Journey of "Becoming":
Secondary Teacher Candidates'
Concerns and Struggles

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As is widely recognized in the teacher education field, it is a complex process for teacher candidates to become effective classroom teachers. With growing linguistic and cultural diversity in today's classrooms (Garcia, 2000; Garcia & Cuellar, 2006), as well as different social expectations for education (Kennedy, 2006), the teacher preparation process is becoming increasingly demanding and challenging. Further, the characteristics of the preservice teaching force are changing as teacher candidates of the millennial generation (Howe & Strauss, 2007) enter teacher education programs. In particular, teacher educators who prepare secondary preservice teachers need to provide support in areas beyond content expertise and pedagogical knowledge. While many researchers report the reality shock teacher candidates experience during the process of "becoming" (Huberman, 1991; Lortie, 1975) and discuss the struggles and confusions that teacher candidates confront during their professional identity development (Brown, 2006; Day, 1999; Veenman, 1984; Vonk, 1993), continued research is needed for teacher educators to learn from teacher candidates' experiences and their journey of becoming. Such feedback will lead to the development of more effective teacher education programs that prepare highly qualified teachers for 21st century school-age populations.

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In addition to examining the impact of selected components of our teacher education program on teacher development (He & Cooper, 2009), we were particularly interested in learning more about teachers' concerns and struggles on their journey of becoming. Through autobiographies, interviews and focus groups, we followed the development of seven secondary teacher candidates over the last two years of their teacher education program. In this study, we intended to focus on: (1) the development of teachers' self-perception of their roles; (2) the major concerns of our teacher candidates; and (3) the reasons behind these concerns.

Two major research questions were addressed in this study:

(1) How do secondary teacher candidates perceive their roles as teachers before and after student teaching?

(2) What are secondary teacher candidates' main concerns and sources of such concerns before and after student teaching?

Our interpretation of the implications for teacher education programs is provided. Additionally, through the exploration of our candidates' journey of becoming teachers, we as teacher educators can potentially gain insight into our own professional journeys with the goal of improving not only our candidates' professional preparation but also our own professional practice.

Literature Review

As early as 1969, Frances Fuller identified a model of teacher development. Based on empirical research, she conceptualized teacher development as stage-related and concerns-based. Fuller found that teacher candidates are concerned with themselves as students. They are eager to know "where do I stand" (p. 220); in other words, they are concerned about the self (self-concerns). Through field experiences, they progress to questioning their adequacy or performance as teachers (task concerns) where areas such as classroom management and coping with evaluation are concerned. Later in their teacher development, they emerge from thoughts of the self to thoughts about their students and the impact they have on students (impact concerns). Over three decades later, Conway and Clark (2003) re-examined Fuller's model and suggested that not only is theirs a "journey outward" in teacher development as maintained by Fuller, but also there exists a "journey inward" when attending to the self as a teacher during the student teaching experience.

While there has been research about concerns-based teacher development (Adams, 1982; Boccia, 1989; Dunn & Rakes, 2010; Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1986; Hall & Hord, 2001; Marso & Pigge, 1989;

1995; Pigge & Marso, 1987; 1997; Rakes, & Casey, 2002), current and past research on teacher preparation has also included craft knowledge, practical knowledge, and personal practical knowledge (Beijarrd, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000). Calderhead (1996) recognized that teachers are subject matter experts, a learned expectation of many prospective secondary teachers. Beijaard (1995) defined teachers as pedagogical experts, those who understand key ideas and misconceptions of their content area. Teachers are also considered didactical experts, those who understand the moral and ethical features of teaching, for such professionals know what is going on in students' minds; they know with whom to communicate and speak, and what to speak about, including the private and personal problems that their students experience. Additionally, teachers are aware of the importance of reflection and particularly critical reflective teaching practice (Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010; Walkington, 2005). Even with the plethora of literature in these areas of teacher development, there is still little research on how teachers interpret and personalize theory and practice with the intent of creating a definitive, identifiable professional identity (Eraut, 1994; Kompf, Bond, Dworet, & Boak, 1996; Horn, Nolen, Ward, & Campbell, 2008; Ronfeldt & Grossman; 2008; Olsen, 2008; Sexton, 2008).

More recently, another aspect of developing professional identity has been recognized as positive teacher-student relationships (Aultman, Williams-Johnson, & Schultz, 2006; Carr, 2005; Cothran, & Ennis, 1997; Smith & Strahan, 2004). For developing teachers, codes of conduct tend to become boundary-driven in deciding what is proper and improper in pedagogical caring (Holmes, Rupert, Ross, & Shapera, 1999; Reamer, 2004). Such decisions made by novice teachers tend to cause them to "constrain, constrict, and limit" their behaviors as they relate to matters of authority and influence in the lives of their students (Austin, Bergum, Buttgens, & Peternelj-Taylor, 2006, p. 77). In doing so, novice teachers become engaged in an ongoing yet delicate balancing act of caring and authority. At the same time, they must deal with the connected emotions that result from their daily practices (Hargreaves, 2000).

Building upon concerns-based studies and taking into consideration teaching context and teaching experiences, in this study we seek to explore the development of secondary teacher candidates' understanding of themselves as teachers, their concerns about becoming teachers and the sources of those concerns through their autobiographies, interviews, and focus group discussions over the last two years in the teacher education program.

Methods

Participants were selected among volunteers enrolled in two required courses: CUI 450-Educational Psychology and CUI 545-Diverse Learners, both taken during their junior year in a teacher education program. Among 102 teacher candidates who granted consent to participate in the study, 13 were enrolled in both courses where they completed an autobiography and a biography project with a student they worked with during their internship. Seven teacher candidates were selected and provided complete data for this study (see Table 1).

Qualitative data were collected from the participants over the course of two years while they were in a secondary teacher education program. One aspect of the data collected related to our goal of preparing teacher candidates for working with diverse student populations. Toward this effort, a project based on Schmidt's ABC's Model (Schmidt, 1999) was conducted in CUI 450 and CUI 545. Teacher candidates were asked to compose their own autobiographies by reflecting upon their growing-up, beliefs and values, learning experiences, teaching experiences, and understanding of teaching. In CUI 545, teacher candidates were provided with opportunities to conduct internships in classrooms where they were required to work with one student whose cultural background is different from their own and write a biography of the student with whom they worked. Finally, teacher candidates compared their autobiography and the biography of the student in an effort to conduct a cross-cultural comparison for the purpose of making recommendations for effective cross-cultural communication. The ABC's project linked teacher candidates' reflections and their field experiences. Furthermore, the project provided them with an opportunity to examine their understanding of teaching in diverse settings.

In addition to participants' field experience reflections and their ABC's project reports, individual interviews and focus group discussions were also used as data sources. We conducted interviews with individual participants at the end of the first semester of their senior year. Participants were student teachers during the following semester, at the end of which two focus groups were formed to discuss their concerns and struggles. Finally, before they graduated from the program, participants were asked to reflect on their experiences and complete their final autobiographies. As a means of ensuring validity, member checking was completed by sending interview and focus group transcripts back to each participant for their individual feedback. All the qualitative data including participants' initial autobiographies, field experience reflections, individual interviews, focus group discussions, and final autobiographies were analyzed.

Table 1. Description of Participants

Participants	Description
Joseph	Joseph is a nontraditional student who decided to become a history teacher upon returning to college. Instilling a love of history in his students was important to him. This Phi Beta Kappa student completed his early field experience in a rural school known for its regional heritage. His student teaching experience was also conducted in a rural setting in a neighboring school district.
Erika	Erika is a nontraditional student who had previous experience teaching in an Asian country. She desired to teach English language learners. Her initial field experience occurred in the city's flagship high school, one that was steeped in history and was known for its culture of achievement. Her student teaching experience occurred in a suburban school in the same school district. Since her teaching experience in Asia was quite successful, Erika was excited about teaching English and believed in her ability to be an effective teacher.
Bill	Quiet by nature, Bill is a serious student who wanted to share his love of English with others. Bill spent a semester in a rural school known as a "redneck" haven before he began his final year-long field experience in a suburban school well-known for its success in football. He began this student teaching experience with the knowledge that, if successful, he could qualify to be a substitute teacher for the rest of the academic year in the same classroom after he completed his student teaching/initial teacher licensure requirements.
Ellen	Hoping to teach, but questioning her ability to be an effective teacher, Ellen admitted her apprehensions about teaching. She began her early field experience in the same school as Erika; however, she accepted the challenge of student teaching in the classroom of a softball coach. She knew early on that she would perhaps assume full in-class teaching responsibilities before her classmates. She and Bill were fellow English student teachers in the same school.
Martha	Martha was committed to teaching social studies, in part, based on a scholarship she received that was designed to recruit and retain teachers. She volunteered to complete her early field experience in a school cited as low performing by the state. Her response to the urban teaching preparation she received through her scholarship program led her to request a student teacher placement in another low performing high school.
Karen	Karen was a member of the same scholarship program as Martha. Having relatives of Italian descent who lived in New York City, Karen requested to be placed in a multicultural school setting. Already having accumulated volunteer hours in numerous schools, Karen spent both her internship and student teaching experience teaching history in low performing high schools.
Charles	Born in a New York City borough, Charles enjoyed studying English. Since he was already used to being around other ethnic groups, spending time in ethnically diverse high schools was something to which he looked forward. His first internship experience occurred in a rural high school, a setting in which he was not accustomed. However, he requested to be placed for student teaching in the most ethnically diverse high school in the system.

The data analysis process was undertaken in two phases: vertical and horizontal (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For the vertical investigation, each participant's autobiographical narrative and interview responses were examined separately to form seven cases. Then, during the second phase, constant comparative analysis was employed to seek patterns and themes across the seven cases (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). NVivo was used to manage the qualitative data in the process. Two researchers coded the data independently and memos were kept to track emerging themes and patterns. Discrepancies in coding and memos were resolved through discussions among the researchers.

In order to answer the research questions for this study, the findings were organized to explore participants' self-perception of their roles as teachers, and address participants' major concerns and challenges they reported during the last two years of their teacher education program. The sources of participants' concerns were also examined.

Results

Development of Perceptions on Teacher Roles

All participants in this study shared their perceptions of their roles as classroom teachers through their autobiographies, individual interviews, and focus group discussions. In this section, we discuss the themes and patterns we noted in teacher roles participants discussed and track the development of participants' understanding by comparing their perceptions during, before, and after their student teaching.

Based on participants' autobiographies completed in their junior year and interviews conducted in the first semester of their senior year, it was noted that the seven participants expressed their understandings of their roles as teachers from different perspectives along two continuums ranging from: (1) being the authority in the classroom to being the facilitator in the classroom, and (2) ensuring content delivery to building relationships with students. Participants admitted the contradiction they saw in their efforts to teach as an authority versus being a facilitator, or to focus on content instruction versus developing relationships with students. They also reflected on the process in identifying their own positions relating to the dilemma along these continuums.

Six out of seven participants in this study mentioned their perceptions of their roles along the continuum of being the authority to being the facilitator in the classroom. All of the six participants explicitly commented on their roles as facilitators in the classroom. For example, Bill[1] stated that,

> As a teacher I believe I'm put in the classroom in order to guide the students in their learning. I don't think, maybe I should address it from what I don't think I'm here to do. I don't think I'm in the classroom in order to force anything down the students' throats. (Bill, personal communication, December 1, 2006)

While two of them mentioned their roles as facilitators who engage students in their learning in the classroom, four participants pointed out the balance between being the facilitator and the authority in the classroom. For example, Ellen discussed multiple roles she plays as a teacher:

> I think that a teacher has different roles to play. I think that you have to be the authority in the room and you have to be professional but you have to be real and you have to show your students you're real because your students are only going to be real when you show them that you're real. (Ellen, personal communication, November 21, 2006)

In an example of her interaction with one of her students, Ellen commented on the importance of allowing students to feel comfortable in discussing their concerns and issues with the teacher, while simultaneously remaining the authority in the class.

Among the seven participants, six of them also commented on their responsibilities as teachers along the continuum from delivering content knowledge to facilitating student moral development. One participant, Joseph, especially mentioned his passion for the content and the importance of him sharing his knowledge with the students:

> I love history. It is not the dates or quick summaries of the events which even remotely touch on the true essence of history. It is the people and their actions which form a connection to our modern lives that is at times hard to see. The one thing that I can say, which holds true for all of man's history, is that it does repeat itself. To not teach the youth to look out for these crossroad moments is doing them a great disservice. (Joseph, personal communication, March 15, 2006)

On the other hand, Erika, as a prospective ESL teacher, mentioned the importance of her role in facilitating students' transition to American schools. She wanted to

> be the one that scaffolds them throughout their journey through school. I have to be there from day one, from the beginning of the semester to the end, to the last day that I see them and it's their job to do the work but it's my job to make sure they comprehend it, make sure they understand, make sure they feel comfortable in the classroom, make sure they don't think that going to an American school is the worst thing they could have ever done for themselves. Make sure they come and have a satisfying journey. (Erika, personal communication, November 20, 2006)

The other four participants spoke about both the importance of content and student moral development and considered both essential as teachers' responsibilities. Charles, for instance, elaborated in his interview:

> . . . my role I would say is to not only give them a chance to understand whatever level of English that I'm going through, whether it's British Lit [Literature] or American Lit [Literature], whatever it is, but I also just want to get them ready for the real world and just get them ready for dealing with different people. . . . . I want them to get ready for different diversities myself . . . I want them to respect each other and I want them to respect different people. (Charles, personal communication, December 1, 2006)

Comparing participants' autobiographies, interviews and focus group data from before and after student teaching (Tables 2 & 3), we observed that two participants' perceptions remained the same (Joseph and Martha). It is interesting to recognize that both of the participants focused on content delivery as their responsibility as teachers and emphasized being both the authority and facilitator in the classroom.

Two other participants expressed their considerations for making connections with students (Karen and Charles). In the focus group discussion, both Karen and Charles shared their desire to make classroom instruction more student-centered and content more applicable for students. Charles explained:

> Once I get into their shoes then I can finally be a bridge to their real world which that's the best thing my OSTE [on-site teacher-educator or cooperating teacher] has told me with especially British Lit[erature]; it's that granted some of it is difficult, some of it is probably going to be over their head but tied to real life. I mean we started with *Frankenstein* and I tried to bring across many different themes, one of them having to do with the dangers of too much knowledge, another one having to do with perceptions and judging people, you know getting to know them. So I just keep trying to tie it to their lives and to their futures as much as possible and to me that's the best thing I can do regardless of what grade level I'm teaching is just prepare them for the real world and just make it as relevant as possible. (Charles, personal communication, April 20, 2007)

The other three participants experienced a shift from initially knowing what they wanted to be as a teacher to self-doubt and confusion about their roles. Ellen, for example, said: "I don't like who I am right now. I do not like the teacher that I am right now." (Ellen, personal communication, April 20, 2007). Ellen described her experience in student teaching as "horrible" and she questioned her approach in maintaining the balance between being the authority and facilitator in the class:

I lost face with one of my kids, you know, and one of the other student teachers had this previous kid in the internship and they can vouch for this kid. He's been lost to teachers and he and I had a conversation when I kicked him out of class one day and I said I'm not going to send you to the office. He goes, 'well, you sent me to the office three times'. And I said, 'well, that was my mistake. I should have talked to you first' and he said 'it doesn't do any good to talk to me now because I don't want anything to do with you'. I did not like hearing the comment because

Table 2. Teacher Roles

Teacher Roles	Definition	Examples
Authority	To be authoritarian/ authoritative in the classroom; To be able to handle behavioral/ discipline issues	I think that you have to be the authority in the room and you have to be professional (Ellen) [There are] discipline problems and they [students] need discipline. (Martha)
Facilitator	To be facilitating in the process of student learning; To guide students' development by being a role model	It's to be their scaffolder if that's a word. Be the one that scaffolds them throughout their journey through school. (Erika) You can't walk into a classroom and dominate and you can't be a dictator in the classroom …So I feel like you have to role model … then you're on the level and they know that you respect them and they'll respect you. (Karen) I believe I'm put in the classroom in order to guide the students in their learning. (Bill)
Content Expertise	To be knowledgeable in the content areas; To be able share content knowledge with the students	I love history. It is not the dates or quick summaries of the events which even remotely touch on the true essence of history. It is the people and their actions, which form a connection to our modern lives that is at times hard to see. The one thing that I can say, which holds true for all of man's history is that it does repeat itself. To not teach the youth to look out for these crossroad moments is doing them a great disservice. (Joseph)
Moral Obligation	To facilitate students' development beyond content area	… I also just want to get them ready for the real world and just get them ready for dealing with different people. … I want them to respect each other and I want them to respect different people. … That I think is a very big part of what I want to be as a teacher. (Charles)

> that's me. That's not him. That's partially him because he's been wronged before but that's me and I don't like that - that I am the teacher that I never wanted to be and it hurts to say that now and I love my kids. (Ellen, personal communication, April 20, 2007)

Bill, on the other hand, struggled with the way he presented himself and finally figured out what worked for him:

> I tried originally what my OSTE did and what works for her as being nurturing and I found out very quickly that I'm not a terribly nurturing individual. That didn't work so well for me and so I went and observed some of the other teachers, especially some of the male teachers to see what they did differently because it's harder to be nurturing I think as a male teacher. And so, second, I tried being what I was told to do by some of the other male teachers and it worked for a short time and then it didn't work as good anymore and so I was like well . . . and I really didn't enjoy it much either. It worked slightly better than the nurturing thing for me but not as good as I'd like. So I've moved on now to humor and humor especially sarcasm works extremely well. (Bill, personal communication, April 20, 2007)

Erika was the only participant who reported having a negative student teaching experience. In reflecting on her role as a teacher after

Table 3. Teacher Roles Development

Name	2006-Before student teaching	2007-After student teaching
Joseph	Content expert Authority and Facilitator	Content expert Authority and Facilitator
Erika	Facilitator for cultural transition	Confused
Bill	Facilitator for content delivery and prepare life-long learners	Nurturing-"Male" role model – bring humor and sarcasm to connect with students
Ellen	Balance being the authority and facilitator	Balance between being the authority and facilitator
Martha	Authority to ensure discipline in class Facilitator for content delivery	Authority to ensure discipline in class Facilitator for content delivery
Karen	Authority and Facilitator Student Moral Development	Connecting with students and make instruction student-centered
Charles	Help students understand the diversities in the world through content instruction	Bridge content and students' life

student teaching, she emphasized the importance of building a strong relationship with students which she felt she did during student teaching. She was left confused as to what she could do in the classroom: "When I started teaching and up until now, it's been very difficult for me …. I'm not great at it like I thought" (Erika, personal correspondence, April 20, 2007). It is important to note here that Erika previously had experience teaching in a school outside the United States. Her ideal image of teaching, especially where building relationships with students was concerned, was initially crafted from her prior teaching experience. What she actually experienced in student teaching shattered her previous beliefs about her role as a teacher.

Overall, through participants' shift in their perceptions over time, we observed many internal negotiations as they gained more teaching experience, especially along the continuum in terms of their roles as authority versus facilitator, and their main responsibilities as content delivery experts versus relationship builders with students.

Teacher Concerns Revealed

Through their autobiographies, interviews, and focus group discussions, the participants also addressed concerns and challenges they faced before and after student teaching. An examination of the aforementioned data suggested that before student teaching, participants tended to focus on various components of classroom teaching including content delivery, classroom management, student diversity, and effectiveness of instruction (see Table 4).

Both Joseph and Charles considered content delivery challenging before student teaching. Being from a New York City borough, Charles worried about the difference in the curriculum: "Because one thing in particular we never did on _____ (name of the borough) was British Lit [Literature] and that's actually what I'm going to be student teaching. So getting used to that is going to be one thing" (Charles, personal communication, December 1, 2006). In preparing himself to be a good history teacher, Joseph commented on his preparation in terms of the history subject area:

> I have tried to get a broad spectrum of courses concerning history ... I have touched on the basics such as U.S. and European history while narrowing in on topics like Civil Rights and Black Freedom, N.C. history, Ancient Greece and cultures of North American Indians. Since I felt fairly comfortable with that branch of history, I aimed my studies at the greater world (looking to challenge myself). My wider world courses include Silk Road topics, Asian history, medieval studies, and Islam in northern Africa. I have also tried to become a well-rounded

future teacher by minoring in sociology and geography. I thought that sociology would give me a better understanding of why people do what they do and that geography would give me a better idea of where they are doing it. (Joseph, personal communication, March 15, 2006)

Classroom management was an area that four out of seven of the participants cited as an area of concern. Comments on their concerns included working with students with behavior issues (Erika), and making sure that students have respect for them so that they could ensure the effectiveness of instruction (Bill, Ellen, Karen, and Charles). Additionally, all participants reflected on their experiences working with students from

Table 4. Teacher Concerns and Sources of Concerns

Name	2006	2007	Sources
Joseph	Content delivery	Classroom management and content delivery Focus on content rather than the students	Personal interest in the content area vs. responsibility as a teacher
Erika	Classroom management	Personal self and professional requirement	Personal passion to ESL teaching vs. reality of teaching
Bill	Classroom management Effectiveness of instruction	Professional image and personality	Personality vs. professional image
Ellen	Classroom management Effectiveness of instruction	Relationship with students	Lack of self-confidence
Martha	Student diversity	Building relationship with students and their families	Ideal of teaching vs. reality of teaching
Karen	Classroom management Effectiveness of instruction	Lesson delivery, student centered	Personal teaching experiences vs. learning experiences
Charles	Content delivery Classroom management	Connecting content with student reality	Ideal of teaching vs. reality of teaching

diverse backgrounds and working with families. Most of them (six out of seven) mentioned that they did not have much opportunity to work with families or in the community during their internship.

After student teaching, participants commented on their views of themselves as teachers. The conflict between the ideal image of teaching and the reality of teaching appeared to be the main source of participants' discomfort (see Table 4). Reviewing participants' autobiographies and focus group transcripts, it seemed that in addition to their concerns with classroom management, content delivery, effectiveness of instruction and the diversity among students, there was a recurring theme that all seven participants were struggling to figure out the most comfortable way for them to present themselves as a professional teacher with individual characteristics.

Joseph, for example, considered it essential to be the content expert and was concerned about content delivery before student teaching. After student teaching, he reflected on his experiences, and commented that he felt apprehensive about classroom management and struggled to figure out the best way to present himself as a teacher being both "professional and real." To most effectively deliver the content, Joseph choose to present himself as "knowledgeable and goofy"; however, sometimes,

> I get into the stories and I have to admit sometimes I get so lost in the stories and telling the stories that I kind of forget the kids are there. You know I turn around and it's like two minutes before the bell rings. (Joseph, personal communication, April 20, 2007)

In reflecting on his struggles in figuring out the "mask" that fits him as a teacher, Bill said: "part of it [student teaching] has been about learning what I want to bring to the table there and which personality works best for me because a lot of teaching is about which act you should run on a particular day." After trying to be a "nurturing" teacher and following models set up by other male teachers, Bill finally chose to bring his own personality into his teaching and do so through use of humor and sarcasm. However, he said he was still exploring and he needed to "wear different masks" when working with different groups of students. He recalled:

> I haven't finalized exactly what I want to do and I've also learned that I have to be a different person depending on the students, depending on which classroom I'm in. But whether I'm in my honors class or whether I'm in my yearbook class, which is a completely different ballgame or whether I'm teaching my CP [college preparatory] kids, but I've learned to turn it on and turn it off. (Bill, personal communication, April 20, 2007)

Commenting on her struggles with becoming the teacher she wanted to

be, Ellen summarized for the other focus group members by saying: "the truth is, however, that teachers can only bring so much idealism inside the door with them" (Ellen, personal communication, April 20, 2007).

Discussion and Implications

Based on their perceptions of the teacher's role and the concerns and challenges participants reported in this study, we summarized the following themes that were observed and expressed by our students.

First, we found that secondary teacher candidates in this study considered their roles as teachers as being both the authority and facilitator in the classroom, and focused on both content delivery and student moral development. In regards to being an authority in the classroom, secondary teacher candidates were concerned about both being authoritative and authoritarian. It is challenging for secondary teacher candidates because of the requirement of content expertise at the secondary level and the relatively small age difference between themselves and the students with whom they engage. In addition, while the teacher candidates would like to establish their authority to ease their concerns regarding classroom management, the constructivist teaching models promoted in our teacher education program also call for them to take on a greater facilitator's role rather than an authoritarian one as practiced in a traditional lecture format. It is a challenge, therefore, for teacher educators to facilitate teacher candidates' growth in seeking the balance between the authority and facilitator role so they feel comfortable in their position to not only impart content area knowledge, but also to make learning an interactive process with their students (Austin et al., 2006; Holmes et al., 1999; Reamer, 2004). This struggle is quite significant, especially for teacher candidates as they are positioning themselves in becoming skilled in the delivery of content and pedagogic interactions that go beyond content knowledge (Klein, 2004). While there is a contradictory nature about our participants' need to be perceived as an authority and facilitator at the same time, perhaps teacher educators can more explicitly demonstrate to them how secondary teacher candidates can use their ability to connect with their students to more strategically position themselves as facilitative authority figures in the classroom.

Second, while our participants' concerns and struggles with classroom management and relationships with students were not unusual for teacher candidates (Veenman, 1984), it was interesting for us to acknowledge that teachers in this study also mentioned their concerns with the effectiveness of their instruction and diverse needs of their students in their discussion of classroom management. We suspect that the increas-

ing cultural and learning diversity in the schools in which participants completed 50 contact hours for their internship and a 16-week student teaching experience and the increasing demand for accountability at the school level might have contributed to their awareness of such issues. As teacher educators, it is important for us to bring those issues to the discussion prior to their internships and student teaching so that our teacher candidates have a solid understanding of the school culture and its dynamics and feel prepared and empowered when they become first-year teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Fraser-Abder, 2010; McKinney et al., 2005; Sutherland et al., 2010; Weinstein, Curran, & Tomlinson-Clarke, 2003; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004).

Third, it is important for teacher educators to recognize teacher candidates' struggles between the ideal and the reality of teaching, and their concerns with the ways they present themselves in front of the students. The potential discrepancy between teacher candidates' personal K-12 learning experiences and the current expectation of teaching 21st century students, coupled with the conflict between who they are as a beginning teacher and who they want to become, presents a challenge for teacher educators. Awareness of this conflict indicates that we must provide more support early in the teacher preparation program to facilitate teacher candidates' exploration of their own teaching styles and identities as professional educators through regular reflection and scaffolded field experiences (Sutherland et al., 2010; Walkington, 2005). Especially for secondary teacher candidates, extending the length of field experiences, uncovering prior beliefs about teaching, developing mission statements and/or setting goals are some ways in which teacher educators can help these candidates as they prepare to become professional educators.

Consistent with previous research findings (Calderhead, 1996; Beijaard, 1995; Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000), we also noted that teacher candidates' major concerns included their struggles with their self-image as teachers and attending to their own professional development in becoming teachers (Kennedy, 2006). Although the study of teachers' identity development and concerns in professional growth is not new, the findings of this study highlighted the evolution of teacher candidates' "becoming" (see Table 4) and the dichotomy of struggle that they face between assuming an authoritarian role vs. a facilitator role, their personal passion for content vs. the reality of students' interest in content, and their prior learning experiences vs. the learning needs of 21st century students. Systematic efforts in exploring and facilitating teacher candidates' personal needs for supporting their professional identity development are needed beyond individual coursework. Further, recognizing the new reality of teaching in the 21st century, teacher edu-

cation programs need to move beyond introducing teacher candidates
to diversity, accountability, and other complex issues in schools, to more
thorough discussions and analyses of the positions professional teachers
hold in addressing these issues (Fairbanks, Duffy, Faircloth, He, Levin,
Rohr, & Stein, 2009).

Finally, the fact that one of our participants did not pass student
teaching also cautioned us as teacher educators that teacher candidates'
passion for the content, for teaching, and for working with students,
is necessary but definitely not sufficient to ensure success in teacher
preparation. While teacher candidates need to be encouraged to step out
of their comfort zones and face various conflicts between their image of
teaching and the teaching reality, it is critical for teacher educators to
provide systematic support and facilitation along their journey of becoming.
Throughout the teacher education program, deliberate scaffolding needs
to be provided to uncover teacher candidates' visions and beliefs of being
a teacher, to share expectations of teaching and learning in local schools,
and to facilitate teacher candidates' adjustment to the alignment between
their ideal of teaching and the reality of being a teacher. Teacher educators'
support throughout this process is vital to engage teacher candidates in
metacognitive thinking during their journey of becoming.

Conclusion

Although the types of struggles and concerns we found in this study of
preservice secondary teachers' understanding of their roles and concerns
were consistent with previous research findings, closer examination of
teachers' professional identity development in their journey of becoming
allowed us to identify the contradictions between roles they think they
should take and ways they want to be as teachers. They want to deliver
content and be a facilitator of learning, but these are more conflicting
than complementary roles. They want to be good classroom managers
but also have strong relationships with students, which they see can be
challenging at times. Moreover, the teaching context has changed and
may not match what preservice teachers think it will be like based on
their own schooling experiences. While their prior beliefs about school,
passion for the content area, and personal role models can serve as an
internal motivation factor for them to join the teaching force, they also
serve as sources for construction of their ideal image of teaching, which
may not necessarily fit in today's teaching context.

In order to better prepare our teacher candidates so they will re-
main in the classroom, but also be flexible in adapting to changes in the
teaching field, teacher educators need to re-evaluate our own visions

for teacher education and contextualize our curriculum, including the knowledge of content, pedagogical experience and knowledge of learners, to reflect the reality of today's schools. Further research and studies in understanding teacher candidates' transformation from candidates to teachers and exploring effective ways to integrate knowledge into the teaching context would facilitate teacher educators in better serving our preservice teacher candidates and thus aid them in their journey of becoming more prepared for the real world of teaching today.

Note

[1] Throughout this study, pseudonyms are used to maintain the confidentiality of all participants.

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