Education Faculty Research

College of Education

8-15-2012

Developing and Presenting a Teaching Persona: The Tensions of Secondary Preservice Teachers

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This qualitative, multiple case study investigated the ways that three preservice secondary teachers developed, presented, and considered their teaching personae. Data for each participant consisted of three interviews, field observations of both teaching and non-teaching, data collection of lessons and class documents, and four journal reflections. Findings show that the participants experienced various tensions as they formed their teaching personae; as they navigated these tensions, they drew on discourses and ideas about good teaching and their various experiences, including the practicum experience. The nature of the interactions between the Cooperating Teacher and preservice teacher pairs contributed to the preservice teachers' confidence in and understanding of their enacted personae. Implications of the research for teacher training programs include an increased need for reflection on persona and careful matching of CIs and student teachers. Suggestions for further research include investigating the effect of high-quality teacher education programs on persona development and the effects of personae on pupils.

Keywords: persona, social roles, preservice teachers, student teaching, social psychology

Much occurs within the social interactions between teachers and students, including the formation of relationships, the subtle expressions of role expectations, the enactment and adjustment of social roles, and, ultimately, the development of an identity. One's teacher self often differs from the self that is enacted with family and friends; this aspect of teaching is especially relevant to current efforts to determine what successful teachers do (Green, 2010). During student teaching, preservice teachers engage in the process of moving into a new role: the teacher. In the title of her paper, Wells (1994) refers to the tension that novice teachers face as "moving to the other side of the desk," which can lead to confusion or distaste at the emergence of a new teaching identity that differs from one's previous self (Brown, 2006) or "reality shock" whereby the new teacher is surprised and confused

that their expectations of pupil behavior and interactions differ considerably from the students' actual behavior (Veenman, 1984). Adding to the confusion of taking on a new role are the often-mixed messages from one's own education, popular culture, and teacher training programs about how a teacher behaves in his or her role (Kagan, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Weber & Mitchell, 1995). Preservice teachers carry images and memories of teachers with them throughout their lives, and when they become student teachers, many of them work to determine what those images mean and how they fit into their own teaching practice (Brown, 2006; Kagan, 1992; Lortie, 1975).

Persona means mask; it provides external clues about one's self-image (Sadoski, 1992). Symbolic Interactionism states that we adopt roles and define our

selves depending on our understanding of and response to situations (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1982); thus, as applied to teaching, describing one's persona helps others understand how the teacher views the act of teaching. People—teachers included—adopt daily personae based on their and the audience's expectations of the setting. This dramaturgical view of social communication, which includes such features as speech, language, clothing, and gestures (Brissett & Edgley, 1990), provides the basis for the idea that teachers present a persona or play a role onstage in their classrooms; part of that role comes from personal models of teaching, whether fictional or real. Especially in secondary classes, content and subject matter knowledge is important to how teachers think of themselves and form their identities (Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 2000; Day, Kington, Stobart, & Stammons, 2006).

Although empirical literature on teaching persona is scarce, there is a large body of research on teacher identity. Both are rooted in the process of social interaction (Schlenker, 1980, 1985). Identity is seen in the literature as either a goal to reach (Erikson, 1970; Marcia, 1980) or, more recently, as an ongoing process that is never completed (Britzman, 1992; Connolly & Clandinin, 1999; Flores & Day, 2005). However, in general, the process of identity formation takes place over an extended time. Identity can be difficult to identify, particularly with preservice teachers or in considering professional as opposed to personal identities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Flores and Day (2005) describe forming an identity as "the making sense and (re)interpretation of one's own values and experiences" (p. 220). Persona, on the other hand, occurs in the short term, is adaptable, and can be viewed as adopting a role, acting, or even tricking others. In their review of related research, Rodgers and Scott (2008) highlight the important role of reflection on one's experience or "storying the teacher self" (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2002, as cited in Rodgers & Scott, 2008, p. 748) in modern-day teacher education programs.

The idea of the *identity* and the *persona* intersect and overlap in the literature. Gee (2000) views identity as almost the same as persona, stating that identity is, "being recognized as a certain 'kind of person,' in a given context…In this sense of the term, all people have multiple identities connected not to their 'internal states' but to their performances in society" (p. 99). Certain features of persona increase the likelihood of one's choice to enact roles in society: taking on a socially recognized role can serve to solidify one's identity; enacting personae can give order to one's life because they are comforting and familiar (Perlman, 1986). The concept of "professional identity," although it has been defined in many ways (or even left undefined) in various studies (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004), generally exists at the intersection of identity and persona as it has been

defined for this study; that is, the public role that teachers enact in the classroom.

There are key differences between experienced and preservice teachers in the realm of persona and identity development. Experienced teachers cite persona as a crucial part of their identity and interactions (MacDonald, 2004; Wells, 1994), and presenting an interesting self is a strategy that some teachers use purposefully (Bell & Daly, 1984; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986). Hamman, Gosselin, Romano, and Bunuen (2010) used the lens of "possible selves"—both expected and feared—and found differences in preservice and beginning teachers. These researchers call for more investigation into how these kinds of identities develop in new teachers.

Stronge (2007) links affective characteristics—which are displayed within social interaction—of teachers such as caring and respect with effectiveness. Identity leads to action: there is an interrelationship of prior influences, identity before teaching, context, and the newly redeveloped identity, which is generally either a return to traditional methods of teaching or a proactive response to the diverse students in the classroom (Flores & Day, 2005). Ng, Nicholas, and Williams (2010) that found that over the course of their teacher training program, preservice teachers' beliefs about what it took to manage a class changed from being a content expert to being charismatic. New teachers often equate charisma with quality (Grossman, Smagorinsky, & Valencia, 1999; Virta, 2002), but what does it mean to be charismatic? The definition may vary from person to person. Taken together, these findings indicate a need for more study of how persona is created and enacted. Teacher educators support preservice teachers as they fine-tune their self-presentation and engage with students in the classroom, and persona emerges from social interaction, so understanding the initial development of persona during student teaching is important. However, most of the literature that relates to teacher persona is either not empirical, based on veteran teachers' experiences, or both (MacDonald, 2004; Weber & Mitchell, 1995; Wells, 1994). Hence, the purpose of this study was to investigate the ways that three preservice secondary teachers developed, presented, and considered their teaching personae during the student teaching practicum. The research questions were

1. How do secondary preservice teachers develop and present a teaching persona?
2. How do secondary preservice teachers describe the development of their teaching personae during the student teaching practicum?

In order to provide a foundation for the study, I drew upon multiple research areas; these are outlined in the following section.
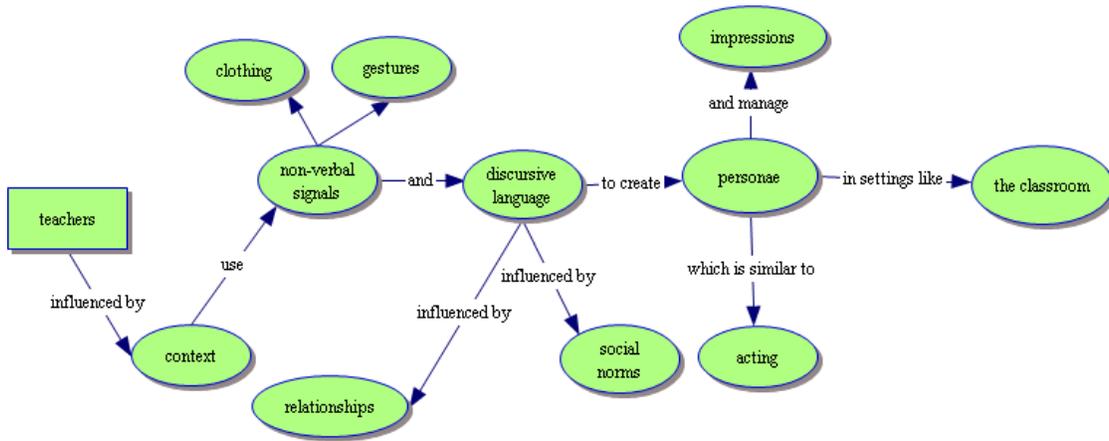
Figure 1. Theoretical Framework.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the process of persona development draws on several bodies of literature, including sociolinguistics, Symbolic Interactionism, and, because studies of teacher persona are rare, leaders' presentation of self in contexts such as management (Gardner & Avolio, 1998). All of this work is located within the realm of social psychology; this literature views people as actors who construct certain personae in daily life in many different ways and for various reasons (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1985). This framework has also been applied to a study of inservice teacher persona development (Davis, 2011).

As seen in the framework, when creating a persona, one's consideration of the context or setting serves as a primary consideration (Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Schlenker, 1980, 1985). People construct a persona through their use of discursive and non-discursive actions (Goffman, 1959). Relationships and social norms influence discursive language because they are a part of the discourses that preservice teachers encounter in their own schooling and teacher training programs (Kagan, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). This process is similar to acting, where the end goal is the same: to create and manage certain impressions for the audience's benefit. Goals can include "desired identity images" (Schlenker, 1985, p. 95). For example, charismatic leaders use positive characteristics such as high self-esteem and personal motivation to manage their employee's impressions of them; that is, to be seen as having these traits (Gardner & Avolio, 1998). This process occurs in all public settings, but I have developed this framework for observations of teachers in the classroom setting.

Method

Data Collection

After securing IRB approval, data collection took place over six weeks in the fall semester of 2009 at Wilson High School. Located in a suburban area of a small Mid-Atlantic city, Wilson enrolled about 1800 students and employed three levels of academic tracking. Caucasians made up the majority of the student body at 70%, followed by 15% African Americans and 5% Latino students. Fifteen percent of students received free or reduced price meals. English Language Learners (ELLs) formed about 6% of the student population.

The three participants volunteered for the study in response to an email sent to all current student teachers in a teacher education program near the research site; I selected one from the field of science, one from the humanities, and one from foreign language to provide a variety of content area perspectives. Data for each participant consisted of three semi-structured interviews with the participants and one with each participant's University Supervisor; field observations; and data collection of lessons, class documents, and four journal reflections. Interviews occurred at the beginning, middle, and end of data collection. Interview questions were grounded in the theoretical framework and the literature on persona development and included questions about teacher models, relationships with Cooperating Teachers (the teacher with whom the student teachers were placed) and Supervisors (the graduate students from the university who supported and observed the student teachers during the practicum), and interactions with pupils and colleagues. I interviewed Supervisors at the end of the semester to verify my initial analyses of the participants' personae and interactions.

Observations of each participant totaled 17 hours: 12 hours as they taught lessons and five hours

during planning and other non-teaching times (to determine personae "onstage" in the classroom and "offstage" in other settings). Running notes from observations were transcribed into digital files within four hours of the observation.

The participants completed four emailed journal reflections at weekly intervals during the data collection phase. The reflective journal prompts asked participants about the roles they wanted to present in the classroom, their external appearance while teaching, commonalities and differences between their personae with students and with family and friends, and beliefs about persona and its development.

Data Analysis

The data analysis utilized Miles and Huberman's (1994) three-step approach of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. I developed a start list of codes that was grounded in the literature and added emergent codes during the process of analysis. Coding language was drawn from Goffman (1959), and included "costume," "setting," and "backstage," as well as codes drawn from Symbolic Interactionism and sociolinguistics, such as "framing," and "non-verbal cues." After uploading data files into the NVIVO program, I assigned codes at the phrase level during multiple readings of the data corpus.

The analysis proceeded systematically and concurrently with the data collection, which is necessary in case study research because it allows early findings to drive later data collection (Yin, 2009). At the coding level, conducting within- and cross-case analyses led to codes for the context, for each case, for major case themes, for cross-case themes, and for assertions across cases (Creswell, 2007).

In addition to assigning codes to relevant sections of text, NVIVO supported later phases of analysis such as the creation of models and matrices of instances of certain key codes across the participants. In the write-up phase, I grouped key common areas that emerged through the matrices and constructed a case portrait of each participant, noting their behavior and beliefs for each area. Each participant selected his or her own pseudonym to ensure confidentiality in the final report. Finally, I compared these case portraits and created a cross-case analysis that expanded on common themes across the participants. In forming the cross-case analysis, I created a set of descriptive generalizations from the interview responses and observation data for each of the three participants according to the methods outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994), which involved searching for non-examples that contradicted emerging themes.

Participants

Clark. Clark Wayne, a preservice English teacher in the post-graduate program, had a degree in English from a small college in Virginia and was pursuing his Master of Arts in Teaching degree in English Education. He described among his interests a love for literature, writing, acting, and film, but he believed that it was too difficult to make a living pursuing the arts as a career choice. Clark decided to become a teacher because he liked people and couldn't imagine being cut off from them in an office or cubicle all day. His unique humor, love of film, and awareness of the relationship between acting and teaching was apparent when he noted, "You have to be like Judge Dredd one minute and then the next minute you have to be like a cute, furry bunny" (Interview 1, October 23, 2009). Clark took over the three scripted Reading classes and one Honors English class of his Cooperating Teacher, Bob. Clark felt as if he adjusted his persona for student needs, and valued charisma in his own teacher models. Using nicknames, sarcasm, and slang were common in Clark's interactions with students.

Tina. Tina James was a student in the five-year Master's program in Teaching for Earth Science. Tina was the youngest of five girls, and teaching ran in her family. Tina initially wanted to teach because she loved Earth Science, but explained that she grew to enjoy the part of the job that involved simply interacting with the students. Growing up, Tina attended a large public high school and developed a love of order and organization. As she indicated, "I'm always into like neat piles and knowing where stuff is," (Interview 2, November 13, 2009). Tina taught the four Honors and one Standard Earth Science courses of her Cooperating Teacher, Mary. When not teaching, Tina was often setting up labs or cooperative learning stations and discussing lesson plans with her Cooperating Teacher. Tina wanted to appear professional and convey the content, which she found fascinating. She described adjusting her persona for student levels, though she always addressed students by names (never nicknames) and used a question-based approach in most of her lessons and labs.

Maria. Maria was a preservice Spanish teacher enrolled in the five-year Master's program. Her Puerto Rican heritage was important to her and shaped her interactions with family and friends; she described her family as "very close and loud and emotional and passionate people" (Interview 1, October 30, 2009). She added, "We maintain the part of our cultures where…we eat lots of rice, beans, chicken…we have family nights on Sunday nights where we'll dance salsa" (Field Notes, November 11, 2009). When a student asked about her plans after student teaching, Maria told the student that she was considering moving back near her family or overseas. After moving to the United States as a four-year-old, Maria attended a large public high school, where she took Spanish classes even though she spoke the language because she wanted to relearn it in an academic way. Her parents were also involved in education: her father as a principal and her mother as a counselor. Maria had an unusual placement with three different

Cooperating Teachers: Casey, who taught Spanish 2; Jill, who taught an experimental Immigration class for a wide variety of students; and Diana, who taught two Spanish 4 classes. Maria valued warm relationships with her students and used expressive signals such as broad smiles, open-mouthed laughs, fast hand gestures, and physical contact. She adjusted her persona based on the classroom contexts of her three Cooperating Teachers.

Results

Several areas were common to the participants as they developed, presented, and considered their personae and its development during student teaching; while their resulting personae differed, they shared the same process and challenges. Recalling the theoretical frame, the process of constructing and presenting a persona involved considering the context and using verbal and non-verbal signals to manage others' impressions; in this section I will share a subset of my findings. The participants' shared challenges involved feeling tension when deciding which kinds of personae—or "desired identity image" goals (Schlenker, 1985, p. 95)—they wanted to present. The ways that they made sense of their experience of developing a persona and found the personae that worked for them was through their experiences as a student and as a student teacher, teacher training, and relationships with their Cooperating Teachers.

Tensions of Developing and Presenting Persona: The Balancing Act

The participants experienced two tensions when considering the kind of personae they wanted to present; these were whether to focus on charisma or content, and whether to focus on being professional or having warm relationships with students. All of the participants expressed working to find the right balance when presenting the self, and these choices were linked to forming relationships with students while also managing the class.

Deciding to focus on charisma or content. The first dichotomy in goals for self-presentation that participants identified was whether to focus on conveying the content (in this case, English, Earth Science, or Spanish) or on presenting a charismatic persona (that is, appearing outwardly interesting and dynamic). Clark tended to focus on charisma. He often perched sideways in a director's chair at the front of the room, stroked his chin, and shared random personal details, later likening it to slowly and dramatically revealing the details of an interesting character in literature. Tina spent her time thinking about and delivering her Earth Science content. However, she also noted that she didn't want to bore the students by focusing only on content, saying, "I guess I feel like, I don't want my classes to be dull, but I'm still learning how to get in all that content and still do really fun experiments that they like…and cool stuff, because a lot of times you hear about science teachers doing that but not really getting in the content, or you're feeding them

the content but they're bored out of their minds, and I want to learn how to put those two together (Interview 3, December 2, 2009). Maria had intertwined considerations of charisma and content. She cited a stereotype of foreign language teachers as those who created charismatic personae by being "like the crazy teachers, with the Mexican hats, and you always had parties, and you did weird stuff" (Interview 1, October 30, 2009) and she presented this persona to a certain degree, although she did not wear Mexican hats. She did, however, carefully compose her outfits for visual interest, refer to a certain chair as the "throno," lead the class in rousing renditions of "Feliz Cumpleanos," and participate in a piñata-breaking party in the Immigration class.

These two stances varied depending on the class context: in his scripted reading classes, Clark aimed to present an interesting and charismatic persona by engaging the students with witty or sarcastic comments. He taught a reading curriculum, but he did not make enthusiasm for it a part of his persona. He even publicly equated the program to "taking [their] medicine" (Field Notes, October 23, 2009). There was more of a focus on conveying content in his Honors class because Clark felt pressure from students and parents to do so, and his Supervisor noted that his charismatic persona became less of a focus because the honors students did not respond to it as well as the reading students. Tina made her interest in and knowledge of the content a primary focus in her Honors classes, because she thought the class should be challenging and saw the pupils as prepared to handle the content. In contrast, Tina made more attempts to appear interesting and friendly to the students in the Standard class because she felt that they responded better to a less strict persona. Maria's personal relationship with her content—she grew up speaking Spanish and re-learned it in an academic way in high school and college—affected her view of teaching it because she saw it as sharing her culture with the students. She shared relevant personal anecdotes in all classes, including her own immigration story in the Immigration class.

Deciding to focus on professionalism or warmth. The second dichotomy in the balancing act of self-presentation goals was deciding between a professional, strict persona in order to maintain discipline or a warm persona that involved responsiveness to student needs and maintaining close relationships with students. Maintaining discipline included feeling in control of the class and students, wanting to appear older and more professional, and teaching the required curriculum. Maintaining relationships appeared in such forms as careful listening and responsiveness to student needs such as needing to leave the room for personal reasons. Management and responsiveness were major issues for the participants throughout the semester: these two codes occurred with the highest frequency. The participants saw these two elements of the persona as linked to

classroom management, because they thought that the pupils' behavior would match their own.

These two kinds of goal personae—the professional and the friend—were opposed in that some methods the participants used to form relationships with students, such as using slang or nicknames, often undermined the professional persona. All three student teachers commented on the need to show pupils the "human" side of themselves to build relationships, although they also wanted to appear professional and the level of personal disclosure differed a great deal for each participant. Clark wanted to appear friendly and asked students about their personal lives; he even saw a student perform in a band after school and occasionally shared personal details such as inside jokes from his summer writing program. Tina stated, "I think if you act like you're happy to be there and you're enjoying yourself, like you want to be there and around the kids, then you'll get like positive behavior from them too" (Interview 1, October 26, 2009), although she rarely shared any personal details beyond the fact that she had exotic pets. By contrast, Maria often shared personal anecdotes and commented on how the students noticed her quirky mannerisms.

Discipline made up another aspect of the participants' personae to various degrees. Clark applied discipline to a moderate degree; occasionally writing students' names on the board and giving rewards such as free time. He seemed to attempt to stop problems by moving quickly through the scripted lessons. Tina spent much of her time explaining activities, asking students to stop talking, or waiting for students to be quiet before she began teaching. Tina was very aware of her age and mentioned on multiple occasions that she wanted to appear older so that the students would take her seriously. Maria did not often discipline the students or manage the class beyond describing how group activities would be conducted.

Making Sense of the Presented Persona: Finding the Balance

As they described how their personae developed, there were four ways that the participants made sense of and found the balance between the aforementioned two tensions; this was through experience as a student and student teacher, teacher training, and relationship with their Cooperating Teacher. They felt as if they were able to set goals for self-presentation and reach them by the end of the practicum.

Drawing on experience as a student. The participants' time as students in K-12 and college classrooms exposed them to dozens of teacher models, and this experience provided a baseline of expectations for how teachers could and should behave. Each of the participants recalled teacher models, and these choices indicated their personal preferences for how teachers should behave and dictated their behavior differently.

While Clark preferred teachers who were charismatic, interesting people and aimed to create a similar persona, Tina chose these kinds of teachers as negative examples. She liked teachers who focused on teaching facts and skills and worked to do the same in her own teaching. Clark chose a charismatic teacher model who accepted a student's offer to wrestle during class time, echoing his own choice to collapse dramatically on the floor of the classroom. A teacher who encouraged her to speak more in class was memorable for Tina. She wanted to hear from quiet students as well, and used names on popsicle sticks to call on all students, not just volunteers. Tina also admired a former physics teacher who had displayed lots of enthusiasm; she said that she also tried to show her own love for the content. Maria recalled Diana's quirky mannerisms and close, motherly relationships with students when Maria was her student several years earlier. Maria also shared her personal quirks with the students and got to know them well, often greeting them warmly at the door.

Drawing on experience as a student teacher. The student teaching practicum lasted one semester (although each of the participants had observed and taught in other classrooms during their teacher education program); during this time the participants gained experience through first observing and then gradually taking over their Cooperating Teachers' classes. Simply the act of being the teacher for much of the semester cemented the participants' confidence in their roles. At the end of the practicum, the participants felt as if they had developed their personae over the course of the semester in response to these student interactions, and that they had kept what worked—their positive interactions with students and a certain level of strictness that allowed the class to stay on task—while also eliminating what didn't work for their particular students. For Clark, he thought he had become more authoritarian because the students needed that structure. Tina changed her teaching methods to suit her students' preferences for less lecture and more cooperative grouping. Maria described allowing students to have private conversations if there was some downtime, while toward the middle of the semester she had attempted to stop it in an effort to appear professional.

Ideas about the goals of the course, as defined by the school, Cooperating Teachers, and student teachers, were important to personae as well. The participants responded differently to students in Honors and Standard classes, often delivering content in a businesslike way in advanced classes and presenting a more easygoing self to the lower-tracked classes. Both Clark and Tina felt that students in lower-tracked courses responded more to humor and less to strict content delivery, and Clark even saw some of his jokes fall flat with the Honors class because they wanted to continue talking about their grades. Clark had to use a scripted reading program; as a

result, he appeared to focus more of his efforts on greeting students and maintaining an interesting persona, and not on planning instruction, because it was already planned for him except for his one Honors class. Tina taught all Honors classes except for one Standard class and focused on delivering content—not on revealing much about herself, whether explicitly or implicitly—and on maintaining an organized environment for both her preference and for safety reasons. Mary felt strongly that Honors classes should be more challenging than Standard classes, and Tina accommodated this goal by adjusting her lessons to be simpler for the Standard classes, including using fewer cooperative learning stations or eliminating choices, which she believed could be more confusing for Standard students.

Maria's classes were not tracked, but she described a greater desire to focus on content with the more advanced Spanish 4 classes. In these classes, she could move more freely and use Spanish without having to carefully consider which words she chose because of the students' higher proficiency levels, while for the lower level students she measured her words carefully and reverted to English more often. She commented on the less academic goals such as self-awareness and social interaction in the immigration class as an influence on her choices to have personal conversations and form warmer relationships with students.

The time in the participants' lives during the practicum but not in the classroom also contributed to their understanding and development of their personae. These relevant areas included participants' ideas about who they were in everyday life, with friends and family, or in arenas such as Facebook. Clark noted that his experience with acting informed the ways that he created a character while teaching. Tina said that she "cleaned up" her Facebook page in order to be more professional in case the students found her there. Maria indicated that she wanted to "be herself" when she was teaching, and she did acknowledge that her "trendy" style was a big part of who she was in all arenas of her life. Tina, on the other hand, said that she bought "teacher clothes" and cut her hair shorter when the practicum began.

Drawing on teacher training. Ideas about good teaching from the participants' teacher education program influenced their choices surrounding lesson planning, student interactions, and classroom management; in turn, these choices formed each student teacher's persona. Citing their prior field experiences, methods courses, and content pedagogy courses as factors that influenced their actions while teaching, the participants formed philosophies and used strategies that either drew on or opposed their teacher education program. Clark did not enjoy his content area courses, but he did like his Supervisor and his general methods courses and valued student input even while using a scripted program. Tina used cooperative grouping strategies learned in the program even though she felt that they made classroom management more difficult because she wanted the students to engage with the material; Maria also used models and strategies from her general and content area methods classes because she wanted to keep things interesting and thought it was appropriate for foreign language students, who needed to communicate while learning language. They all drew on their training when deciding the kind of teacher they would be, but experience was also a factor; as Maria stated, "As far as classroom management goes, I feel like we talked [in teacher education courses] about a lot of problems and different designs of things, but it's more experiential, I feel like as you go through experience you kind of figure things out…when we learned classroom management, some things are helpful, some things are not" (Interview 3, December 1, 2009).

Drawing on relationship with cooperating teacher. Finally, the participants' relationships with their Cooperating Teachers were crucial to the development of their personae. Specifically, the participants felt either constrained or free to enact the personae they wanted in the classroom because of their Cooperating Teachers' influence, preference for certain kinds of personae, or kinds of interaction with the pupils while the student teachers were teaching. Bob almost never addressed the class while Clark was teaching, but Diana, Casey, and Mary often did speak to the students during their student teachers' lessons. Of the three participants, Clark felt the freest to behave how he wished, followed by Tina, who had a warm relationship with Mary and indicated that she wanted to behave in similar ways because Tina found her to be a knowledgeable and nurturing content expert. Maria felt constrained in Casey's classroom, but free with Diana and Jill.

Forming their personae was a process of trial and error that was shaped to various degrees by reflection and consultation with the Cooperating Teacher. A requirement of the practicum was at least one weekly meeting to reflect on how the student teachers' lessons were going; in practice, the pairs generally met much more often. During these meetings, the Cooperating Teachers listened to their student teachers' concerns, offered advice, and recommended curriculum or instruction that they had found to be successful. Clark's meetings with Bob were brief. Bob usually gave general, positive feedback about Clark's performance; he only gave direct feedback about a lesson if Clark had made a mistake during instruction— Bob saved this feedback for their private meetings, and never interrupted when the mistake occurred. Clark rarely planned with Bob, but chose to work away from the school instead, even though this opposed the expectations of the program. Clark was confident in his persona, and did not change much from the beginning to the end of the experience. Tina and Mary met often, and carefully planned and reflected on the lessons and assessments that

Tina delivered. After the chance to reflect on her performance for a semester of these meetings, Tina felt confident in her persona and her ability to meet her students' needs. In Maria's meetings with Casey, Casey would share ideas about what she wanted Maria to teach, and she would get involved with the class if Maria did not teach in those ways. Diana offered feedback about Maria's lessons, but was generally positive; she even advised Maria to form her own unique teaching persona, rather than attempting to copy what worked for other teachers, although Maria did borrow successful lessons and strategies from Diana. Because she had picked up the extra class and served more as an aide, Maria rarely met with Jill other than to become more familiar with Jill's upcoming plans for the class. Her meetings with Diana—and her meetings with me—helped Maria process her choices and she felt confident at the end of the practicum, though she was also frustrated because of her less successful meetings and experience with Casey.

Discussion

The findings show that the participants experienced various kinds of tensions as they formed their teaching personae; as they navigated these tensions, they drew on discourses and ideas about good teaching and their various experiences, including the practicum experience. Research supports that discourses from teacher training programs and one's own upbringing can conflict and affect the ways that novice teachers think about their roles (Brown, 2006; Cavanaugh & Prescott, 2007; McCann & Johannessen, 2004). Discourse about what makes a teacher effective and how teachers should behave—from teacher training, upbringing, popular culture, and one's own schooling (Kagan, 1992; Lortie, 1975; Weber & Mitchell, 1995) and the specific context where teachers work, particularly the nature of the teachers' colleagues (Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004; Solomon et al., 1993) can determine how teachers present themselves to students, colleagues, and administrators. While they were considering their roles, identities, and possible selves, these related concepts were still beyond the reach of what these preservice teachers did each day. As they negotiated the many tasks they would complete, presenting certain personae (such as warm or professional, or a content expert or a charismatic figure) became one of these tasks. In addition, the language "persona" resonated with the student teachers in interviews because to them it felt less permanent and more adaptable, as opposed to an identity. They were engaged in the process of trying on which personae would fit.

In this setting, the participants' primary colleagues were their Cooperating Teachers, and these partners were a key form of discourse: they had preferences about how their student teachers should behave (although some were more vocal about these preferences than others), and this affected the resulting

personae that the preservice teachers presented to varying degrees. This echoes research findings that show that external observers can contribute to novice teachers' confidence in their public persona (Cavanaugh & Prescott, 2007; Grossman et al., 1999).

The participants worked to balance their content delivery with an interesting persona. Content knowledge is important to eventual teacher identity (Beijaard et al., 2000; Day et al., 2006) and charisma is commonly equated with teacher quality for novice teachers (Grossman et al., 1999; Virta, 2002). The various ways that the participants thought about who they were figured into their personae: Maria shared elements of her culture, so she formed that identity and presented herself based on discourses of what it means to be Puerto Rican. Tina instantly understood the concept of persona when asked to compare who she was on Facebook with who she was in the classroom or with family.

The participants felt that managing the class was integral to their personae, whether it was deciding whether to appear strict or friendly or responding to the level of class. Preservice teachers enact the personae they believe will help them be successful with their pupils (Grossman et al., 1999). Two forms of classroom management from the findings—maintaining warm relationships with students or appearing charismatic—involved increasing one's likeability through affinity-seeking strategies such as presenting an interesting self or increasing physical attractiveness (Bell & Daly, 1984; McCroskey & McCroskey, 1986).

The participants wanted to maintain control through a charismatic or content expert persona, echoing recent research (Ng et al., 2010). Another form of classroom management was appearing strict in order to increase the pupils' cooperation; this recalls the age-old tenet, "don't smile until Christmas". The particular contexts of the participants drove their choices: Clark could not manage the class's enthusiasm through the content, because it was non-negotiable that he would teach the program, so he attempted to distract and engage students with his persona. Because he perceived that his research-based lessons were already planned, he did not take ownership of them.

Teacher education programs provide a shared set of expectations and values for preservice teachers (Rodgers & Scott, 2008), and the participants responded to these when presenting various selves. Their willingness to use certain strategies at the appropriate times became a part of their personae. More specifically, when Tina and Maria conveyed their desire to match program strategies with student needs during interviews and during planning with their Cooperating Teachers, each took on an open-minded, resourceful persona. This persona was generally recognizable by audiences who knew the program goals, including the Supervisors, Cooperating Teachers, and me. When they used those strategies, the resulting persona

was responsive and engaging, but engaging *through the content*, and not through interesting aspects of their selves. Clark's rejection of elements of the teacher training program based on his teaching philosophy and his particular situation led to a persona that seemed more focused on presenting material through an interesting self and not through interesting methods. However, Clark explained that he wanted to get to know students through his public self, which was partly due to what he had learned in the program. While this kind of visible program influence contradicts much of the research that says that novice teachers revert to teaching the way they were taught (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991; Lortie, 1975; Virta, 2002), it is likely that the quality of this particular program (which has been featured in articles about exemplary teacher education programs) was a factor in its level of influence. The quality of the participants as students is also notable. Because of its high ranking, the program attracts talented, successful preservice teachers, many of them (including these three participants) from two-parent families and safe, upper-middle-class communities with excellent schools and many enrichment opportunities. Students from these contexts may have more successful teacher models and be better able to understand their actions, reflect upon them, and refine them to present their desired classroom personae.

Implications

Persona is complex, and this study has highlighted the need for more investigation into how preservice teachers present a persona in the classroom. There are no existing models to explain teacher persona beyond the one proposed in this study, but this study's participants were constantly thinking about how others perceived their "teacher selves" in the classroom.

Most teacher education programs incorporate theoretical research with practical considerations that student teachers navigate in various practicum experiences. However, persona occupies a different realm—it is based not in the traditional theory and practice of education, but in social psychology—but these findings indicate that considerations of the persona are salient for student teachers. Written reflection is a crucial step toward identifying how and why one presents oneself in public. Thus, teacher training programs may have an increased need for reflection on persona. Because the partnerships of these student teachers and their Cooperating Teachers were a contributing factor to the participants' final personae, schools of education that do not already do so should consider careful matching of Cooperating Teachers and student teachers. The participants who felt most comfortable with their personae and their student teaching experience were the ones who were given the freedom to try on different personae without immediate involvement from the

Cooperating Teacher—but with the chance to later process their experiences verbally.

Further research is needed in several areas. The teacher education program that formed a shared personal context for the participants has been labeled "high quality" in multiple studies of teacher education programs; future studies should investigate more about the effect of high-quality teacher education programs on persona development, or on high-performing students' capability for adopting certain personae more readily. Also, because the participants varied their response to and treatment of students in different academic tracks, their choices may have impacted student learning in unintended ways. Along these same lines, although it was beyond the scope of this study, findings suggested that pupils responded differently to their student teachers' personae. Future studies should investigate the effects of different teacher personae on pupils.

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