**Don’t You…Forget About Me**

*The Power of Being Remembered on a Teacher’s Pedagogical Development*

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**Background**

"It's a poor memory that only works backwards." – Lewis Carroll

- Teachers often want to be remembered and the loss of their class at the end of the school year can be bittersweet.
- Many teachers, aware of this fleeting time, desire to live on in the memories of their students.
- How we want to be remembered has the power to alter how we operate in the present and plan for the future.
- The choice of how teachers want to be remembered can be influenced by the D/Discourse (Gee) that surrounds teaching and teachers.
- Statements of remembrance could be seen as an indicator of either their own pedagogical beliefs, or the normed beliefs they feel obligated to espouse.

**Theoretical Framework**

"Every system of authority attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy" – Max Weber

Teachers, especially beginning teachers are surrounded by D/Discourses that attempt to identify and/or categorize them in ways they might or might not agree with.

Often teachers respond to this D/Discourse by trying to legitimate their rightful place, authority, expertise, etc. in the teaching profession.

**Research Questions**

1) How do teachers respond to the perception of teachers and teaching in constructing their teacher identity around being remembered by their students?

2) What do teacher statements on how they want to be remembered reflect in their belief of what teaching is?

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**Prompt**

30 graduate student Teacher Candidates were asked to reflect on their teaching experiences and answer the following prompt:

"What sentence do you hope your students say about you at the end of the school year?"

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**Methods**

1) Grounded Theory was used to locate various themes within the data, moving from initial codes to four main categories. For example:

2) The data was analyzed through the use of moral evaluation, where specific words were highlighted that related to the naturalizing language of morality in teaching.

**Legitimization**

The data was analyzed by using Theo van Leeuwen’s concept of legitimation in the following ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorization</th>
<th>Moral Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Authority: Legitimate authority is vested in a person because of their status or role in a particular institution.</td>
<td>Legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom and law, and of persons in whom institutional authority of some kind is vested.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expert Authority: Legitimacy is provided by expertise rather than status.</td>
<td>Legitimation based on moral values. Moral values can be made explicit with words like “good” or “bad”, “right” and “wrong,” but they can also be more subtle through adjectives that trigger a moral concept that can have an effect at a more unconscious level.</td>
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**Emergent Interpretations**

**Personal Authority = “Caring for Students”**

- She cared so much about us.
- I want my students to believe that I truly care about them.

**Expert Authority = “Teaching Students”**

- She helped me learn new things and be excited about learning.
- Is someone who helps me learn.

**Evaluation:** help(8), care(7), love(5), encourage(2), inspire(2), trust(1), motivate(1)

**Abstraction:** being the best(6), belief in students(3), never gave up(1), above and beyond(1)

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**Discussion**

- These are statements on how teachers want to be remembered, but they can also be read as statements on how they want to be (as a teacher).
- I feel that the much of the data points to (d)iscourses around ‘results’ and ‘caring’ that legitimize a teacher’s place in dominant D/Discourses surrounding education.
- This group of beginning teachers, through answering the prompt, are engaging in the development of their teacher identity, like Gee (2014) would say, as a “who-doing-what,” or in their case, as a teacher, doing teaching.
- When taken together, the various answers, written by these new teachers, demonstrate the interconnectedness of authority and morality when it comes to how teachers talk about themselves.
- They also demonstrate the need to legitimize ones place in the profession of teaching.
- Beyond the D/Discourses of teaching, I think in the end, teachers want their work to matter. They, like one teacher wrote, “want [their] students to say…that they will miss me.”

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**Implications**

1) Teachers are often told what teaching should be like.
2) Teachers respond by talking about themselves and their teaching.
3) This talk, can sometimes turn into actions.
4) Actions can reinforce and/or change pedagogical beliefs, just as beliefs can reinforce and/or change actions.
5) These actions/beliefs can get out of balance if not constantly maintained (i.e. challenged, supported, reflected upon, etc.)
6) If action/beliefs become too lopsided, teaching, teachers, and students all suffer.

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