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That's Not In My Position Description: A Discourse Analysis of SBAE Migratory Context

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Abstract

While the choice to move to a new school is personal, many play a role in justifying that choice for the mobile teacher. These justifiers—or influencers—make up the socializing network for teachers (in this case, SBAE teachers) in new settings. Our study outlined how mobile SBAE teachers rationalize the choice to change schools and validate career moves. We used a positioning theory approach to discourse to give migrators (teachers who change schools) and influencers a voice. Positioning theory allowed us to situate migrators as they reflected on their choice to change school districts, and influencers as they recounted their interactions with new-to-district SBAE teachers. The purpose of our study was to identify the positionality of migrating SBAE teachers in their school-based context. We did this by examining positionalities of SBAE teachers and influencers in their interactions. Four themes described how SBAE migrators identified their positionality: This is Where I'm Meant to Be, Additional Duties as Assigned, I'm the Real Deal, and Everyone is Special. Four themes further described how SBAE influencers identified their positionality: We're All Doing the Best We Can, You Gotta Want It, Double Standards, and All or Nothing. We found SBAE teachers aligned with their positioning in the Agricultural Education literature and found additional implications for mobile teachers. The teachers in this study also navigated the expectations set by their predecessor and voiced by their community. Our recommendations focus on SBAE teachers and their job search, workload, responsible autonomy, and replaceability, and influencers' interactions to support these endeavors.

Keywords: teacher mobility, mobile teacher, career moves, autonomy, replaceability, support, success, challenge, teacher turnover

Introduction

In 2018, a teacher introduced herself to me saying, "I'm a first-year teacher with twenty years of experience." What she meant, was, "Hi, I've recently changed schools, and it's like starting my career all over again." This led to several questions, including, "Why, if changing schools is so hard, would a teacher opt to remain in the teaching profession over moving into industry for a higher paying career?" The concept of mobile teachers is something that, until recently, the literature did not attempt to explain. In 2019, we worked with mobile teachers to identify how they defined success through *mobility* (Haddad et al., 2019). *Mobility* is variously defined and operationalized but is generally the process of moving from one school district to another. We found teachers operationalized a successful move as one that provides additional support and reinvigorates their career through a professional challenge (Haddad et al., 2019). This led to several additional questions, but the one guiding this study sought to explore how mobile teachers found support and challenge within their new environments.

Our research explores how the education profession examines the uniqueness of mobile teachers and their needs. This work shifts the paradigm of the professional conversation from current discourses of mobile teachers being leavers, less effective, and lacking commitment to teaching (Atterbury et al., 2017; Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2012; Ross, et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). Instead, we step back from simply viewing mobile teachers as problematic and move toward a broader contextualization recognizing the impact of the system in which teachers reside. We assume there
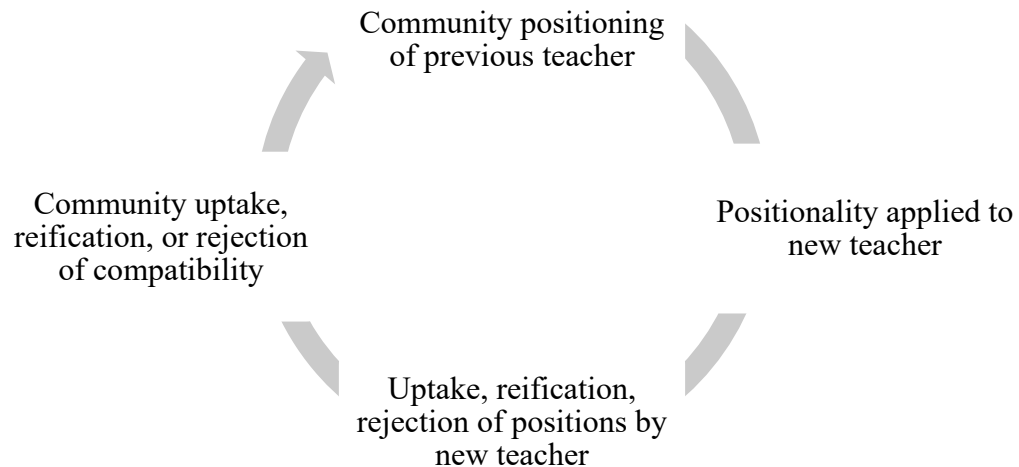
is a system, people operate in it, and people seek learning and growth as distinctly hopeful human phenomena. Based on our previous work, we believed a search for relational connection was critical as teachers navigated a teaching career. Therefore, to better relay the relational nature of teacher mobility, we engaged *positioning theory* to identify how people locate themselves in their interactions (Davies, 2000; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999).

We further illuminated positioning theory by using discourse analysis as a methodology. Discourse analysis allowed us to utilize both the broader discussions in educational research in conjunction with the local discourses in which the participants subscribed and participated. Approaching teacher mobility with the lens of positioning theory, and employing discourse analysis, helped us to account for power in ways other methods could not (Davies, 2000; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Positioning theory, specifically, enabled us to explore nuance in attempt and intention and to understand positionality as a navigational process rather than a fixed assignment (Davies, 2000). In this way, the methodology of discourse analysis is heavily intertwined with theory as both a means of understanding mobility and as a process of engaging in the local discourse itself (Patel-Stevens, 2004).

In the case of mobile teachers, we positioned individuals in school systems, but also in broader discourses of education, teachers, School Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) teachers, and individuals' own subjectification inside their communities. We offer teacher mobility as a positioning phenomenon based on its circular nature. Figure 1 illustrates this point.

Figure 1.

Conceptualizing   the   discursive   position   of   mobile   SBAE   teachers

Community positioning
of previous teacher

Positionality applied to
new teacher

Uptake, reification,
rejection of positions by
new teacher

Community uptake,
reification, or rejection
of compatibility

Thinking of teacher mobility as a choice, through the lens of positioning, allowed us to view mobility as relational. The goal of our study was to illuminate mobility as much more than a school level detriment, and potentially even, a professional asset.

Study Purpose & Assumptions

The purpose of our study was to identify the positionalities of mobile SBAE teachers and SBAE influencers. We focused our attention on this question: How do mobile SBAE teachers and SBAE influencers position themselves and others in their co-constructed discursive context?

We defined *mobile SBAE teachers* as teachers who have changed schools at least once in their career (Atterbury et al., 2017; Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2012; Ross et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). *SBAE Influencers* were those who supported and/or challenged the teachers with whom they worked. This had not been previously defined in the literature. However, based on those mentioned in our previous study (Haddad et al., 2019), we operationalized influencers to include administrators, alumni, and co-teachers. We did not include students as influencers, recognizing students are not in positions to make decisions related to the expectations imposed on mobile teachers.

Our study aligns with AAAE Research Priority 3, Question 2: "What methods, models, and practices are effective in recruiting agricultural leadership, education, and communication practitioners and supporting their success at all stages of their careers?" (Roberts et al., 2016). Despite mounting anecdotal evidence in SBAE, this work addresses a little explored field, that the advice offered, support conveyed, and action of the workforce trends toward mobility.

Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to identify the positionalities, and subsequent discursive positions, of mobile SBAE teachers and community influencers. To date, the discourses in the broader body of literature identify mobile teachers as a relatively unexplored subset of turnover and attrition (Atterbury et al., 2017; Borrero et al., 2012; Davies, 1989; Harris & Sass, 2007; Hazari et al., 2015; Turner et al., 2013). School level attrition, while impactful, does not address teaching as a profession. *Professions* are careers that involve prolonged training and formal qualification (Oxford English Dictionary, 2022). Most often, teaching is considered among the professions, including law and medicine, but it bears marked structural and systemic differences from its professional counterparts. One particularly salient difference, termed *stagedness,* bears critical implications for the teaching career.

Teaching is different from law or medicine in that recent inductees to the profession perform the same tasks, at the same load, as veterans. Law and medicine, on the other hand, are *staged.* There are progressions of supervision and expertise built into the process of becoming a doctor or lawyer (e.g., resident, intern, paralegal, clerk). This lack of *stagedness* in teaching converges heavily on the mobile teacher, as their newness to a district means not only navigating the nuance of their discipline, but also the specific practice of their profession in a new space. Therefore, we used our literature review to outline the broader discourses related to career stagedness, socialization, and mobility.

Those studying teacher mobility internationally have recognized the necessity of considering teacher mobility as a system made of up *actors* (e.g., teachers, departments of education, schools, and school administrators) and *contexts* (e.g., school districts, unions, educational policy, and broader politics) (Ochs, 2012). Considering teacher mobility as a system better enabled the evaluation of best practices in recruiting and retaining mobile teachers, particularly as it shed light on the various influencers at play (Ochs, 2012). This consideration furthered the legitimacy of taking a profession wide (SBAE) view of mobility and migratory contexts.

Notably, the majority of current education literature focuses on the teacher in the school (Atterbury et al., 2017; Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2012; Ross et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). However, outside of the realm of education, mobility is often classified as a socialization process of engagement work (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). To contextualize our research, we grounded our literature review in the canonical teacher socialization literature. While dated, unpacking ideas of socialization found in

School Teacher: A Sociological Study (Lortie, 1975) better informed our conceptualization and analysis of the discourses surrounding mobility based on the socialized structure of teaching.

Teaching as an Unstaged Profession

Socialization into teaching starts when teachers are students. In other words, teachers know what school is well before they find themselves facilitating a class (Lortie, 1975). Teachers are socially constructed as individualistic, conservative, and present-focused (Lortie, 1975), and this construction positions teachers. It requires they balance personal autonomy with professional alignment (Lortie, 1975). In our earlier work with mobile teachers, we found personal autonomy positioned the individualistic choice (changing schools) as productive (Haddad et al., 2019), however, professional alignment (serving a district) made mobility a less desirable alternative (Atterbury, et al., 2017; Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2012; Ross et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). Professional alignment means bringing one's practice in line with the norms of the discipline. In this case, professional alignment pushes against the autonomy of mobility as a productive career choice.

Peterson (1978) extended Lortie's (1975) work, noting definition, bias, and method as challenges to describing the teaching career. In recognizing these challenges, Peterson (1978) also claimed teaching lacked a critical component of a true career, namely having a progression of sequenced steps of upward mobility. Upward mobility includes career advancement in position, pay, or responsibility (Peterson, 1978). Rather, teaching is *unstaged*, meaning classroom teaching does not have specific progressions of expertise within the profession. Most upward mobility in teaching involves leaving the classroom (Peterson, 1978). If a teacher is to improve their position, they must engage in horizontal mobility--in other words, moving between schools--while remaining a classroom teacher (Peterson, 1978). Peterson (1978) recognized the various improvements gained through horizontal mobility as significant victories and advocated horizontal mobility as a healthy part of teacher career patterns (Peterson, 1978). Even today, embracing horizontal mobility requires a more systemic view of teaching and education compared to an organizational one. Organizational approaches imply career incentives which are unavailable to the classroom teacher; as such, an organizational approach is at odds with the actual state of the teaching profession (Peterson, 1978). Instead, accountings of teacher career patterns should include job morale, affective changes associated with aging, perceived changes in school environment, shifting commitment to teaching, personal revitalization, and attitudes about teaching at retirement (Peterson, 1978). We specifically attended to job morale, perceived changes in school environment, and personal revitalization as components of this study.

Through her work, Peterson (1978) found teachers were personally revitalized following a move to a new school, a change in the subject taught, reassignment of duty, opportunity to take additional coursework, and the challenge of meeting the needs of new students. Our recent work with mobile SBAE teachers corroborated this finding (Haddad et al., 2019). While individuals identified success based on teaching circumstance (Peterson, 1978), the broader profession does not embrace mobility as the mark of a successful career.

Mobility as a Process of Socialization

Over the last few decades, teachers' career patterns received continuous attention. Work related to teacher mobility focused on teacher satisfaction (Chapman & Lowther, 1982), differences between male and female teachers (Murnane et al., 1989; Whitcombe, 1979; Whitmarsh et al., 2011), and intention over the course of a teaching career (Burden, 1982; Draper et al., 1998; Peterson, 1978). Particularly relevant here were studies highlighting the choices and intentions of teachers. Burden (1982) and Draper et al. (1998) noted two types of teachers who remained in classroom teaching: those who enjoyed their jobs in the classroom and those who felt unempowered

in other career outcomes. This further established routes of promotion as taking teachers out of the classroom (Draper et al., 1998).

As previously stated, the education literature positions teachers as individualistic, conservative, and present-focused (Lortie, 1975). We can couple this positionality with considerations of teacher career patterns. For example, if a teacher is individualistic, they may move for the things that most benefit them. If they are conservative, they likely mitigate risk by remaining in a familiar profession (teaching) over changing geographical location and career. If present-focused, considerations may center on what will be the most immediately beneficial next step. But the literature here is silent. The literature we subsequently review outlines the discourse under which acceptable career movement can occur. Socialization implies that autonomy in career decisions is not entirely individualistic. *Socialization* is a process of navigating new norms and expectations, necessarily established in relation to others engaged in the process (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Socialization & Mobility in SBAE

We theorized that challenges and positions are often easier to identify for mobile SBAE teachers. Newness to a situation supports this theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), but so does the published expectation (or professional discourse) for the SBAE teacher. Their extensive engagement with a broad array of community interactions (e.g., FFA, SAE, classroom, etc.) (Phipps et al., 2008) requires SBAE teachers exercise an ability to identify their available positions, even if they do not articulate them as a component of their situational assessment (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). The SBAE literature further supported this approach as researchers described SBAE teachers as filling multiple roles and being asked to navigate the unique identities of agriculturalist and teacher (Robinson et al., 2013; Shoulders & Myers, 2011). They are overworked (Traini et al., 2019), but also diligent, daring, and devoted educators (Roberts & Montgomery, 2017).

The literature positioning SBAE teachers in their discipline is markedly different. In short, there was little room for the SBAE teacher to be mediocre, let alone poor (Traini et al., 2019). SBAE teachers were positioned as able to take on more, and as members of a club more connected with their community (Traini et al., 2019). Lortie's (1975) positioning of teachers as individualistic, conservative, and present-focused aligned with discourses in SBAE. In other words, the SBAE literature outlines teachers as individualistic, navigating roles specific to themselves and their communities. They are conservative, in fulfilling the expected norms of their discipline and community, and they are present-focused, doing what needs to be done at the time. While complimentary, little has been done to understand how these discourses converge across a broader profession or on an individual teacher. Specific to our study, as we explored how positioning influenced mobile SBAE teachers, we saw the potential for greater challenges as teachers navigated new communities. We posited a heightened potential for challenge as teachers navigated new communities as our study considered how positioning converged on the mobile SBAE teacher.

Teachers are in the difficult position of looking out for themselves (individualistic) in a system that expects them to look out for everyone else (present-focused) (Lortie, 1975). We speculated this challenge intensified when teachers navigated new communities. We based this speculation on our previous work with mobile teachers. A tacit goal of SBAE migrators was to align values and find greater levels of support (Haddad et al., 2019). This goal became a strong measure of a move's success (Haddad et al., 2019). For the current study, we wanted to explore the interactions surrounding values alignment and support as teachers changed schools.

Understanding discourses related to teacher socialization, stagedness, and mobility allows discussion of the mobile teacher in the context of a broader education system. Knowing these

discourses were in play, our purpose was to identify the positions mobile SBAE teachers and SBAE Influencers discursively took up to navigate a broader system and context. Therefore, the research question guiding the current study was: How do SBAE teachers and community influencers position themselves in their co-constructed context?

Study Significance

Within SBAE and internationally, work has already been dedicated to understanding how teachers identify success when their career decision finds them changing schools (Haddad et al., 2019; Ochs, 2012; Rudder, 2012). In prior research, teachers resoundingly reflected on community support as a key indicator of whether their program move was a good choice (Haddad et al., 2019; Rudder, 2012). However, little research explores the interplay between SBAE teachers and their community to specifically elicit how teachers interact with support and challenge. We must explore teacher and community interactions as teachers enter and exit programs. This illuminates key pinch points in the teaching profession more broadly and allows greater understanding to support teaching careers.

The purpose of this study was to identify the discursive positions of community influencers relative to their SBAE counterparts. To date, the literature related to teacher mobility has focused almost exclusively on student impact and relationships (Atterbury et al., 2017; Borrero et al., 2012; Davies, 1989; Harris & Sass, 2007; Hazari et al., 2015; Turner et al., 2013) and left relationships with colleagues, administration, and others to the fate of anecdote. It is important to note that communities are the ones who must recover from the exit of a migrating teacher (Barnes et al., 2007; Bond, 2012; Boyd et al., 2011; Grissom, 2011; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010; Keesler & Schneider, 2010). Our study was significant in its scope and approach as it undertook an examination of teacher mobility holistically, including various influencers: state staff, colleagues, administrators, and program alumni.

When bringing various actors into discursive interactions around power, multiple perspectives and divergent viewpoints will emerge (Davies, 2000). *Multiplicity* is the anticipated divergence in interactions. To account for *multiplicity*, our study took up a positioning approach to discourse (Davies, 2000). Positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) exposed and challenged the positions into which societal norms place people as speakers. We hypothesized new members of communities necessarily positioned themselves, pushed against positioning by others, and in turn, positioned others in hopes of finding support and navigating challenges. Positionality is inherent to mobile SBAE teachers as they interactionally enter a community, examine it, and make choices regarding adopting normalized values.

Theoretical Approach to Discourse

While teacher mobility has been examined from an organizational perspective, few studies have focused on mobility from the interactional perspective of an individual in a profession. Employing positioning theory as an approach to discourse analysis shed light on SBAE teachers' positioning members of their new community and the members' positioning mobile SBAE teachers. Positioning theory, broadly, is a means of engaging with discourse to study the impact of interaction by unfolding how individuals situated themselves and others across interactions (Davies, 2000). We conceptualized the community broadly, to include administrators, colleagues, former teachers, alumni leaders, and others, such as "Team Ag Ed" at the state level. This aligned with how mobile teachers talked about those most influential in their assessment of productive moves in our previous study (Haddad et al., 2019).

Sample

We focused on teacher mobility in one Agricultural Education program with consistent SBAE churn (i.e., a new teacher every five years for the last 30). It is important to note that focusing on one program does not inherently make this research a case study. While this specific program could be considered an example or *case* of teacher mobility or churn, we were interested in the interaction over constructing a case of mobility. Our data could be reviewed to employ other qualitative methods, but for the current study, we were not interested in what is it like to experience mobility or be a mobile teacher (phenomenology), the shared constructed story of mobility (narrative), or cultural implications of mobility (ethnography). We were concerned with the relational interactions amongst participants based on our previous work indicating the importance of this factor in teachers' positive career assessment. This required a single site, and small, tight knit sample, but did not align with other methodologies.

An ability to situate community knowledge and engage speakers in an accounting of the social and cultural factors influencing people's positioning of themselves and others, was essential to maintaining integrity in the examination of discourse using positioning (Patel-Stevens, 2004). Having taught in the district for five years, I (one of the researchers) was particularly equipped to situate this knowledge. The familiarity of my former school district (North Plains Consolidated High School, NPC, Oakville, NA) balanced the need for understanding social and cultural norms with operationalizing the assumptions of the theoretical approach (Davies, 2000). All references to the Oakville community and its members use pseudonyms, as agreed upon by the participants. We invited the last three SBAE migrators since 2003 (myself excluded), to participate in the study. All the teachers were currently involved with the broader education profession in some form, and at the time of the study, all three were still employed by the NPC school district. Two participated for the full duration of the study, and one withdrew participation in the co-iterative analysis while generating conclusions. The SBAE teachers in this study (Aaron and Stephanie) taught at North Plains Consolidated (NPC) for five years or fewer before making their next career move. The community influencers included two former industrial technology teachers (Ben and Caleb), the FFA alumni president (John), current assistant principal (Aaron), and state supervisor for agricultural education (Mark). Most of the data captured from Mark was contextual. As such, his data were used throughout the study to situate participant experiences within the context of Agricultural Education for his state. During member checking, we confirmed the use and situating of his data.

Data Collection

We involved teachers and influencers in a reflective, autobiographical interview process to establish a more holistic presentation of the discursive context in which SBAE migrators were positioned for the NPC district. We operationalized Positioning Theory (Davies, 2000) with the methods of this study (Patel Stevens, 2004) in terms of reflexivity, answerability, and authenticity. Notably, multiple phases of the co-iterative analysis discussed below accounted for reflexivity, not fully represented in Figure 2.

Figure 2.

Operationalizing Positioning Theory (credibility & trustworthiness)
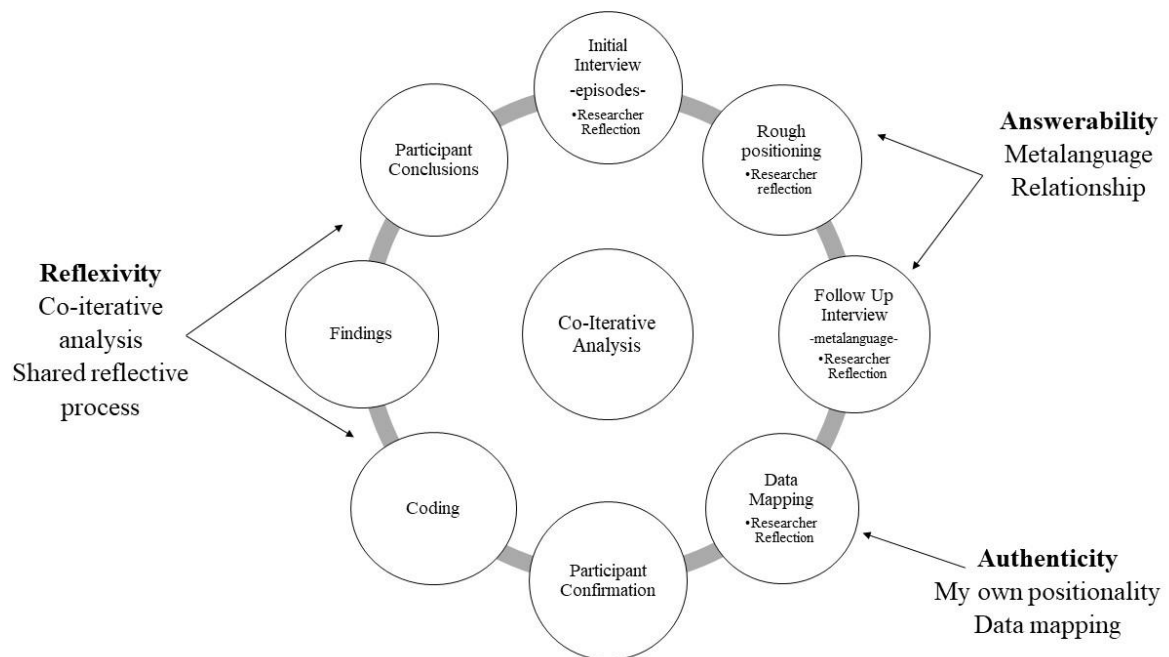
My position and embeddedness in the school site were salient to this study as components of answerability and authenticity. We recognize, however, my interpretations of the context were my own, informed by my experience with the site and individual speakers (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). As such, my interpretations (and my biases) are limited in broader applicability relative to the experience of others beyond this study, based on their own positionality, their positioning of others, and others' positioning of them. With reflexivity in mind, we produced findings discursively with participants.

We engaged participants in an iterative process to co-construct a picture of navigating newness resulting from mobility at NPC. Having worked with participants through their reflexive positioning, further semi-structured interviews, based in dialogue, allowed for an answer (Patel Stevens, 2004, citing Bakhtin, 1990) regarding the positions imposed by self and others (including research discourses). The semi-structured nature of the interviews highlighted different *episodes* (Davies & Harré, 1990) of the mobility experience: coming to teaching, prior teaching appointments, coming to, working at, and moving on from NPC. The emphasis on understanding discourse warranted a semi-structured approach to incorporate meaning making in both the initial and secondary interviews (Patel Stevens, 2004). Interviews occurred via the Zoom video conferencing platform and in-person during November of 2019. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Interviews ranged from one to two hours in-length, generating approximately 20 hours of audio data over 16 interview sessions.

After transcription, rough identification of positions, and shared analysis, we engaged in a discursive process, shared with the participants, of reflective journaling and memoing (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Gee & Handford, 2012; Patel Stevens, 2004), data mapping (Ash, 2003), member checking (Patel Stevens, 2004), and open coding (Ash, 2003; Davies, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). We transcribed our data using the Temi platform, checking transcripts for accuracy with both researchers and individual participants. In identifying rough positions, we read through the transcripts to highlight key sentiments conveyed, based on discourses from the literature. Our shared analysis engaged in a meaning-making process of returning to the participants to discuss the rough positioning. Secondary interviews varied widely as different positions were

conveyed by different participants but followed a similar open-ended structure ("You said [x], it sounded like you were positioning yourself as [y].") Participants would then elaborate on positions that aligned with their experience or rebut positions that did not. This process constructed a secondary discourse, or *metalanguage* (Patel Stevens, 2004)*,* by which participants navigated their experience and co-generated findings with me.

   With individual speech episodes as the unit of analysis, we coded individual positions navigated by concept conveyed. For example, one of our teachers shared:

> …We got FFA moving on leadership stuff that hadn't been a huge push in the past–Branching out and trying new CDEs, getting kids to start an SAE program…some state degrees and that kind of thing. Just [trying to] change the whole stigma around ag programs and around FFA…It was a slow process, but I feel like I started. It was just not great…The person who had been there before me had really done a number on the ninth graders…There was just so much retraining for behaviors and expectations that it was really starting from the ground up. They had stolen tools from the shop. I walked into nothing and had to start over. It was the same with building relationships and bringing in new kids.

We coded this episode as shown in Appendix 1. The unit of analysis was the speech episode of Stephanie sharing her experience of coming to NPC. She corroborated positions of herself as *change agent, enforcer, resourceful, putting things in order*, and *under-resourced* in constructing metalanguage around this episode. In the subsequent analysis, *resourceful, putting things in order,* and *under-resourced* conveyed a concept of being an *imposter*; not cut out for the job. This concept aligned with the theme of *doing the best we can*, as teachers did hard work in challenging situations. We took the same approach to data collection with mobile SBAE teachers and their community influencer counterparts. Overall, coding yielded 24 concepts encompassed in four themes for SBAE migrators and 17 concepts comprising four themes for SBAE influencers. We exercised caution to not falsely overlay acceptance of truth on given episodes through the co-iterative analysis (Patel Stevens, 2004) and data mapping (Ash, 2003). In other words, participants' efforts at meaning-making (developing a metalanguage) comprised the analysis, and the data mapping generated convergent themes across mobile SBAE teachers and community influencers.

Discussion of Findings

SBAE Migrators

   Four themes emerged to describe how SBAE migrators positioned themselves and others in their co-constructed discursive context. In positioning oneself, individuals also position others (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999), therefore, we discuss SBAE migrator positioning both as positioning self and as positioning others in their co-constructed context.

   This is Where I'm Meant to Be embodied positions recounting a sense of belonging. Beyond identifying from a particular geographical area, participants expressed ideas of belonging to a particular institutional position. Across this theme, teachers positioned themselves and those around them as *committed*, *geographically bound*, *connected*, and *supported/supportive*. Themes intertwined as teachers discussed support from various community influencers fostering greater connectedness in successful teaching in their community. Stephanie discussed:

> I feel like I walked into a different situation. I feel like when teachers come in, the community is like, "You're not the last teacher," and that's a big thing to overcome. I was lucky not to have that because the person before me was a long-term sub they let go halfway through the year. And the community welcomed me with open arms, and I think they were happy to have someone stable again.

Conversely, when teachers did not feel supported by their community, they suggested a diminished desire to connect within the community and commit for the long-term. The quote above and the quote below provide examples of teachers' perceptions of community influencers fostering or rejecting positions of belongning. Stephanie specifically discussed available resources:

> One unique thing I had was the assistant principal was one of the former instructors, so I had him to help with onboarding. He was especially helpful with some of the discipline things I had because he already had relationship and rapport. Him being able to tell me, "This is who we use for welding materials," and "This is what we've done with that," was so helpful. At the time, PLCs weren't really a thing yet, but Mr. Meyer was a major veteran, so he was very helpful in that process.

The former initiative on the part of the community influencers seemed to be expected, appreciated, and largely reciprocated.

Additional Duties as Assigned captured how these SBAE migrators positioned themselves as agricultural educators and FFA advisors, especially in light of the workload and challenge of the job itself. Participants outlined the challenges of their positions in institutional roles, expressed as participants positioned themselves as less competent, but surviving and persevering through the role despite significant challenges. Aaron talked about it as a process of becoming good:

> Eventually you'll be good, you'll make those connections, and you'll know who to call when you have a question. You can reach out to community members, you can build a program, and you can have those great interactions with kids, because really that's what it's all about.

As these teachers deliberated their *Additional Duties as Assigned*, they wrestled with positioning themselves and being positioned in their institutional roles. Stephanie shared her attempts to fully occupy the role of SBAE teacher:

> [They told me,] "Well, you can't do work-based learning because you have to have a study hall." [And I said,] "I don't want to do a study hall." The school didn't see the value or try to find a way to make that work. They just said, "Well that won't work because you have to do a study hall." I never quite figured it out because Aaron knows what [work placement] is. He knows I wouldn't just be sitting here twiddling my thumbs for an hour every day. But sometimes, I feel the people doing the schedules just don't want to figure out how to make it work. Instead, they just say, "Oh, we can't do that, it'll never work with the schedule."

Teachers perceived the positions they occupied as rejected by community members, discussed in the previous quote as administrators, when initiatives did not move forward, they were compared to others, or they felt others were out of touch with the work the SBAE teacher was doing.

I'm the Real Deal embodied a sense of being well-equipped to do the job. Beyond being able to perform well in an institutional role, participants expressed being able to elevate a program beyond what it was when they arrived. Across the theme of being *The Real Deal*, teachers positioned themselves with the dispositions to do the job well: *considerate, having a desire to build, resourceful*, and *experienced*. Stephanie discussed being able to build something as a significant consideration in accepting the job:

> I was kind of hired with this promise of "do what you want. It will be your program and you can turn it into whatever you want it to be." That was pretty appealing to me. The reality was half the time I was teaching junior high, which was not my fave, and the other part of the time was the high school stuff…I added some of my own stuff but was tied down schedule wise by the junior high electives and that wasn't something I was really into. They wouldn't let me do work-based learning. So that was another thing I didn't get to do that I had seen very successfully at other schools.

Within the differences of these teachers' experiences, the migratory context for SBAE teachers varied, with many evidences present of the constant negotiation of establishing the position of the best person to do the job at that time.

Everyone is Special unpacked positions of purpose derived from being different from one's peers. Participants discussed enacting their own agenda and plans for what a program should be, particularly as it positioned them as more capable than their peers. Capability served participants well when their agenda aligned with those with whom they interacted. It broke down, however, when limits were imposed on a person's autonomy, challenging their ability to position themselves as independent in their work. Aaron talked about the nuance of teaching agriculture relative to his peers:

> I think I had a different attitude about my expectations with kids; what I wanted to get out of them. I always had the mindset, "This is an elective area. I'm trying to make this fun. I'm trying to make this interesting and worthwhile." I think that's a different mindset than let's say a Math, or English, or Social, or Science teacher. You gotta take 12th grade English. So, I think [the ag] position lends itself to that, which comes with different challenges too. Because you got to sell it or you're out of a job, so you gotta do that and it can't be fluff. It can't be just a fun and screw around type of thing.

Each teacher saw himself or herself as special, positioned as *unique, visionary, refreshed, lucky,* and *autonomous.* Stephanie, however, also felt like she could not do her job well as limits were imposed on her autonomy:

> Obviously, it's very appealing [to hear, "Run with your vision of the program,"] because you want to teach what you like. I wanted to teach animal science. The problem was they would say, "Well, you have to have the numbers." It was like, "You can offer animal science, but that's two hours. If you only have eight kids is that worth it?"

Relationally, holdover expectations strained relationships with feeling challenged rather than supported; they limited teachers' options to engage, working to reject a position of *limitation* rather than flourish in a position of *autonomy.*

SBAE Influencers

Four themes emerged to describe how SBAE influencers positioned themselves and others in their co-constructed discursive context. Influencers, for the sake of this study, were those with close connections to the success of a SBAE teacher or program. We drew on tellings from our SBAE instructors' co-teachers in industrial technology (Ben and Caleb), an administrator (Aaron), and the alumni chapter president (John) to answer our research question.

We're All Doing the Best We Can recognized how influencers saw the job of agriculture teacher as doing hard work in challenging situations. While influencers recognized SBAE teachers' job as difficult, it did not excuse agriculture teachers from rising to the challenge. Ben put it this way:

> I think we were just self-absorbed into what we had to do for the next few days that we didn't pay attention to [making connections]. I'm sure the administrators didn't. It's a little bit of the sink or swim kind of thing…if they don't have the people skills to get there, they kind of sink for a while.

We're All Doing the Best We Can captured recognizing the work, but also saw the challenge as part of the job for which an agriculture teacher must be prepared. Additionally, influencers identified successful agriculture teachers as *overwhelmed* and up against significant *challenges*. Caleb said this:

> Well, [the job is sustainable at a high level for one person], but you can't be married. You can't have children. But you have to find that balance. You establish it and then you back off. Had I remained in Oakville, I would've backed off. I've been working at backing off...You start doing those things that are important to you that you'll prioritize.

SBAE teachers positioned as less successful were seen as *imposters*; not up for the task and underqualified to address the needs of the community surrounding NPC. John explained it this way:

> Now I feel we've regressed back to the point of getting a lot less of the challenges being given. You had just enlarged everything so much and [now] things are just kind of pulling back again…We're not seeking to challenge the students to do things. And then as the student numbers have dwindled some you just don't have the personnel to do all these things either. So, it's just kind of pulled back into the comfort zone…For a while it was pretty well what the students are doing this, they're doing this, all these things, and I don't think there's nearly as much creativity anymore.

You Gotta Want It encapsulated ideas of influencers positioning themselves as able to provide substantial support if support was received appropriately from the SBAE teacher. This theme recognized how others, particularly administrators, may be perceived as unsupportive. However, the recounting influencer never described himself as unsupportive. Influencers sought connection and ways to provide support but had strong resentment around missed opportunities from those they were trying to help. As John said:

> It's up to each individual. Who we have right now, there's no time to talk about anything. They're going to do it their way. We attempted to give them a heads up of how things had moved forward or some successful things they maybe want to take a look at and it was just like, "Fine, but I'm doing it this way."

Contrary to anecdotal ideas of support being material (e.g., resources, money), these community members specifically discussed *support* as time, attention, mentoring, and friendship. As John shared:

> I think knowing how it seemed to be comforting and welcoming to you to have the connection and the outreach I provided to you really tells you the importance of that...I think that feeling of welcomeness and support is so important because being an ag teacher/FFA advisor is so much different than coming in as a ninth-grade algebra teacher or something. There's so much more to it.

Double Standards captured the variety of expectations from SBAE influencers relative to the expected job and involvement of the SBAE teacher. Overall, expectations suggested SBAE teachers should be in a continuous state of development while leaning on the community for program expectations and support. At the same time, teachers should operate autonomously as individuals. Aaron discussed his vision for the agriculture program this way:

> If it's your program…I want you to have vision, keeping in mind what the community needs and wants, what your strengths and weaknesses are…I want you to grow the program…But that teacher…[has] to be the champion, trying to develop their vision of their ag program.

Competing demands and expectations comprised a difficult landscape to navigate, as a brand-new teacher or as an experienced teacher making a program move. Explicating expectations before going into a job is nearly impossible, due to the multiple influencers holding them and the varied ways in which they unfold.

All or Nothing recognized an all-in approach to reciprocal investment. For our purposes, reciprocal investment is an equal or greater display of commitment from those invested in those investing. Ben discussed investment in terms of where teachers live:

> In a town the size of Oakville, they really appreciate the teachers that live in town, go to their churches, are there for other activities, and they see go downtown to the parade, and all that stuff…People really appreciate if you're living in the town you work in, but it just can't work that way much anymore.

Influencers positioned themselves as invested in the success of the SBAE program as a reflection of the community and the community as a reflection of the program. John discussed being a program advocate like this:

> I let you drive the bus…but that was what we talked about as the group, "Let's just be here to support." We didn't know what direction we were needed, but we were here when you needed support. If something would have gone sour for you, I guarantee you, had you been called into the principal's office or they would've thrown some cutbacks at you or something, you would've called us and we would've said, "What can we do? We're here to help."

This community took reciprocal investment as a serious charge issued to the teachers with whom they entrusted the care of their students. *Investment* was the pinnacle of the *All or Nothing* theme as *luck*, *responsibility*, and *continued growth* identified how community influencers positioned themselves and others as *invested*.

Implications, Recommendations, & Conclusions

In discussing implications, recommendations, and conclusions, we return to the broader discourses to which these teachers and influencers subscribed or tacitly operated within when recounting their experience. While the specifics of six individuals' experiences are not generalizable, their individual discourse bears implications within the local discourse and for the broader professional discourse in which they participate. Therefore, we used our implications, recommendations, and conclusions to address broad discourses, supported by specific experiences, to supplement the professional conversation surrounding the teaching career. Recognizing the broader challenges implicated in this local discourse meant addressing complex issues, structured systems, and values-laden constructions of teaching and education. These recommendations are not small, nor are they localized to this specific discursive context. Discourse, as a means of taking up narratives, is especially well suited for these types of recommendation. To keep our recommendations out of theoretical idealism we offer specific implications for the local teaching career based on the pinch points in the broader system these local discourses illuminated.

Implications

This is Where I'm Meant to Be, *Additional Duties as Assigned*, *I'm the Real Deal*, and *Everyone is Special* showed these SBAE teachers positioning themselves as capable, well-disposed, visionaries who belonged in their roles in their communities. Dissonant expectations were magnified, especially if unclear when the job was accepted. These expectations could be especially challenging to navigate as mobile teachers brought the expectations from their former district and community with them. What a district gained in experience was also juxtaposed by the established habits and expectations from a former way of practicing.

In aligning expectations with the socialization of teaching as an individualistic, conservative, and present focused profession (Lortie, 1975), we must be willing to question what positions our study exposed. For SBAE teachers, but especially mobile SBAE teachers, positioning allowed these questions: 1) What is expected of SBAE teachers and migrators? 2) Where do those expectations come from? 3) Which expectations are held across teachers, and which are released when new teachers enter the context? 4) How are discourses engaged to clarify expectations for all involved?

We found implications related to support, connection, and commitment. These mutually influencing positions, and the broader discourses to which they applied, were key to teachers finding their ideal location to engage in their career (Haddad et al., 2019). The challenge for the SBAE migrator is clearly identifying, for themselves, why they are moving (Haddad et al., 2019) so they can better articulate how they are able (or not) to meet the expectations of the various community influencers they will engage to develop a program. If teachers are moving to improve

their situation (Peterson, 1978), they must be intentionally autonomous throughout the search process about what constitutes a better situation.

Recommendations for SBAE Teachers

Mobile SBAE teachers must find clarity regarding their responsibilities as they step into new communities. Only with clarity in responsibility can teachers act with their desired autonomy. Researchers must be cognizant of proposing solutions adding to a teacher's workload, given the implications of workload in this study and others (Traini et al., 2019). As a recommendation, co-teachers and administrators encouraged teachers (mobile or not) to act in their communities by asking of any task: 1) Who else could aid in delivering this service to students? 2) How do I communicate to others that this partnership has been established?

Exiting a program is inevitable. Whether from retirement, mobility, or other measures, mobility permeates the teaching profession. Predecessors played a significant role, both tacit and intentional, in establishing expectations for their successor. Understanding the role of the predecessor necessitates balancing what is helpful with what is feasible. It is essential SBAE teachers consider the work cycle in terms of what they leave for the next person. Teachers must ask themselves: Am I replaceable? What expectations am I establishing for my successor? Asking these questions begins to elevate replaceability to a measure of success.

Lastly, for the SBAE teacher, a notable deliberation may be the expectation of the community regarding the teacher's presence beyond school hours. Therefore, in contemplating a program move, how important is it to live in the community to which you migrate? Furthermore, if we ask community influencers to invest and engage, on some level, SBAE teachers must be prepared to return the investment. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine at what cost such investment occurs but should part of the evaluation process for mobile teachers as they seek to relocate.

Recommendations for SBAE Influencers

Across this migratory context, community members positioned themselves and the SBAE teachers with whom they worked in a variety of ways. *We're All Doing the Best We Can*, *You Gotta Want It*, *Double Standards*, and *All or Nothing* came together to describe how community members sought to be understanding and supportive of their SBAE teachers, but their support was based on their own experience. If a community member offered support, it followed with an expectation that their support would be utilized. Using support was a means of conveying investment in the community for the SBAE teacher. Support was a reciprocal process of engagement for community influencers in their interactions with SBAE teachers. With this conceptualization of support in mind, we propose the following recommendations for the influencers represented in this study.

Administrators must be clear in their desires and expectations for SBAE program management, particularly as it pertains to program growth. Clarity in expectations was essential to avoid a misalignment in vision between administrators and SBAE teachers. Often, a lack of alignment in available resources challenged the opportunity to carry out the "ideal" vision.

By seeking belonging and connection, fellow teachers grounded their SBAE counterparts. For these mobile teachers, establishing connections was equivalent to identifying and maintaining realistic program expectations with the broader community. Fellow teachers also held key insight regarding expectations and provided much needed reality checks, preventing their co-workers from taking on too much.

FFA alumni chapters are encouraged to provide a community liaison (e.g., former teachers, co-teachers, administrators, or community members) who can acquaint the new teacher with key influencers in the community. Alumni expressed that their role is more than just being a resource as the job is too big for just the agricultural educator. Identifying opportunities for new teachers to receive support was essential. SBAE teachers already had a high logistical load to manage, as do other SBAE teachers (Traini et al., 2019). Sharing the load of an integrated program is a key reason for the existence of alumni chapters. Therefore, reducing SBAE teachers' decision load is essential to accepting offers for help.

Regarding Stagedness

At its base, this study operationalizes teaching as an unstaged profession (Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1978). Unfortunately, much of educational policy and research does not. Even in approaches to mobility, the career ladder suggests incentives unavailable to teachers (Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1978). Breaking the cycle of unstagedness to elevate teaching to a legitimate profession has the potential to help retain teachers to the classroom. Progressions of expertise within teaching may also alleviate challenges in identifying mentoring connections at the school level. Various supports can be employed to setup teaching as staged and move teachers through a continuum of development with appropriate supports. The necessary focus on teacher recruitment and retention currently diverts attention and resources from issues of student success, learning, and the art of teaching.

We must clarify and incentivize teaching as a staged profession to acknowledge and validate the challenges of being an early-career teacher, the proficiency of mid-career teachers, and expertise of late-career teachers. Compensating teachers for accruing experience, and accommodating less experienced teachers as they develop, provides benefits across the spectrum of teacher experience. To borrow language from the trades often taught in SBAE classrooms, "apprenticeship" allows the expectation for early-career teachers to learn a profession and mitigates challenges regarding professional entry induced by varying routes to certification. Apprenticeship allows time to "get good" (as Aaron phrased it) by assigning "tradesman" (mid-career teachers) or "master teachers" (late-career teachers) as a team focused on teacher development. While the specific terminology might sound different, using language to ease identification of expertise is essential to supporting successful teaching careers.

Conclusions

The four purposes of agricultural education, currently comprising the broader professional discourse, include SBAE being for agricultural literacy, career exploration, career preparation, and preparation for further study in agriculture (Phipps et al., 2008). These present a specific challenge for the SBAE migrator related to positioning. A SBAE teacher's vision of the purpose of agricultural education must align with their community influencers' if it is to be positioned as supported. Influencers at all levels are strongly encouraged to communicate a clear, single purpose for agricultural education and structure pre-service programming, messaging, policy advocacy, and program implementation around the key purpose.

Notably, community influencers recognized the difficult role their SBAE teacher occupied. They also offered substantial help and support to manage the workload, and in fact, positioned themselves as rejected if the assistance was not accepted. The underlying assumption, based on the data presented here, is community members sought engagement. Despite being busy themselves, they were eager to be involved. Community influencers were willing and able to provide much greater leverage to a total SBAE program including financial stability, institutional knowledge,

content expertise, facilitation of community connectedness, support for challenging students, and input and visioning for forward progress of the program.

Positioning exposed discourse as much as discourse exposed positioning. In reflecting on available positions and assigned positionalities, these teachers uncovered a discourse situating their communities as essential to their work. Influencers also situated themselves this way, but further contributed to the discourse of support being something you engage in (beyond something you provide). The discourse exposed here challenges all involved to identify mutually supportive ways forward. Positioning is neither good nor bad. Positions merely locate people in relation to others through their interactions (Davies, 2000; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). It is essential to ponder how the exposed location in interactions clarifies expectations, locally and for a broader profession to support teachers across their career trajectory.

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Appendix 1: Sample Coding for Example Speech Episode

We had an opportunity for students that were interested in the area, we got FFA kind of moving on leadership stuff that hadn't been a huge push in the past. Branching out and trying new CDEs. Getting kids to start an SAE program that had never really been a thing, some state degrees and that kind of thing. And just kind of changing the whole stigma, I guess, around ag programs and around FFA. I don't know. It was a slow process, but I feel like I started. It was just not a great…The person who had been there before me had really done a number on the ninth graders. He had ninth graders and Focus. There was just so much retraining for behaviors and expectations that it was really starting from the ground up and they had stolen tools from the shop. I walked into nothing and had to start over. It was the same with building relationships and bringing in new kids that didn't just say we didn't want to be involved with that.

Position	Evidence	Order	Type	Use	Metacomment	
Change agent	We had an opportunity for students that were interested in the area, we got FFA kind of moving on leadership stuff that hadn't been a huge push in the past. Branching out and trying new CDEs. Getting kids to start an SAE program that had never really been a thing, some state degrees and that kind of thing. And just kind of changing the whole stigma, I guess, around ag programs and around FFA.	First	Self	Reification (getting things going)	Agreed	
Former teacher as lax	The person who had been there before me had really done a number on the ninth graders. He had ninth graders and Focus. There was just so much retraining for behaviors and expectations that it was really starting from the ground up and they had stolen tools from the shop.	First	Other	Reification (retraining)	Well, just giving lots of chances and I'm waiting for that moment when they kind of come around because I know when you're new they don't like you. They don't want to like you; they just want it to be the way it used to be. I mean, I cannot remember that guy's name, but I was like, "That word is forbidden." And it wasn't because, "Oh, he did it this way." No. [It was because] every story was a horror story and we just can't say that name anymore. I will kick you out to say that name. But I think I was starting at a pretty good place where they were looking for a leader.	
Enforcer	The person who had been there before me had really done a number on the ninth graders. He had ninth graders and Focus. There was just so much retraining for behaviors and expectations that it was really starting from the ground up and they had stolen tools from the shop.	First	Self	Reification (retraining)	So that stuff never really bothered me. As long as they were behaving it wasn't an issue, but then it had to stop. But for the most part I feel like everyone's probably winning here because he's not causing a problem with [another teacher]. He had come down and said, "[another teacher] and I	But then having to set those expectations too. When I started, I think even maybe the first year they did night meetings and that was just when I was like, "Nope, this isn't gonna work for me. Do it in the morning. I'll buy donuts. I don't care. But I am not doing a seven o'clock PM meeting. It's not going to happen." So

				aren't firing on all cylinders today." I'm like, "Are you ever?" And then she knew to tell him to get his stuff down and then he could go. I don't think he ever got stuff done, but he went anyways.	some of those things, especially those older kids and I was like, "You're just going to have to get over it because I decided."
Resourceful	And just kind of changing the whole stigma, I guess, around ag programs and around FFA. I don't know. It was a slow process, but I feel like I started. It was just not a great…	First	Self	Reification (changing the stigma)	I tried to find ways to—not get kids to like me--but find ways to relate with them. So if I had one who was kind of a turd but he could be okay and I'd be like, "You should be my TA. I just need you to come down and cut up this metal for me and you get a credit for it. You wouldn't have to sit in a study hall, which you hate anyways, and your study hall teacher probably doesn't enjoy you sitting in there causing a ruckus." So that was kind of a way that I would try to be resourceful. I would try to get people on my side. And, of course, I had the TA's that corrected papers or did that kind of stuff too. But sometimes I thought these other ones would be like, "Oh, I need this made, just go and take care of this for me." That was nice too.
Putting things in order	I walked into nothing and had to start over. It was the same with building relationships and bringing in new kids that didn't just say we didn't want to be involved with that.	Second	Self	Reification (putting things in order)	Did it matter if a tough guy came down to help with engines because that was his thing and that's what he liked? When he would pop in, he wasn't interrupting. He was helpful. I thought it was great for him to learn; everyone was learning from each other. And for this other group of kids to be like, "Wow, I'm really good at football, but he's really good at making an engine run," I thought that was a really valuable skill to for kids to learn.
Underresourced	I walked into nothing and had to start over. It was the same with building relationships and bringing in new kids that didn't just say we didn't want to be involved with that.	First	Self	Uptake (walked into nothing)	Agreed