak openly during interviews about the tensions this phenomenon can create. Significantly, this was not the case for several participants.

Participants and Small School Size

When Tyack (1974) first referred to small schools as alternatives to public urban education, he specifically cited small private and rural schools. Participants in this study were teachers from three small, private, religious institutions in the Midwest. Two of the schools are Jewish day schools (early childhood and elementary, respectively), and one is a Christian college. Central to the schools' cultures is that many of the teachers are also parents of children attending the school, and all three of these schools pride themselves on being close-knit communities that feel like family. The two Jewish day schools have student populations of under 200. According to Grauer's (2012) literature review, a disagreement exists about the population size constituting a small school, which stems from a lack of consistent research in the field. There is general agreement that mid-sized schools range from 600–900 students at the elementary and secondary levels, suggesting that small schools have fewer than 600 students (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2000). Grauer (2012) further refined the number by subdividing small schools into two additional categories: preparatory schools and public schools. According to Grauer

(2012), small preparatory and public schools cap their population at approximately 230 students and 300 students, respectively.

The Christian college has a student population of 1,500. Less research exists on what constitutes a small university or college. According to the COLLEGE-data website, a small college has fewer than 5,000 students ("College Size," n.d). Banerjee (2011) identified a small college as having fewer than 4,000 students, while Flapsohler (2003) identified the college in her study as a small college because it had fewer than 3,000 students. While a student population of 1,500 may seem too large to create a family feeling, colleges with smaller student populations market themselves as being able to create a more supportive, family-like experience. A common understanding is that parental roles shift at the college level in terms of academics, extracurriculars, and services offered; however, current newspapers and news magazines, such as *The Washington Post* and *Forbes*, have shared stories about the increased number of challenges that professors are encountering with parents who remain involved in their children's college experience (Haelle, 2016; Joyce, 2014).

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research study was to understand the unique relationships between parent–teachers and colleague–teachers in small educational institutions. The following research questions guided this study: How do parent–teachers perceive their professional relationship with their colleague–teachers? What strengths and challenges do parent–teachers perceive in having a dual membership in the school community? How do colleague–teachers perceive their professional relationships with a parent–teacher? What strengths and challenges do the colleague–teachers perceive in working with colleagues who belong to two distinct groups within the school community? What recommendations would they give to the educational institution to support these unique relationships? After conducting our data collection and analysis, we realized that our question concerning recommendations was never answered. Participant responses related to recommendations shed light on the strengths and challenges of this phenomenon. While initial recommendations are drawn from our conclusions, further research is necessary to provide more comprehensive recommendations.

Methodology

We used a phenomenological approach to understand participants' experiences of the relationships held between colleague–teachers and parent–teachers. According to Merriam (2009), a philosophy of phenomenology supports "a

focus on the experience itself" (p. 24). Phenomenology is also a good place to start when beginning a conversation about a phenomenon that has been little researched (Friedman, Friedlander, & Blustein, 2005). By using a phenomenological design, we were better able to understand the lived everyday experiences of our participants (Creswell, 2009; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants to ensure participants met our parent–teacher and colleague–teacher criteria (Merriam, 2009). We chose purposive sampling because of the short time frame that we were given to conduct the study and because it is difficult to access teachers in these particular small schools as they are overwhelmed by their workload and rarely respond to general requests or flyers to participate. School administrators at each site provided participant names for both parent–teachers and colleague–teachers. After researchers received the parent–teachers' names, each researcher contacted the participants via email. Once participating parent–teachers were secured, researchers reached out to the colleague–teachers.

Significant ethical concerns existed because the sampling procedure required administrators to provide us with the names of potential participants. First, administrators could coerce their teachers to participate in the study if they felt it was good for the school. To reduce the possibility of coercive recruitment, the participants' recruitment letter explicitly stated that their choice to participate in the study or to refrain from participation was not shared with their school administrator. Second, we had to begin with identifying parent–teachers before we could solicit participation from colleague–teachers. We could have easily obtained the names of colleague–teachers from a parent–teacher participant. However, that would have impacted our ability to keep our participants anonymous. Only once a parent–teacher agreed to participate did we contact the colleague–teachers already recommended by the school administrators. There was no requirement of or compensation for participation. Prior to each interview, the researchers obtained written consent from the interviewees to participate and to have their interviews audio recorded.

Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through the use of eight individual interviews with parent–teachers and colleague–teachers. Interviews were semistructured so that each researcher was able to "respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). Interviews allowed the researcher to member check in the moment (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In other words, as participants shared their thoughts, the researcher conducting the interview was able to reflect back to them what had been heard so that the participant could verify

that the interviewer heard them correctly. Often, this led them to expand on their ideas and express themselves more clearly. Instant feedback was critical for our data collection since we wanted to understand the phenomenon from our participants' perspectives as much as possible. When creating our interview protocols (see Appendix), we practiced reflexivity to ensure that we avoided leading questions and imposing our personal biases on our participants.

Each researcher interviewed one parent–teacher from one of the three research sites at the early childhood, elementary, or college level and also attempted to interview two colleague–teachers within the same institution. In total, eight interviews were conducted for this study—three parent–teachers and five colleague–teachers. Tables 1 and 2 present the participants' demographics. Researchers transcribed all of the interviews and sent them to participants for member checks. Those participants who responded agreed with what was written on the transcripts and were open to receiving clarifying questions from the researchers. All participants have been given pseudonyms.

Table 1. Parent–Teacher Participant Demographics

Parent–Teacher	1 (Lynn)	2 (Kate)	3 (Jennifer)
Site	Early Childhood	Elementary	College
Grade Level/ Department	Lead Teacher, 3-year-olds	Art	Math
Other Role in School		Office/ Administrative Work	Academic Dean
Age	Early 30s	Late 30s	50s
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Years of Experience at School	8th year	2nd year	20th year
Children currently attending school while working there	Son, 3 years old	Son, 5th grade Son, 2nd grade Daughter, Kindergarten	Son, junior in college
Children previously attended school while working there	Son, 6 years old Son, 5 years old		Son, graduated

Table 2. Colleague–Teacher Participant Demographics

Colleague–Teacher	1 (Sue)	2 (Mary)	3 (Beth)	4 (Patti)	5 (Robert)
Site	Early Childhood	Early Childhood	Elementary	College	College
Grade Level/ Department	Lead Teacher, 3-year-olds	Lead Teacher, 4-year-olds	Fifth Grade Teacher	Business Dept.	Political Science Dept.
Other Roles in School			Administrator		Dept. Chair/Dir. of General Education
Age	52	23	40s	40s	40s
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male
Years of Experience at School	8th year	1st year	3rd year	4th year	11th year

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study went through several iterative cycles. Using investigator triangulation, open-coding was used during the first round of data analysis and was conducted individually by each researcher for all interviews (Merriam, 2009). As each researcher identified emerging themes, they were entered into a shared Google document. During the second round of data analysis, the researchers worked together in two distinct phases. The first phase focused on the data collected from parent–teacher interviews, the second on data collected from colleague–teacher interviews. We realized that though we perceived similar themes and used identical language, what we understood those themes to mean were dependent upon each of our respective worldviews and grade-level expertise. The definitions of terms also changed based on the participants discussed. Thus, talking through our open-coded themes and identifying an agreed upon definition of each label became a crucial part of our data analysis.

After developing an initial lexicon from our first phase, we closed-coded the transcripts into categories derived from our theoretical framework. Once these codes were constructed, we conducted a cross-comparative analysis of the themes that emerged from our individual analyses (Merriam, 2009). Analytic deduction (Schwandt, 2007) was the final data analysis phase and continued

until themes that worked across all of the data sources were identified. This process included refining our lexicon and increasing interrater reliability. Finally, themes were categorized according to the study's research questions.

Results

All of the participants viewed the "close-knit" community and "family" feeling of their respective schools as strengths and as a central underlying principle of their school communities. Participants from the Jewish day schools each viewed their school as a close-knit community because many of the families and teachers lived near one another and attended the same synagogue or were involved in other Jewish community organizations together. One parent–teacher, Lynn, expressed that "we are all family, for the most part." As a result of this close-knit familial school culture, teachers get to know children of other colleagues. Kate said, "I mean, obviously the colleagues who have my children in class know me better, know my family better." Parent–teachers specifically viewed the school culture as supportive for them because they could "go and talk to" other parent–teachers in the school. Many of the strengths that came from having a close-knit community were also perceived as challenges or as more complex phenomena. As Jennifer reflected on being a parent–teacher, "It can be really wonderful, and it can be very not-so-wonderful." Jennifer's words capture the complexities inherent in small school communities where dual roles abound.

Role Expectations and Role Ambiguity

Parent–teachers expressed having two separate roles and needing to switch back and forth between the roles throughout the day. As Jennifer articulated, "I have to make sure I have the right hat on." At school, the parent–teachers put on their "teacher hat" for work but never take off their "parent hat." Lynn captured this when she said, "no matter what you're doing...you're always thinking about your kid." Later, Lynn also commented, "I am always doing things for my classroom, but not necessarily each kid as an individual," suggesting that parent–teachers think of their children constantly and in ways that they do not think about their students.

Various colleague–teachers held different expectations of their own role and the role of parent–teachers. Colleague–teachers often stated their desire to treat students and parent–teachers like normal parents and teachers, but admitted these relationships held unique differences. Some colleague–teachers needed to establish professional boundaries with the parent–teacher in order to treat the parent–teacher like any other parent. As Beth described, "I won't

have parent–teacher conferences in the hall. I will email them, or I will call them, the same way I would call or email any other parent." In contrast, other colleague–teachers felt that since parent–teachers understood the demands on teachers, those same parent–teachers would understand if they needed to speak to them through different channels. Mary described her conversations with a parent–teacher as "it's a lot more casual…it's not like, let me reassure you that your child's not a bad child…they don't need that kind of stuff." Although Mary originally stated parent–teachers should be treated like every other parent, her later comments indicated otherwise. Colleague–teachers did not share a common conception of appropriate interactions with parent–teachers.

Overall, the colleague–teachers expected the parent–teacher's role to be similar to any other teacher when situations concerning work matters arose and like a parent in situations concerning the parent–teacher's child. Interestingly, Lynn described two conflicting role expectations from colleague–teachers. First, she shared an incident in which her colleague "forgets that my kid is in the class…she treats me more like a teacher." Then she described a situation in which a parent–teacher was not given the opportunity to sign up for a specific time for parent and teacher conferences because there were limited slots for other parents. Lynn expressed that a parent–teacher may be frustrated by the latter situation and "feel like, treat me as a parent…don't push me aside." Parent–teachers desire to have their colleagues treat them both like any other teacher and any other parent in the school. Though colleague–teachers stated perceived role expectations of the parent–teacher, the role expectations and how they treated parent–teachers varied among the colleague–teachers. Interestingly, sometimes their treatment of the parent–teacher conflicted with their stated role expectations of that parent–teacher, such as in Mary's case.

Internal Role Conflict

The perceived role expectations for the dual role of being a parent–teacher were accompanied by many tensions, including a roller coaster of emotions and anxieties about one's child and one's professionalism. Jennifer specifically used the term "roller coaster" to describe the experience of having a child enrolled where one teaches. A major challenge for parent–teachers was how to prioritize at school. Is the child or are the students the priority? Lynn recounted an experience in which she was concerned about how a teacher handled a situation with her toddler, and she left her own classroom to check on him. Lynn expressed that doing this "definitely affected my focus on my kids [students] in my classroom." Ultimately, the parent–teacher's priority was her son, even though it may have jeopardized her professional role as a teacher. Prioritizing one's child can also be apparent during times of safety, as Lynn also described her concern for her baby who was with the on-site babysitter during a fire drill.

Parent responsibility, specifically pertaining to ensuring child safety, can cause another tension in the parent–teacher dual role.

Physical proximity between the parent and child and the physical layout of the school were relevant to the tensions of being a parent–teacher. Kate was able to run downstairs and check on her son who was crying in the hallway. Lynn could just "peek in" to her child's room to check on him, but would also change her students' schedule so that she avoided seeing her child in the hallways or at recess. However, for students in college, students and their parents may not be as physically close to each other during the day. Jennifer compensated for this physical distance with technology by telling her child, "you are not getting what you need on this one [situation with a professor], and when you send the next email, copy me on it so that I know what's going on." Jennifer wanted to fulfill her parent role but also wanted to let her colleagues know that she was aware of her child's situation in a respectful manner. Using email was one way to do this.

Colleague–teachers also experienced internal role conflict due to the assumptions they made about parent–teachers' role expectations. Though unaware of their anxieties around this phenomenon, several colleague–teachers used words like "awkward" or "worry" when discussing their internal conflicts. At the college level especially, colleague–teachers expressed anxiety when working with students of parent–teachers and trying to treat the situation normally. Patti described the internal battle she feels when a parent–teacher's child is struggling when she stated, "I'm thinking if one of them [child of parent–teacher] showed up, I'd probably feel more responsibility to spend extra time with them…I wouldn't want it to come back to me." For Patti, there was a fear that a student of a parent–teacher would complain about her teaching and that could potentially hurt her professional identity. Robert described the tension that existed when a parent–teacher's child committed a plagiarism offense. He was deliberate about not bringing it up to the parent–teacher, but he did express, "It was just in the room! Or at least it was in my head." Robert experienced anxiety about how to prevent negative experiences with a student from impacting the professional relationship between him and his colleague, a parent–teacher.

Boundary Setting and Boundary Blurring

Parent–teachers compartmentalized and tried setting intentional boundaries to cope with their dual role. When asked to offer advice to a new parent–teacher, Lynn responded, "Compartmentalize everything and just, when you are a parent, you are a parent, when you are a teacher, you need to really just focus on the kids, and then right after school, you know, you could deal with the parent stuff." However, as the parent–teachers noted, it is hard to completely

separate their teacher and parent roles. Even while trying to compartmentalize and act solely as a teacher, parent–teachers found it challenging not to think about their kids during the day.

Another approach to managing the tensions of the parent–teacher roles was to set boundaries and be selective about when to intervene. Maintaining clear boundaries is especially important at the college level, because college students are no longer minors and their privacy is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA ensures that college-age students have sole access to their educational records and control over disclosure concerning personal information (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). As Jennifer explained, "you have to be really careful not to step outside the FERPA rules," and "trying to draw those boundaries can be a little challenging" as a parent–teacher.

One reason that parent–teachers found it challenging to respect boundaries is that parent–teachers also want to advocate for and to protect their children. Kate said that her experiences as a parent–teacher have all been "positive because my kids are good kids. You know if my kids were the kinds getting in trouble or disrespectful, I am sure there would be more conversations that are uncomfortable." Significantly, Kate set intentional boundaries through explicit conversations with her children's teachers: "Even when I ask about my child...I always preface it with 'If this is not a good time to talk'…'If I'm getting too involved let me know.'" She was concerned about crossing a boundary, and it was important to have the colleague–teachers know that. Furthermore, for Jennifer, part of setting clear boundaries for herself was establishing clear guidelines as to what was appropriate for her to do as a parent–teacher and what actions might jeopardize her professional identity and teacher role.

Colleague–teachers at each of the schools expressed the importance of establishing professional boundaries with the parent–teachers with whom they work. Beth stated, "I do try…to set that up very professionally from the get go." Beth continued by saying that keeping the relationship professional does not mean it needs to be cold, but that the "roles need to be understood." This particular colleague–teacher relied on the boundaries she created with parent–teachers in the beginning of the year to help her manage the unique experiences with them.

In addition to establishing boundaries with the parent–teacher, colleague–teachers need to respect boundaries as well. Patti stated that when she is having a problem with a parent–teacher's child in class, "I have to bite my tongue when I'm in a meeting with that person [parent–teacher]; I have to completely separate myself." Similar to the college level parent–teacher, the college level colleague–teachers relied heavily on FERPA to help support their boundaries.

Robert expressed that if parent–teachers approached him about their children, he would reply that he could not speak to them without permission from the student. Evidently, he found comfort in having a policy to rely on that was in place for all students. In contrast, Patti reflected that it would bother her professionally if a colleague put her in the position of having to rely on FERPA in an interaction.

Even though many colleague–teachers expressed their attempts and desires to establish clear boundaries, some expressed that there are times when this is difficult or when the boundary lines get blurred. Sue described the tension she feels at faculty meetings when discussing classroom or student issues. Because many of the children in this early childhood program are children of the teachers, discussing particular situations in a meeting can be difficult. She said, "even if you aren't talking about a parent's child, the parent may think you're talking about their child. That would be very uncomfortable." Sue needed to determine whether she could discuss a specific issue in front of the faculty in order to get feedback, or if that would cause problems for the parent–teacher and herself. She continued that not only did this pertain to specific students, but about classroom issues as well. She gave the example that a teacher would not want to express her difficulty with classroom management because the parent–teachers at the meeting might be concerned.

Communication

Communication is an important part of the partnership between colleague–teachers and parent–teachers at the early childhood and elementary levels. Mary valued the ability to have more frequent interactions with parent–teachers because "they're in the same hall as me…they see me all the time." She viewed this frequent communication as positive, but also acknowledged that this communication is different from how she communicates with other parents. Mary highlighted this tension when she said that creating a partnership with parent–teachers is important in order to "use them as a resource" but that it is important to treat their children "like any other student in class." In contrast, Beth expressed that the conversations she has with parent–teachers are very similar to those that she has with other parents, but noted that "it's probably more comfortable because I have a much better sense of that person's personality."

As described previously, role expectations are not always clearly communicated between the two parties, and much is left unsaid. The unspoken role expectations caused colleague–teachers to make assumptions based on their perceptions of both their own role expectations and the parent–teacher's role expectations. In some cases, assumptions were made about parent–teachers'

children as well. At the college level, Robert described his struggle to avoid making assumptions of the children of parent–teachers when he reflected,

> I just sort of think, oh yeah, this is so and so's daughter, and then they are not engaged or they don't write as well, and then I think, "oh this is surprising." I probably shouldn't make those assumptions, but I have.

Robert had a difficult time separating his relationship with his parent–teacher colleague from how he expected that parent–teacher's child to behave or perform academically.

At the elementary and early childhood levels, colleague–teachers assumed that parent–teachers would be more receptive to feedback because the parent–teacher knew the colleague–teacher and his or her teaching style. Beth said, "There's much less worry…that parent knows what I'm doing." This suggests that colleague–teachers assume that their parent–teacher colleagues respect them as teachers and agree with their choices. Clearly, assumptions made about parent–teachers, colleague–teachers, and students can impact the professional relationship between parent–teachers and colleague–teachers.

Discussion

Using role theory and organizational role theory as our theoretical framework proved useful in designing our study and analyzing our data. Even though this research study had a very small sample size, it clearly illuminates that the presence of parent–teachers in small school communities contributes to complex teacher dynamics with both positive and negative outcomes. Strengths, such as the strong familial community feeling, were highlighted by all of the participants. We also identified external and internal role conflicts leading to individual and organizational level tensions and anxieties because of the presence of parent–teachers in the school. This finding applies across grade levels in early childhood, primary, and postsecondary education and should be explored further.

Significantly, during our data analysis we noticed that our coding process for the parent–teachers flowed much smoother than for colleague–teachers. Through discussion, we realized intrarole conflicts for parent–teachers is more overt because parent–teachers are typically aware of their two competing roles at school and of the potential to experience interrole conflict with colleagues. The parent–teachers were already using language that fit or even matched codes derived from our theoretical framework, for example, when Jennifer described her experience as a "roller-coaster" or Lynn mentioned a tendency to distraction because her child was present in her workplace. In contrast, the colleague–teacher's role was more puzzling. It was not until the end of the interviews

that colleague–teachers were able to share more specific information regarding their experience around this phenomenon. From this it became evident that several of the colleague–teachers did not consider, prior to being interviewed, how the competing demands of their teaching role might be affected by having parent–teachers as colleagues. Since colleague–teachers used less explicit language to talk about their role, it was more challenging for us to fit their words into the codes derived from our theoretical framework. What follows is a more in-depth discussion of our findings as they relate to our theoretical framework.

Role Conflict

Role conflict was experienced by both the parent–teachers and colleague–teachers as the expectations and stress in one role or between roles diverged, similar to Coverman's (1989) and Horton et al.'s (2013) definitions of role conflict. There seemed to be a clash between the expectation that a parent–teacher puts on her "teacher hat" while at work and the reality that a parent always is concerned for his child. This was seen in Lynn's conflict of whether to do her job and accompany her class to safety in case of an emergency or to first guarantee her own child's safety. This concern and others like it elicit intrarole conflict as teachers experience conflicting behavioral expectations as parents and as teachers, just as Horton et al.'s (2013) fault line model suggests.

Colleague–teachers spoke mostly about intrarole conflicts. These conflicts stemmed from questions regarding sharing information about students or general school matters with parent–teachers that would not typically be shared with other parents in the school community. Sue expressed a tension surrounding sharing information with a parent–teacher that she would normally discuss with another colleague, but felt that it was inappropriate to discuss with a parent. Her role as a colleague to a parent–teacher engendered inharmonious role expectations leading Sue to experience intrarole conflict. At the college level, colleague–teachers felt similar tensions, yet due to FERPA these conflicts were framed within clearer boundaries.

Not all parent–teachers and colleague–teachers perceived interrole or intrarole conflict. Indeed, some colleague–teachers believed talking with parent–teachers was easier because the school culture supported close relationships. Both parent–teachers' and colleague–teachers' assumptions about their and their colleagues' role expectations contributed to this belief. Role expectations seemed more ambiguously defined for colleague–teachers by both participant groups. Although the participants did not always recognize their intrarole or interrole conflicts, their assumptions about role expectations possibly caused some interrole conflicts.

Whether or not teachers explicitly and consciously expressed stress, tension, or conflict with the expectations of their roles, their feedback concerning their experiences suggests these tensions were present. The expectations and assumptions of their multiple roles led to anxiety and stress on the individual and organizational levels. As Figure 2 demonstrates, the role conflicts may begin at the individual level and, if left unmanaged, lead to role conflicts at the organizational level. How, then, do parent–teachers and colleague–teachers navigate conflicting expectations?
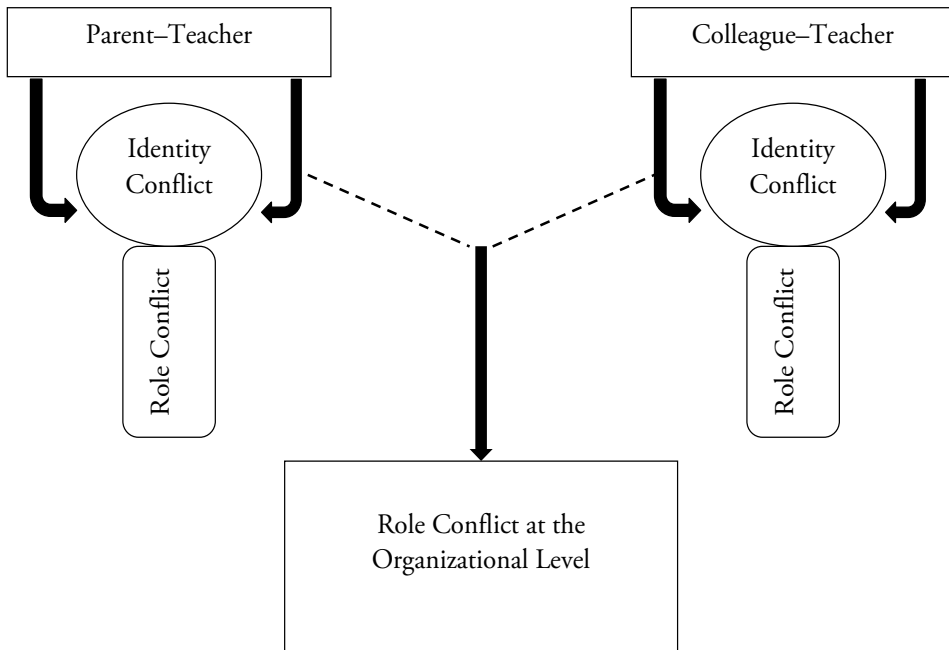

Figure 2. Role conflict in schools at the organizational level.

Boundary Blurring

Many of the colleague–teachers expressed situations and experiences where boundary lines might become blurred. Similar to Tiri and Husu's (2002) discussion of the ethical dilemmas experienced when teachers must decide if their loyalties lie with their students or with their colleagues, colleague–teachers felt these tensions while navigating their incongruent responsibilities of being both a colleague and a teacher in the institution. Especially evident at the early childhood level, colleague–teachers needed to wrestle with how to discuss student and classroom issues in faculty meetings where many parents were in attendance. By not participating in conversations about student concerns, colleague–teachers were not able to benefit from the support and suggestions

from fellow professionals. This support is vital to benefitting the students and the classroom (Hoy & Feldman, 2007). However, if colleague–teachers did discuss these concerns with the entire faculty, they knew they could potentially put the parent–teachers in the meeting and themselves in a difficult position.

In this study, as in Tiri and Husu's (2002) study on all teachers, colleague–teachers were faced with the dilemma of prioritizing student social/emotional and academic needs or showing respect and loyalty to parent–teachers. Even though this specific dilemma was not discussed at the elementary or college level, it is reasonable to expect similar types of situations to exist within these schools as well. How are colleague–teachers supposed to balance these two prioritizations? How are colleague–teachers supposed to choose between impacting student learning or maintaining loyalty to the parents involved?

Boundary Crossing

Shumate and Fulk (2004) assert that the use of "rites, rituals, and scripts" are key for a person to communicate when they are boundary crossing so that others know how to behave around that person. Both the parent–teachers and colleague–teachers provided examples of particular language they used to communicate that they were intentionally boundary crossing. However, this language was used only when needing to discuss the child as a student in the colleague–teacher's class. Colleague–teachers used starter sentences such as "I need to speak to you as your child's teacher," indicating that they had crossed into the teacher role. Similarly, parent–teachers used particular language with their colleagues to show that they were boundary crossing as well, such as "Let me know if I'm getting too involved." Importantly, these situations were clear in the participants' minds, and they had language to demonstrate how they both set intentional boundaries and communicated boundary crossing. Interestingly, in all of the boundary crossing examples, the trigger for boundary crossing from colleague to student advocate and from teacher to parent was to discuss the parent–teacher's child.

In contrast, participants did not articulate explicit boundary crossing examples when discussing their roles as parents and colleagues. For instance, how parent–teachers shifted roles to decide to "peek into" their child's class or to manage a situation for their child is unclear. More likely they went through internal role shifts as Ashforth et al. (2000) assert. It is possible that because a parent–teacher's dual role is more explicit, they have less trouble integrating their roles and need fewer external boundary crossing mechanisms, whereas colleague–teachers may experience a level of intrarole conflict due to competing single role demands that are less integrated. This might require the colleague–teacher to create more formal boundary crossing rituals between their single role demands.

Communication

The literature on role theory states that people manage role conflicts through shifting roles in their mind and communicating to others that they boundary crossed (Ashforth et al., 2000; Shumate & Fulk, 2004). This implies that to manage the role conflicts that parent–teachers and colleague–teachers experience, there always has to be some form of communication or internal dialogue about the roles. In this study there was communication between the parent–teachers and colleague–teachers at the individual level but a lack of communication between them at the organizational level. This dichotomy contributed to individual anxieties, assumptions, and overall organizational tensions.

At the individual level, parent–teachers and colleague–teachers negotiated complex relationships through clear language to show that they boundary-crossed into a parent and teacher relationship and wanted to talk about the student. Open and honest conversations between the colleague–teachers and the parent–teachers at the college level were less possible because of FERPA; the lack of a college colleague–teacher's ability to discuss a parent–teacher's child's progress with the parent–teacher both increased and decreased individual worries for the colleague–teacher. While the school's implementation of FERPA helped maintain clear boundaries for the teachers, it also presented an obstacle. Thus, "bite my tongue" was used to manage a possibly tense situation that was not openly discussed between the parent–teacher and colleague–teacher.

At the organizational level, participants did not discuss how they manage parent–teacher and colleague–teacher relationships as much. Most likely, this is because participants were primarily asked to reflect on their personal experiences rather than on the organization's experience. Even though there were questions in the interview protocol relating the phenomenon back to the overarching school culture, there was less prompting about how it impacted the school as a whole. At the organizational level, faculty meetings do not appear to be places in which colleague–teachers feel completely comfortable raising concerns about a parent–teacher's child or classroom concerns in general.

Conclusion

As we conjectured, both parent–teachers and colleague–teachers in small private religious school settings experience complex relationships with one another and their roles. A school's organizational health is correlated with student achievement and is built on individual-level relationships (Hoy & Feldman, 2007; Roney, Coleman, & Schlichting, 2007). Hoy and Feldman (2007) write, "Finally, in a healthy school, teachers like each other, trust each other, are enthusiastic about their work, and identify positively with the school" (p.

59). In a school with so many parent–teachers, it is prudent for the school administration to maintain an open dialogue around this phenomenon with all teachers so that rites, rituals, and scripts for boundary crossing exist at the organizational level as well.

Many ethical and logistical questions emerged from this study that would help extend the conversation regarding the relationships between colleague–teachers and parent–teachers. This study did not specifically look at power dynamics, administrative perspectives, or student perspectives on the phenomenon. Possible questions for future study include: Do parent–teachers microtransition between their dual identities and roles as Ashforth et al. (2000) imagined, or are parent–teachers just taking on and off their teacher "hat" throughout the day? How are student–student relationships affected when one student is the child of a parent–teacher? How are student–teacher relationships affected when a student is a child of a parent–teacher? What power dynamics are at play when a colleague–teacher has an administrator's child in her class? How do tensions experienced by parent–teachers and colleague–teachers affect the organizational health of a school?

As previously mentioned, the schools participating in this study were all small, private religious institutions. It is possible that small, rural public schools may perceive their schools as a "close-knit" community and "family," as well, because they have parents working in the school in which their child or children attend. Future research should examine this phenomenon in a variety of contexts to better understand the dynamics of parent–teacher and colleague–teacher relationships in both the private and public small school spheres.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study despite our best efforts to increase the study's internal validity. Due to time constraints, each researcher was not able to spend an ideal amount of time in the field resulting in a lack of data saturation. There were also times during the interviews when we each felt that participants were withholding information. It appeared that interviewees felt compelled to put everything in a positive light, which made planned questions in the interview protocol less likely to be answered.

The study would be improved with follow-up interviews with each participant at the middle and at the end of the school year. Facilitating focus groups would further elicit valuable information as participants could build off each other's ideas. This might also help the researchers gain more participant trust and willingness to discuss the challenges they experience around this phenomenon. Observations of a parent–teacher's typical school day and faculty meetings concerning students, as well as document analysis of the schools'

faculty or staff handbooks would provide more insight and better triangulation of the data. This would allow researchers more opportunities to identify possible areas of role conflict for the parent–teachers and colleague–teachers. Lastly, recruiting more demographically diverse participants and investigating student and administrative perspectives of the phenomenon would result in richer data and better data source triangulation. We hope that in reading this article, researchers and practitioners dedicated to improving school culture and maximizing its impact on student achievement are inspired to conduct more research on the parent–teacher phenomenon. We believe that such research is vital to expanding the discussion on parent, teacher, and colleague relationships in small school communities.

References

Addi-Raccah, A., & Arviv-Elyashiv, R. (2008). Parent empowerment and teacher professionalism: Teachers' perspective. *Urban Education, 43*(3), 394–415.

Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. G., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and microrole transitions. *The Academy of Management Review, 25*(3), 472–491.

Banerjee, G. (2011, February 1). Blended environments: Learning effectiveness and student satisfaction at a small college in transition. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 15*(1), 8–19.

Biddle, B. J. (1979). *Role theory: Expectations, identities, and behaviors.* New York, NY: Academic Press.

Biddle, B. J. (1986). Recent development in role theory. *Annual Review of Sociology, 12,* 67–92.

Boles, J. S., Wood, J. A., & Johnson, J. (2003). Interrelationships of role conflict, role ambiguity, and work–family conflict with different facets of job satisfaction and the moderating effects of gender. *The Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, 23*(2), 99–113.

Claesson, M. A., & Brice, R. A. (1989). Teacher/mothers: Effects of a dual role. *American Educational Research Journal, 26*(1), 123.

College size: Small, medium, or large? (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.collegedata.com/cs/content/content_choosearticle_tmpl.jhtml?articleId=10006

Coverman, S. (1989). Role overload, role conflict, and stress: Addressing consequences of multiple role demands. *Social Forces, 67*(4), 965–982.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Flaspohler, M. R. (2003). Information literacy program assessment: One small college takes the big plunge. *Reference Services Review, 31*(2), 129–140. doi:10.1108/00907320310476602

Friedman, M. L., Friedlander, M. L., & Blustein, D. L. (2005). Toward an understanding of Jewish identity: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(1), 77–83.

Grauer, S. (2012). *How big is a small school?: A review of the literature on absolute secondary school size.* Retrieved from the Coalition of Small Preparatory Schools website: http://smallschoolscoalition.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/How-Big-is-a-SMALL-SCHOOL.pdf

Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *The Academy of Management Review, 10*(1), 76–88.

Haelle, T. (2016, June 30). Want a well-adjusted college student? Stop helicopter parenting. *Forbes.* Retrieved from http://www.forbes.com/sites/tarahaelle/2016/06/30/want-a-well-adjusted-college-student-stop-helicopter-parenting/#475cbaa13146

Horton, K. E., Bayerl, P. S., & Jacobs, G. (2013). Identity conflict at work: An integrative framework. *Journal of Organizational Behavior.* doi:10.1002/job.1893

Hoy, W. K., & Feldman, J. A. (2007). Organizational health: The concept and its measure. In W. K. Hoy & M. F. DiPaola (Eds.), *Essential ideas for the reform of American schools* (pp. 49–62). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.

Joyce, A. (2014, September 2). How helicopter parents are ruining college students. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/parenting/wp/2014/09/02/how-helicopter-parents-are-ruining-college-students/.

Karkkainen, R., & Raty, H. (2010). Parents' and teachers' views of the child's academic potential. *Educational Studies*, *36*(2), 229–232.

Kreiner, G. E., Hollensbe, E. C., & Sheep, M. L. (2006). On the edge of identity: Boundary dynamics at the interface of individual and organizational identities. *Human Relations, 59*(10), 1315–1341.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Landeros, M. (2011). Defining the "good mother" and the "professional teacher": Parent–teacher relationships in an affluent school district. *Gender and Education, 23*(3), 247–262.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merton, R. K. (1957). The role-set: Problems in sociological theory. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *8*(2), 106–120.

Michaelian, M. J. (2005). *Teachers who are mothers: Perceptions of concurrent career and parenthood roles* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (UMI No. 3179905)

Miretzky, D. (2004). The communication requirements of democratic schools: Parent–teacher perspectives on their relationships. *Teachers College Record, 106*(4), 814–851.

Nelson, L. G. L., Summers, J., & Turnbull, A. (2004). Boundaries in family–professional relationships. *Remedial and Special Education, 25*(3), 153–165.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. (2000). *School size and its relationship to achievement and behaviors*. Retrieved from http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/data/reports/size.pdf

Roney, K., Coleman, H., & Schlichting, K. (2007). Linking the organizational health of middle grades schools to student achievement. *NASSP Bulletin, 91*(4), 289–321.

Schmidt, M. (2000, November 1). Role theory, emotions, and identity in the department headship of secondary schooling. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 16*(8), 827–842.

Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *The Sage dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shumate, M., & Fulk, J. (2004). Boundaries and role conflict when work and family are co-located: A communication network and symbolic interaction approach. *Human Relations, 57*(1), 55–74.

Smit, F., Driessen, G., Sleegers, P., & Teelken, C. (2008). Scrutinizing the balance: Parental care versus educational responsibilities in a changing society. *Early Child Development and Care*, *178*(1), 65–80.

Tiri, K., & Husu, J. (2002). Care and responsibility in "the best interest of the child": Relational voices of ethical dilemmas in teaching. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 8*(1), 65–80.

Tyack, D. B. (1974). *The one best system: A history of American urban education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

U.S. Department of Education. (2011). *The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act: Guidance for eligible students.* Washington, DC: Author.

Vickers, H., & Minke, K. (1995). Exploring parent–teacher relationships: Joining and communication to others. *School Psychology Quarterly, 10*(2), 133–150.

Eliana Lipsky is a school consultant and teacher coach to Jewish day schools in North America. Her research interests include authentic student inquiry, student agency, and the complex relationships that exist within small school communities. Correspondence concerning this article may be addressed to Dr. Eliana Lipsky at 602 Hermleigh Road, Silver Spring, MD 20902 or email elipsky@luc.edu

Ilana Dvorin Friedman is a doctoral candidate in child development at the Erikson Institute and Loyola University Chicago. Her dissertation topic is gender role beliefs of teachers in Orthodox Jewish preschools. Ilana is an adjunct instructor at the Blitstein Institute and has taught at the Erikson Institute, Oakton Community College, and Harold Washington College. Her research interests include gender role beliefs of teachers, Jewish early childhood education, executive function support in the preschool classroom, and professional development for preschool teachers.

Rebecca Harkema is director of student services at a Christian school in Indiana. She is also a doctoral candidate in Loyola University Chicago's Curriculum and Instruction EdD program and is simultaneously working toward earning her administrative license in Indiana.

Appendix: Interview Protocols

Parent–Teacher Interview Protocol

Hi. My name is _____. Thank you so much for participating today. We really appreciate your time. Please interrupt me at any time if you have questions or need a break. Remember, you are not required to answer these questions, so if there is a question you want to skip, just say so, and we will move on. As I mentioned on the consent form, this interview is being recorded, but proper procedures are in place to ensure this information remains confidential.

1. How long have you been working here? What age group/grade/department do you work with?
2. What has your experience been like working at your school?
   a. [PROBE: What are interactions like with your teacher/colleagues?]
3. How often do conversations between you and your colleagues revolve around students? Can you give some examples of what those conversations look like?
4. What is it like to teach at a school where your child/children are enrolled as students?
   a. [PROBE: Have you had experiences when you have had to switch between your role as a parent and your role as a teacher and colleague throughout the day? What challenges are there for you switching from these various roles? What kinds of issues during the school day draw on your "parent hat," and what kinds of issues draw on your "teacher" or "colleague hat?"]

5. How is working with colleagues who are your child/children's teachers any different than working with other colleagues?
    a. [PROBE: How would having a conversation with your child's teacher as a colleague differ from a conversation with another teacher/colleague? Please share a positive experience and a negative experience.]
6. Suppose you found out your child was going to be in a class with a teacher/colleague whose teaching you think is high quality. What feelings might you experience?
    a. [PROBE: What about someone whose teaching abilities you question? What tensions have arisen for you?]
7. Suppose a new teacher was hired who also had children in the school. What advice might you give the teacher on how to navigate being both a parent and a teacher in the school?

Colleague–Teacher Interview Protocol

Hi. My name is _____. Thank you so much for participating today. We really appreciate your time. Please interrupt me at any time if you have questions or need a break. Remember, you are not required to answer these questions, so if there is a question you want to skip, just say so, and we will move on. As I mentioned on the consent form, this interview is being recorded, but proper procedures will be followed to be sure this information remains confidential.

1. How long have you been working here? What age group/grade do you work with?
2. What has your experience been like working at your school?
    a. [PROBE: What are interactions like with your colleagues?]
3. How often do conversations between you and your colleagues revolve around students? Can you give some examples of what those conversations are like?
4. Please describe experiences you've had that directly relate to you being a teacher of a colleague's child.
    a. [PROBE: If it was a positive experience, ask for a negative experience. If negative experience, ask for a positive experience.]
5. Think of a time you were having a conversation with a colleague about his or her child who is in your class. What was it like? Would it differ from a conversation with a typical parent?
6. Some people say that having a colleague's child as a student would cause some potential tensions. What have been your experiences with this?
7. Suppose you found out that a new teacher was going to have a colleague's child in class next semester/year. Based on your previous experiences, what advice would you give that teacher?