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Reading and Composing the Classroom As Text: Illuminating Two Second-Year English Teachers' Meaning Making from Classroom Events through Narrative Inquiry

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Research Presentation Proposal
Christi Edge, Ph.D.

Title: Reading and Composing the Classroom As Text: Illuminating Two Second-Year English Teachers' Meaning Making from Classroom Events through Narrative Inquiry

Objectives

This presentation draws from a recent dissertation to illuminate: 1) how one teacher's meaning-making guided her decisions while teaching poetry and 2) how another teacher's meaning-making guided her planning, teaching, and reflection on her lesson, her students' learning, and her perception of herself as a teacher.

Content

Situated in a transactional paradigm, connections between the constructs of meaning and experience in both teacher education and reading in English education inform a theoretical framework called *Classroom Literacy*. This framework extends Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory of Reading (1978/1994, 2005), broadens the concept of *text* to include the verbal and non-verbal communicative signs related to the context of the classroom, and positions teachers as "readers" of their classrooms as texts. The Classroom Literacy theoretical framework guided my thinking as I re-conceptualized three persistent problems in learning to teach (Hammerness, Darling-Hammond, Bransford, Berliner, Cochran-Smith, McDonald, & Zeichner, 2005)—an apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), complexity (Jackson, 1968, 1990), and enactment (Kennedy, 1999; Simon, 1980)—in order to understand 1) how two beginning English teachers made meaning from classroom events and 2) how I, the researcher, made meaning from research events.

Findings focus on the connections between the participants' and the researcher's meaning-making and demonstrate that meaning-making was a continuous construction of a conceptual text, simultaneously read and composed in situational context, guided by an individual's reservoir of knowledge, experiences, and language, and used for both framing a point of reference from which additional understanding was sought and a point of departure through which exploration and discovery was initiated.

After providing an overview of the recent (July 2011) dissertation study, the presentation will demonstrate one of the study's findings through a description of 1) how one teacher's meaning-making while teaching poetry guided her decisions to change the direction, purpose, and focus of a lesson; and 2) how another teacher's meaning-making guided her planning, teaching, and reflection on her lesson, her

students' learning, and her perception of herself as a teacher. The presentation will conclude with implications for considering teachers' *Classroom Literacy* (Edge 2011) practices.

References

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