MID-WESTERN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHER

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Judith Herb College of Education,
Health Science and Human Service
Carver Resource Center
The University of Toledo

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Message from the Dean

The Judith Herb College of Education, Health Science and Human Service is pleased to support the Midwest Educational Researcher. We are featuring the Carver Resource Center which is housed in the college. It is a technology and curriculum resource center designed to serve student, faculty and staff needs in our 55 programs. It supports teaching, research and service for faculty. It provides students with the numerous resources to enhance their learning experiences. Its services include technology training, equipment loans, mobile technology carts, library assistance, mediated teaching classrooms, video conferencing, printing, lamination and a wide variety of audio/visual services. The Center remains at a "state of the art" status through a technology fee. This resource is applauded by all who avail themselves of this special center. We are fortunate to house and benefit from the Carver Resource Center.

Beverly J. Schmoll

Dean, Judith Herb College of Education, Health Science and Human Service

The University of Toledo

Notes from the Editors' Roundtable

One of our overarching goals as the new editorial team for the Mid-Western Educational Researcher is to diversify the content of the journal to include other types of publications. We have moved forward with this in mind and are pleased to present this issue, which includes two new sections: Book and Media Reviews and Point/Counterpoint. In the Book and Media Review section authors provide readers with analyses of contemporary works of interest to the educational community. The Point/Counterpoint section explores a specific educational, pedagogical or methodological issue from different viewpoints. In this issue, Steven Wade Mackie presents a review of EcoJustice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities by Martusewicz, Edmundson, and Lupinacci. For the Point/Counterpoint section, we are pleased to present an article by Joseph Maxwell regarding the use of paradigms in mixed methods and another by Burke Johnson where he discusses this issue from a different perspective. We hope these new sections offer additional venues for the readership to consider issues and ideas important to our educational community.

In addition to expanding the content of the journal, we continue to work toward an online platform for the journal and will present a mock-up version of an online issue at the 2011 annual MWER conference in St. Louis. We are very excited about this work and about the possibilities it holds for the journal and for the organization. We believe this move will position us well for the future and will provide both authors and readers with the best journal possible. Having an online presence will allow the journal to be more visible—regionally, nationally, and internationally—and potentially to publish more articles each year. We invite you to provide feedback as we unveil this exciting new development at the annual conference.

We continue to expand our reviewer base and hope that you, our readers, will consider becoming a reviewer. We believe this is important work that must be taken seriously if the journal is going to present high quality scholarship. The journal needs a strong cadre of reviewers from a wide array of disciplines in order to provide authors with timely and substantive feedback. Please consider serving your educational community in this way—we can never have too many names on our reviewer list.

This is an exciting time for the Mid-Western Educational Researcher and for us as the Editors. We hope that you consider submitting your work, reviewing manuscripts, and utilizing the journal in your research and teaching. As we move forward in our editorial work, we remain committed to insuring the ongoing success and quality scholarship of the journal, even as its form may change. Should you ever have any questions, comments, or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact us at MWER@uakron.edu.

In service,

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A "Tale of Two Cities:" A Comparative Case Study of Community Engagement and Costs in Two Levy Campaigns

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Abstract

Using Anderson's (1998) framework for authentic community engagement and Levin and McEwan's (2001) "ingredients method," this comparative case study analyzed contrasting approaches to levy campaigns undertaken by two suburban school districts and the associated costs of the campaigns. We found that District A ran a campaign that "authentically" engaged community members with lower opportunity costs for district personnel (administrators and teachers) and success at the polls. District B ran a "central office campaign" with higher opportunity costs for district personnel and defeat at the polls. While overall costs for District A were higher than those of District B, costs per registered voter were lower for District A than District B.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times…" (Dickens, 1859)

The troubled and often litigated history of Ohio's school finance program is well documented (Alexander & Alexander, 2009; Hunter, 2000; Maxwell & Sweetland, 2008). Like other states, Ohio funds its schools through a combination of local property taxes and state aid. However, Ohio is unusual for the sheer frequency in which voters are asked to decide whether or not to approve additional taxation for the purposes of funding schools. Fleeter (2007) states that, "Ohio relies on voter approval of tax levies to support public education to a greater extent than any other state in the nation" (p. 1), noting that from 1994 to 2006 there were 3,433 local school tax issues on ballots in Ohio.

The multitude of local property tax levies in Ohio results in part from a 1976 constitutional amendment that prohibits property taxes from increasing as property values rise. As a result, districts are forced to continually return to the ballot just to keep up with inflationary costs. Maxwell and Sweetland (2008) have noted:

> Ohio's schools are sometimes faced with the dilemma of explaining that the schools are receiving no additional funds from voted in taxes. Under an accountability model, this leaves school officials with an 'uphill' task in convincing voters that additional revenues are necessary. (§4.10)

As one researcher (Johnson, 2008) put it, "there are two types of school districts in Ohio: those that are on the ballot and those that will be" (p. 45).

Broadly speaking, a tax levy is an issue placed on the ballot that seeks voter approval for a specified amount to be raised by a given millage rate. The state of Ohio allows school boards a number of different tax levy options. These include permanent improvement levies that can only be used to make improvements to facilities or purchase equipment with life spans of 5+ years; bond issues that provide for the construction and renovation of buildings and facilities; and income tax levies that can be used for operational or permanent improvements to facilities. A levy can go toward a specified project, but in Ohio, it is more likely that districts will opt to use the revenue generated for general operations of the school district (Maxwell & Sweetland, 2008). Such is the case with operating levies. Operating levies can be for fixed periods of time and subject to voter renewal or continuing. Renewals are tax burdens already being borne by voters, but voters perceive new operating levies as requests for additional taxation. Indeed, research suggests that new operating levies have the highest failure rates among voters (Fleeter, 2007; Johnson & Ingle, 2009). From February 1994 to November 2006, Ohio voters have only approved 54.6% of all operating levies statewide including renewal levies. New levies, which provided additional funds for schools, passed at an even lower rate of 43% (Fleeter, 2007). This trend was borne out in the November 2008 campaign results. Out of 236 levies on the ballot, 99 were new operating levies. Out of these 99 only 22 were approved by voters in their districts.

Various studies have examined the factors that influence the outcome of school budget referenda/or bond issues, such as demographic/district variables (e.g., Berkman & Plutzer, 2006; Bowers, Metzger, & Militello, 2010; Ehrenberg, Ehrenberg, Smith, & Zhang, 2004; Gradstein & Kaganovich, 2004; Ladd & Murray, 2001; Poterba, 1997; Sanders & Lee, 2009). Research has also examined the political tactics that are related to school budget referenda passage (e.g., Balsdon, Brunner, & Rueben, 2003; Davis & Tyson, 2003; Johnson & Ingle, 2009). While it has been suggested (Hunter, 2000; Johnson, 2008; Johnson & Ingle, 2009) that levy campaigns are a drain on Ohio school districts' human and financial resources, there does not appear to be research that estimates the costs associated with school levy campaigns.

Using interviews with stakeholders from two school districts in suburban municipalities, budget data, state administrative data, and district websites, this study sought to address this dearth in the literature by asking:

1. To what extent (and how) did the sampled districts engage the community in pursuit of levy passage?

2. What were the costs associated with the two campaigns?

Theoretical Frameworks

Scholars have noted the presence of rhetoric espousing the importance of stakeholder participation in educational reform efforts in the United States. But like the research on parent-teacher involvement in the classroom, evidence suggests that it seldom goes beyond rhetoric or superficiality (Anderson, 1998; Beare, 1993; Hargreaves, 1994; Malen & Ogawa, 1988; Schutz, 2006; Smyth, 1993). As Schutz (2006) recently noted, "schools and school districts erect barriers with one hand while reaching out with another" (p. 726). Community engagement researchers (e.g., Arriaza, 2004; Comer, 1993, 1998; Epstein, 2001; Schutz, 2006) suggest that community members can be the greatest adversaries or allies to a district's efforts. For the community to be the latter, research suggests that school leaders must be open to community engagement and toward that end, gain an extensive knowledge of the communities in which they serve and provide meaningful ways in which stakeholder can be involved in the education of their youth (Arriaza, 2004; Schutz, 2006).

Notably, Anderson (1998) developed a framework that considers the micro- and macro-political considerations toward what he terms "authentic participation." Anderson has found that "authentic participation" is atypical. Indeed, Anderson contends that discourse of participation is often used "as a cover term for institutional arrangements and management techniques that, while purporting to advance democracy and change, too often tend to support an inequitable status quo" (p. 587). This, in turn, results in a decreased likelihood of true community-school engagement. It is Anderson's theoretical framework for authentic participation that guided the qualitative aspects of this study.

Economic evaluations have been noted as being rarer in education than other public policy arenas (Levin, 1991; Harris, 2009; Monk & King, 1993; Rice, 1997; Ross, 2008). This void appears to be changing, as there has been a recent spate of studies estimating the costs associated with educational activities, including volunteerism (Brent, 2000). Brent found that volunteers improve school-community relations, but high poverty schools attract fewer volunteers than low poverty schools. Brent also found that volunteers provide valuable services to schools without pay, but are not cost free. Costs are incurred for training and recognition programs/activities, which are important for ensuring quality, knowledge of district policies and procedures, and increasing the likelihood of future volunteerism.

Costs, broadly defined, are resources used in the production of a good or service. In an educational environment characterized by increased accountability, there is an intuitive need for the identification of resource costs and economic evaluation of education programs. To estimate the costs of levy campaigns, we utilize Levin and McEwan's (2001) "ingredients method", which has been called the "ideal approach to measuring costs" (Harris, Taylor, Levine, Ingle, & McDonald, 2008, p. 25). Levin and McEwan's analytical framework provides a means of systematically identifying and estimating costs associated with a program or activity. First, resources are identified and grouped into categories (e.g., personnel, facilities, equipment). These various resources are measured in raw units (e.g., the number of hours spent on a particular task), the costs of which are then estimated.

Methodology

Part of a larger project that sought to estimate the costs of five new operating levies (Ingle, Petroff, & Johnson, in press), this study emerged after analysis indicated that the two suburban school districts—although similar demographically—chose to employ two distinct and differing approaches to campaigning. To delve deeper into this phenomenon, we employed a two-district comparative case study (Yin, 2003), in order to examine the contrasting approaches undertaken by the sampled districts. Although limited in its generalizability, this study provides detailed evidence of the alternatives that districts can take in engaging their communities in levy campaigns and the extent to which resources (budgetary and human resource) are expended. Next, we discuss specific aspects of our research methods, including case study site selection, data sources, qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis.

Site Selection

Our study examined two districts that placed new operating levies on the November 2008 ballot in the state of Ohio. The two districts were purposely selected due to their similarities (see Table 1). Both are small, suburban munici-

Table 1
Select District Characteristics for 2008

	District Characteristics					
District	% White[a]	% Minority[a]	% Free/Reduced Lunch[a]	Enrollment[b]	Total Expenditures Per Pupil[b]	District Designation
A	90	10	10	4,500	10,000	Excellent with Distinction
B	85	15	15	3,000	10,600	Excellent with Distinction

Notes: [a] Numbers are rounded to the nearest five in order to protect the identity of the cooperating districts.
[b] Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100 in order to protect the identity of the cooperating districts.

palities serving similar student populations as well as being high performing districts under Ohio's school accountability system[1]. Suburban school districts make up approximately 25% of all districts in the state of Ohio.[2] In addition to implementing contrasting approaches to engaging the communities they serve, these two districts also had different outcomes at the polls—one district's levy was approved by the voters, while the other was not.

Data Sources

Four sources of data were utilized in this study including interviews with key stakeholders, budgets, state reports, and district websites. Fifteen participants from the two Ohio school districts were interviewed. Ten informants were interviewed in District A. Informants from District A consisted of the superintendent, treasurer, campaign co-chairs, administrative assistant, two principals, two community volunteers responsible for public relations and data analysis, and the door-to-door committee chair. Five were interviewed in District B. These consisted of interviews with the superintendent, treasurer, public relations officer, a principal, and a teacher.

Participant selection was based on their involvement in the development and implementation of campaign strategies. Preliminary informants were purposively selected from the sampled districts based on their leadership roles within the district and campaign. These initial informants consisted of the district superintendent, school treasurer, and/or campaign chairs from each of the districts. Using a snowball sampling technique, initial informants were asked to identify additional informants who participated in the campaigns (e.g., parent, teacher, and community volunteers). Interviews were approximately one to two hours in length and consisted of questions related to their role in the levy campaign, the costs associated with the campaign, and the extent to which the community was engaged (and how). Informants were asked to discuss levy campaign activities and costs in terms of three stages: campaign planning, campaign implementation, and campaign debriefing. We define debriefing activities as those that involve analyzing the results and factors that contributed to the success or defeat of the levy campaign being studied.

Budgetary documents consisted of two different types: campaign budgets and district budgets. By law, campaign budgets must be filed with the local board of elections and are readily available to the general public, typically via the internet or by request. These campaign budgets indicate money donations and "in-kind" donations (donated goods and services) and from whom they are received. These documents also indicate how campaign funds were spent. In addition to being useful for estimating costs, these documents also served as a means of triangulating statements made by informants.

We drew upon district budgets to estimate costs associated with campaign activities. District budgets were used to estimate costs associated with individuals. For example, if a superintendent estimated X number of hours were spent on the campaign, we could use the district budgets to identify annual salaries and estimate hourly rates (annual salary ÷ 52 weeks per year ÷ 40 hours per week = hourly rate).

A third source of data that we drew from was publicly available District Data Profiles3 (formerly known as Cupp Reports) that document district characteristics (e.g., average daily membership, median salaries). These were particularly useful in compiling district demographic characteristics, academic performance characteristics, and calculating the human resource costs of teacher and community volunteers when individually specific salaries were not available.

Lastly, we also analyzed the sampled districts' levy campaign websites[4] that are also publicly available via the Internet. These were used to identify and target informants for interview. Furthermore, they served as a means of triangulating statements made by informants. For example, informants made statements about the number of meetings held and when and where these events took place, which could be triangulated by documents available at these websites.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis: Community engagement. For qualitative analysis, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interview transcripts were coded using NVivo7. Our coding of the transcripts was initially guided by Anderson's (1998) framework of "authentic" participation provided in Table 2. These included the codes of: broad inclusion; relevant participation; authentic local conditions and process; coherence between the means and end of participation; and a focus on broader structural inequities.

Anderson also addressed sources of "inauthenticity" as seen in Table 3. Broadly, these were: participation as public relations and response to a crisis of legitimation; participation as disciplinary practice and technology of control; par-

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1   Under Ohio's accountability system, districts are rated using multiple measures including, performance on state indicators, a performance index score, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and value-added data. The Performance Index and value-added results recognize the achievement levels of students, as well as progress over time. School and districts are designated as "Excellent with Distinction," "Excellent," "Effective," "Continuous Improvement," "Academic Watch" or "Academic Emergency." The "Excellent with Distinction" designation was new to the 2007-2008 Local Report Card. This designation is earned when a school or district has been designated "Excellent" and exceeds value-added goals for two consecutive years.

2   In Ohio, districts are categorized as: 0=Island/college corner, 1=Rural/agricultural—high poverty, low median income; 2 Rural/agricultural—small student population, low poverty, low to moderate median income; 3 Rural/Small Town—moderate to high median income; 4 Urban—low median income, high poverty; 5 Major Urban—very high poverty; 6 Urban/Suburban—high median income; 7 Urban/Suburban—very high median income, very low poverty. The two sampled districts are "suburban" districts. Suburban districts make 25% of all districts in Ohio when typologies 6 and 7 are combined.

3   Retrieved at http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEPrimary.aspx?page=2&TopicRelationID=1441

4   These are not provided in order to protect the anonymity of the sampled districts.

Table 2

Anderson's Framework for Moving toward Authentic Participation (1998)

	Micropolitical Considerations
Authenticity as…	Key Question
Broad inclusion	Who participates?
Relevant participation	Participation in what spheres?
Authentic local conditions and processes	What conditions and processes should be present locally?

	Macropolitical Considerations
Authenticity as…	Key Question
Coherence between means and ends of participation	Participation toward what end?
Focus on broader structural inequities	What conditions and processes should be present at broader institutional and societal levels?

Table 3

Anderson's Sources of Inauthenticity (1998)

Inauthenticity as…	Subcodes
Participation as public relations and response to a crisis of legitimation	• One-way communication • Support for existing arrangement • Citizen as dependent consumer • Educator as autonomous professional
Participation as disciplinary practice and technology of control	• Regulatory control (state) • Professional control (school district personnel) • Democratic control (constituents)
Participation as a form of collusion	• District and upper-/middle class interests • Districts and commercial interests
Participation as choice in a competitive marketplace	• Anti-politics • School choice • Choice among referenda—multiple levies on the ballot (e.g. police, fire, parks and recreation)

ticipation as a form of collusion participation as choice in a competitive marketplace.

We also developed codes iteratively and inductively provided in Table 4. These dealt with campaign strategies utilized and externalities that were reported as characteristic of the November 2008 election period.

After the data were coded, we used an iterative team memo-writing process in our analysis. This process is an analytical tool that allows qualitative researchers to abstract meaning from data through a process in which the researcher becomes immersed in the collection and interpretation of data (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Memo-writing also aided in the mapping of preliminary research activities such as data collection and facilitated communication among members of the research team (Birks Chapman, & Francis, 2008). For this study, individual members of the research team independently analyzed the coded data and wrote memos in which we summarized findings. We then met as a team and discussed their content, the extent to which similar codes and themes emerged, and determined whether further analysis was needed. Memos were written until we had achieved theoretical and empirical saturation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Table 4

Iterative and Inductive Coding

Themes	Codes
Strategies	• Clear Vision • Urgency • Ongoing, Year round campaign • Using student achievement data/accountability • Town hall meetings • Civic group meetings • Coffee talks • Campaign length • Board support • District personnel education on the issues • Analyzing previous results and campaigns • Using board of elections data • Targeted campaign literature • Organization • High profile administrative role • Low profile administrative role • Avoiding controversy • Social media • Student participation
Externalities	• Economy • "Obama bump"

Quantitative analysis: Campaign cost estimation. In determining the total resource costs incurred in school levy campaigns, the economic as well as the accounting costs need to be analyzed. Accounting costs report only "hard-dollar" costs—the actual expenditures that are found in budgets. Economic costs differ in that they include opportunity costs, which Levin and McEwan (2001) describe as the cost of choosing one option over another. For example, if an individual chooses to volunteer their time for an organization, the individual chooses to forego spending their time in any other activities, such as gardening, spending time with family, or earning additional income.

In this study, campaign costs were identified using Levin and McEwan's (2001) ingredients method. Actual expenditures were derived from the campaign finance reports filed with the respective counties. In order to estimate human resource costs, interviews with key stakeholders, publicly available district profiles, budgets and websites were utilized in order to draw upon all possible sources of data.

Findings

We organized our discussion of findings around the research questions that we sought to address. First, we sought to examine how and to what extent the two sampled districts engaged their communities in pursuit of levy passage. Our qualitative findings are organized around Anderson's (1998) framework for authentic participation. We then turn to our quantitative findings, which sought to determine the costs associated with the two campaigns.

Engaging the Community: How and to What Extent?

Participants, roles, and local conditions. Starting at the Levy Campaign Committee level (see Table 5), one can see differences in committee composition. District A had a total of 21 participants with 62% of the committee represented by parents/community members. District B had a total of 35 participants and only 14% of the committee represented by parents/community members. Administrators (school and district level) comprised only 19% of District A's campaign committee. In comparison, administrators comprised approximately 43% of District B's campaign committee.

In the case of District A, informants described previous campaign committees under prior superintendencies as committees that offered "only lip service" to engaging community support. The present superintendent and community campaign committee reversed this trend by extensively using parent/community volunteers. In the November campaign, committee members had clearly defined roles and responsi-

bilities as listed in Table 6. Some roles and responsibilities are self-explanatory to the reader (e.g., Campaign Treasurer). Others are less so, such as the Preschools Subcommittee, which was responsible for proliferating informational brochures to parents at preschools during pickup and drop off times. Another was the "Community Contact Subcommittee." Co-Chairs of this subcommittee were responsible for recruiting and coordinating groups of volunteers to cover events such as football games, local group meetings (e.g., churches), and local festivals/fairs. Volunteers were involved in proliferating informational brochures and fundraising.

District A informants described similar levels of organization among rank-and-file volunteers. For example, the parent-led Yard Sign Subcommittee divided the school district into neighborhoods that were each assigned neighborhood leaders. These leaders were responsible for distributing yard signs. As one informant explained:

> We had a great yard sign chair who was a new parent volunteer recruited at the elementary level in the district…On top of doing yard signs, there were 33 large road signs. This person also coordinated on the day of election to get "thank you" put on them so that they were very visible [to drivers]. And we used the neighborhood leaders to do that.

District B's campaign activities were similar to those of District A, describing similar key elements used in the November 2008 campaign as did District A, such as sending direct mailings to parents, hosting community forums, phone calling, using board of elections data, seeking endorsements from key business and civic leaders, and running a positive campaign that focused on the district's high accountability rating (Excellent with Distinction). However, District A's committee and subcommittee structure was characterized by greater stakeholder diversity. In contrast, District B's campaign committee/subcommittee structure, campaign planning and implementation, was consistently reported by informants as "administratively-led." One district level administrator from District B described it as being a "campaign implemented by the administrative team for 90+ percent, seeking support from teachers, operational staff and parents for less than 10 percent." A school-level administrator described his role in the campaign stating:

> We met regularly—the administrative team district wide. We all were assigned to various committees. One committee that I had was the sign committee. One of the responsibilities I had was to go around the city and place signs where they needed to be placed and collect them back at the end of the levy campaign. I was also involved in the phoning

Table 5

Levy Campaign Committee Participants

District	School Board Members	District-level Staff	Principals	Teachers	Parents/Community Members	Total
A	2 (9.5%)	3 (14.3%)	1 (4.8%)	2 (9.5%)	13 (61.9%)	21
B	5 (14.3%)	6 (17.1%)	9 (25.7%)	10 (28.6%)	5 (14.3%)	35

Table 6

District A's Campaign Committee Members and Roles

District A Campaign Committee Members	Stakeholder Type
Co-Chair	Parent
Co-Chair	Board member/grandparent
Campaign Treasurer	Community member
Campaign Coach	Parent
District Liaison	District level staff
Fundraising Subcommittee Co-Chair	Community member
Fundraising Subcommittee Co-Chair	Parent
Letters-to-the-Editor Subcommittee Chair	Community member
Events Subcommittee Co-Chair	Board member
Events Subcommittee Co-Chair	Parent
Preschools Subcommittee Chair	Parent
Mailings Subcommittee Co-Chair	Parent
Mailings Subcommittee Co-Chair	Parent
Door-to-Door Subcommittee Co-Chair	Teacher
Door-to-Door Subcommittee Co-Chair	Principal
Community Contact Subcommittee Co-Chair	Teacher
Community Contact Subcommittee Co-Chair	Parent
Visual Communications Subcommittee Chair	Parent
Website Subcommittee Co-Chair	District level staff
Website Subcommittee Co-Chair	District level staff
Yard Sign Subcommittee Chair	Parent

committee. We were contacting our constituents by phone using a list we got from the election board.

District A's campaign committee scheduled a total of 22 meetings—12 meetings over 6 weeks devoted to planning the campaign, 9 meetings for the actual campaign, and a debriefing meeting to recognize campaign volunteers and ask for their support in future campaigns. Informants from District B reported 28 meetings in total, consisting of 4 planning meetings lasting 2 hours each and 20 meetings during the campaign, lasting 2 hours each. District B informants reported 4 debriefing meetings lasting approximately an hour each that were devoted to analyzing the November 2008 campaign and its results.

Relevant "spheres of participation". In Ohio, the failure of a levy can have an impact on what resources are available for personnel and programs. The onus of tough decision-making falls on superintendents and boards of education. For community members, administrators, and instructional personnel, school levy campaigns offer an opportunity to work together to prevent (or at least mitigate) painful cuts through planning and implementing a successful levy campaign. Anderson (1998) contends that authentic involvement is characterized as going beyond the surface level with stakeholders taking active roles in governance and decisionmaking, educational equity/quality, and curriculum implementation. This notion would be in opposition to what Mann (1976) described as "a public relations approach" to participation— surface-level involvement characterized by one-way communication (from schools and district), support for status quo arrangements, citizens as dependent consumers, and educators as autonomous professionals.

In both District A and District B, there was evidence that venues (e.g., coffee meetings, public forums) were made available to stakeholders within the district. Our evidence suggests that one-way communication was not a characteristic present in either district. District A's campaign committee offered a variety of public events for the purpose of proliferating information, building support, and answering stakeholder questions. The committee documented 65 public events, ranging from PTO meetings, coffees at private residences, meetings with homeowners' associations, faculty meetings, open public forums at libraries, and meetings with business and civic organizations.

District B also sponsored public forums and meetings to proliferate information, building support, and answer stakeholder questions, but administrators ran these. An administrator from District B stated, "We had community meetings…We gave small presentations and answered questions. I actually facilitated some of those meetings." District B's administratively-led campaign was driven not by a desire to limit authentic community engagement, but by past precedent. As a central office administrator from District B noted, "In the past we had been able to win [levy referenda] running campaigns that were top-down driven. We did that in November [2008] and that did not work for a lot of reasons." In reality, District B informants were open to whatever it would take to gain public support for their referenda, especially after the November 2008 loss. Our informants from District B indicated that out of desperation, they quickly changed their tack after the November loss, purposefully seeking the active engagement of the community. A building level principal in District B contrasted his experience in the next campaign:

Well I'm not really involved as I have been in the past because we have so many community volunteers this time around so I am not needed as much—although I did participate in the phone calling again this time. I did not have to do signs

because we had community people doing that now, which is kind of nice.

As to support for existing arrangements, we found no evidence that administrators and/or campaign committee members in District A were interested in keeping the status quo in community engagement. Their campaign efforts sought to build as much community engagement and public support as possible. In the case of District B, we found evidence of Meyer and Rowan's (1977) notion of legitimating rituals—those that provide evidence of stakeholder participation, but real participation is lacking. District B's levy campaign committee was present, but our data point to administrators at the district and building level doing "all the heavy lifting" with community members serving with honorary/advisory appointments and nominal participation. Indeed our data suggest that the only status quo that the two districts were trying to maintain were that of the educational services and programs in November 2008 without further cuts. District A had already cut spending as proof that budgets were tight and would get tighter if the levy was not passed. As one informant explained:

> Part of our sell was that we were reducing spending by 2% to try to ask as little as possible. We also had that infographic about how our fuel costs had soared so people could personally relate. I know I used that in the door-to-door a lot.

In District A, administrators and the campaign committee cited high performance and the district's reputation as being one of the best in the state. The superintendent stated, "I think we found a good message. We do a great job here and I think we played upon that." This was tempered with the campaign committee's creating a sense of urgency that was built around the threat of additional cuts to programs and that the high quality that had been attained could be lost. The superintendent further explained:

> In _____ at that time, the values were holding with the housing properties. We were talking about how this is a destination district. As long as we are that district, people are going to be willing to buy their homes so that was a big part of that. So just look at what we do additionally over the top. The state said these are the things we have to provide and we don't have the operational funds, so we are going to go back to the core. All the additional things that make us unique—the elementary orchestra and those kinds of things—are going to go away. So it was a mixture of letting people know all the things we do over and above and what was at risk.

District B's November 2008 campaign was a positive one that focused solely on the district's quality rather than what was at risk. This would change drastically in their later campaign activities. As a principal explained:

> The difference between the two levy campaigns is there was no discussion of cuts, no discussion of

the loss of services at all prior to the levy campaign in November. Prior to [the current campaign] we had not listed what we will not have. We have even listed several teachers out of this building [subject to reductions in force]. Transportation and key administrators at the central office—there are a number of cuts that have been put out there for the public whereas we did not do anything like that in the fall. There was none of that.

Schutz (2006) has noted the propensity of adults to treat youths as subjects of adult authority, leading to feelings of alienation among young people and an under-utilized source of positive energy. Student volunteers took active roles in the levy campaign of District A. The activities were student-selected, student-driven, and one could even argue that their volunteerism also drew upon their own expertise—in this case, online social networks—thus providing a new venue to utilize in getting out the vote. Students were also involved in activities such as proliferating information at community events and sign distribution. District B also utilized students, but on a limited basis and on very specific functions. Students from a media class put together an informational commercial for local cable broadcasting. The video highlighted positive things that the district, educators, and students had done (or were doing).

Anderson (1998) argues that, "participation becomes a form of collusion in that it can reinforce the power of groups with similar interests" (p. 580). Although the minority and free/reduced meal enrollments within both districts were low (see Table 1), the interests and message of the community campaign committee were those that represented the interests of educators and its relatively affluent stakeholders. There is no evidence to suggest that the campaign committee or administration of either district limited or discounted the engagement of minority or low socio-economic status (SES) stakeholders. Public forums were held in central, easily accessible locations (e.g., libraries) within districts. As a campaign committee member explained:

> The campaign didn't specifically reach out to low income or minority groups. Overall, we didn't have much of a targeted approach. We did target the postcards somewhat with the parents and child-bearing age registered active voters receiving one message and non-parents over 50 receiving a different message. We did try to reach out to seniors with a few presentations and visits.

In the case of District A, there was a neighborhood leader assigned to the small enclave of low SES and minority families. Campaign canvassing reports indicate that the sole low SES/minority neighborhood was canvassed in the door-to-door campaign, just like every other neighborhood within the district. Interview data confirmed information provided in spreadsheets. In sum, the message that the low SES/high minority neighborhood received was that of every other neighborhood in the district. However, there was also

no minority or low SES representation on the community campaign committees of either district.

Macropolitics: Broader structural considerations. Qualitative findings suggest four major macropolitical themes including state campaign policies, state education finance policy, the high profile nature of the November 2008 ballot, and lastly, the state of the nation's and Ohio's economy. With regard to the first theme, all of the administrators and teachers interviewed for this study regardless of district were always quick to point out that their campaign activities were before or after the school day had ended. Per §9.03 of the Ohio Revised Code, political subdivisions can expend public funds to communicate information, but not to support or oppose the passage of a levy or bond issue. When asked directly how much of his time on the campaign was during school hours, a principal from District B replied, "We were really careful about separating our time because we don't want anyone calling us on that. We didn't want [informational] coffee meetings on school time without reimbursing the district." Likewise, a teacher from District A said, "I did this all after work or on weekends."

The November ballot has tended to be a popular time to place levies on the ballot. One reason for this is that "charge back"[5] costs to the districts tend to be less because there are more referenda on the ballots when there are national elections, especially in Presidential elections. In addition, Ohio state law caps the amount that county board of elections can charge during a presidential general election. Both districts hoped that the high profile Presidential election of November 2008 would work to the advantage of the district. As an informant from District A put it, "We knew it would be off the chart turnout because of the Presidential election. Historically, we knew we did well when the voter turnout is high." The superintendent of District A also noted the importance of the 2008 Presidential campaign featuring Obama and McCain. He stated:

> It was the first time a Democratic nominee carried _____ by a large amount. The turnout helped. I don't remember the exact break down. I think younger families, kids who are coming back and voting from college. I think we did benefit, I think they were energized by the Obama campaign. I think it did help us.

A teacher from District B stated, "We hoped the high turnout would help get us over the top, but it didn't happen."

Overwhelmingly, the dire state of the economy in Ohio and the nation exacerbated public concern of additional tax levies in both districts. It was consistent across all informants that the recession and job losses were weighing heavily in the minds of stakeholders. In District B, informants suggested

that the amount requested was too much in the face of the recession, paired with unclear consequences and a lack of urgency. Informants from District B also noted economic concerns such as ongoing uncertainty, local and regional business closures, job losses, and falling home values that weighed heavily on the minds of voters. A central office administrator from District B stated:

> The levy we came back with in May asked for a smaller amount, possibly more palatable than November. There were also real consequences if it did not pass that we could actually articulate and I think that is critical for anybody, especially with the tough economic times.

Eventually, two community members would be recruited to chair the campaign committee, but informants from District A reported extreme difficulties in finding someone willing to chair, due in part to the economic situation and fear of leading a lost cause. District A's Superintendent stated:

> Looking back now, we had trouble finding someone to step up to be the campaign chair. There was a real reluctance. We were getting names of people from the community, "You need to have this person and that person." When we contacted them, it was like, "I am willing to help but I don't want to be the one to lead the band."

In the end, the economic situation was one that challenged both districts in their efforts to garner public support for their levies. Both districts used similar campaign strategies, but the greatest difference was the extent to which community members were involved in the development and implementation of the campaigns. While District A extensively involved community members from various stakeholder groups, District B opted to run an administratively-led, low key campaign that targeted "yes" voters with a positive message and hoped to avoid energizing opposition efforts. District A's efforts were successful, but it was by a small margin of victory (54% to 46%). District B's levy did not pass, leaving the superintendent and board to turn their attention to the next campaign. As one informant from District B put it, "We were being proactive. Now we are being reactive and there is a greater sense of urgency."

Estimating Campaign Costs

The cost categories and ingredients for the two sampled districts are identified in Table 7. Ingredients were identified by means of four data sources (interviews with key stakeholders, budgets, state reports, and district websites). Initial analysis started with the campaign finance reports filed by law with the county board of elections for each district. The next step was to classify any tangible costs identified during the interview process. The ingredients were divided into one of five cost categories—human resources, facilities, fees, marketing, and supplies.

In estimating human resource costs, actual salaries for individuals (e.g., Superintendents and Treasurers) were used

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5   Charge backs are the board of elections fees charged to districts for placing a levy on the ballot. Ohio statute prohibits county board of elections from assessing the full charge back costs in even-numbered years in which a general and/or primary election is being held. As the November 2008 was a general election, the costs to the districts were smaller for that time period.

Table 7
Cost Worksheet, Districts A and B, November 2008

Cost Categories & Ingredients	District A				District B		
	Low Estimatea	Medium Estimate	High Estimate		Low Estimate	Medium Estimate	High Estimate
Human Resources							
Administrators	1,148	1,305	1,453		1,336	1,781	2,254
Teachers	900	1,000	1,100		10,125	12,500	15,125
Community Volunteers	19,941	24,255	28,465		1,165	1,438	1,740
Students	936	1,147	1,358		1,175	1,305	1,436
PR/Statistical Analysis	9,000	9,000	9,000		630	755	1,129
Subtotal for Human Resources	31,925	36,707	41,376		14,430	17,780	21,683
Facilities							
Homes	236	534	1,153		31	68	151
Board of Education/Public Buildings	29	73	175		79	177	314
Utilities Prorateb	10	22	46		3	5	9
Subtotal for Facilities	275	629	1,374		113	251	474
Fees							
District Chargeback	3,097	3,097	3,097		1,591	1,591	1,591
Event Fees	25	25	25				
Subtotal for Fees	3,122	3,122	3,122		1,591	1,591	1,591
Marketing							
Technology	17	17	17				
Signs	4,390	4,390	4,390		1,029	1,029	1,029
Advertisements & Posters			3,074		3,074	3,074	
Mailings & Postage	790	790	790		3,748	3,748	3,748
Give aways	1,030	1,030	1,030				
Subtotal for Marketing	6,227	6,227	6,227		7,851	7,851	7,851
Supplies							
Event Supplies			803		803	803	
Office Supplies	313	313	313		122	122	122
Subtotal for Supplies	313	313	313		925	925	925
TOTAL COSTS	41,862	46,998	52,412		24,909	28,397	32,524
Cost per Registered voter	1.50	1.69	1.88		2.30	2.62	3.00

Notes.   aWhen actual costs were known, no low, medium, or high cost estimation was necessary.
        bCosts are rounded to the nearest dollar amount

whenever possible, drawing from publicly available district budgets. Hourly rates were calculated (annual salary ÷ 52 weeks per year ÷ 40 hours per week[6] = hourly rate). The same calculation process was utilized for teacher and community volunteers, but if actual salaries were not available, teacher median income and district median income were used, respectively.

Based on interviews with informants from each district, it was shared that parent/community volunteers had typically attained higher levels of education and/or skills, suggesting to us that these volunteers were able to receive wages higher than minimum wage rates. It should also be noted that because of the socio-economic status of both districts, some community volunteers have the option to not enter the workforce, but instead devote time to their own children and community service. The presumption was that these individuals, if they were to enter the workforce, would have the education and/or experience to obtain positions at the median income level.

The number of hours of involvement was determined in two ways. Whenever possible, the volunteer was asked specifically to estimate the number of hours devoted to the levy campaign. In cases when the volunteer was not available, the time was estimated based on information provided by other levy campaign committee or subcommittee chairs. Because the districts or the individual did not consistently track volunteer time, the hour estimates were established from personal accounts, which formed the mid-line base. Hours were then adjusted by 10% above to provide a high range. The low estimate for volunteers was based on only training hours at the median rate. The assumption being volunteers do so willingly and receive personal satisfaction. In addition, volunteers may receive benefit from the training experience.

For demographics and statistical analysis work and the public relations/design work, the individuals volunteering their time and efforts provided cost estimates based on their billable time for the tasks. For District A, the community member providing the demographics and statistical analysis provided a cost estimate of $6,000 for the work done for the campaign. The community volunteer providing public

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6   We acknowledge that the work of administrators (or that of teachers) does not stop at the end of a 40-hour week.

relations/design services for District A estimated a cost of $3,000 for the work provided for the levy campaign for a total of $9,000.

The prevailing minimum wage rate of $7.25 was used for student volunteers. A low and a high hourly rate were not calculated for the students because typically high school students, if working, work at minimum wage jobs. A matrix was utilized to combine the low, medium, and high hours with the low, medium, and high hourly rate so that a low estimate of hours combined with the low estimate of rate offered the lowest volunteer cost.

Our findings suggest that human resource costs ranged from $31,925-$41,376 for District A and $14,430-$21,683 for District B. While total human resource costs were higher for District A than District B, the estimates were lower for administrators and teachers in District A than in District B, given the administratively-led campaign that was reported. In District A, due to the higher use of community and parent volunteers, these human resource costs were higher than that of District B. Administrators and teachers were most certainly involved in District A's campaign, but it was to a lesser extent than that of District B. As such, District A's administrators and teachers could spend more time on other administrative and instructional duties required of the job.

Facilities costs were more difficult to determine. Some meetings and volunteer efforts were held in private homes while others were held in board of education offices. It was not feasible to ask community volunteers to determine the utilities and facilities costs for a one-hour coffee meeting at their home. Cost associated with holding a meeting in one room could be calculated by determining the utilities costs on a monthly rate, and then reduced to an hourly cost. The cost for the use of the physical room was calculated on a square foot cost basis, based on the fair market value of the property or on a rental space price for similar properties. The challenge was determining a fair market value for a commercial property with limited use or with limited comparable sales data within the district. District A reported a higher use of private homes than District B, thus overall costs for facilities were higher.

With regard to fees, there were only two basic types. The first and largest of these were the previously mentioned charge backs—the board of elections fees charged to districts for placing a levy on the ballot. These were available from the county board of elections in which the school districts were located. District A's charge back costs were higher than those of District B, likely due to District A's location in a county that had fewer issues on the ballot. As such, the burden of charge back costs fell heavier on District A. The second of these were fees to take part in local festivals. In the case of District A, there was a $25.00 event entry fee. This allowed the campaign committee and its volunteers to take part in a street fair, passing out information flyers, distributing campaign signs, signing up additional volunteers, and encouraging people to vote yes on the school levy issue on the November ballot.

This leads us to the costs associated with one of the primary activities of the levy campaign committee and the volunteers: marketing. There were some variations in approaches (e.g., District A t-shirts while District B did not), but there were also similarities in marketing cost ingredients, such as signs and direct mailing. District B's mailing costs appear higher than that of District A, but interview data suggested that other mailing costs were part of public relations services provided by a volunteer.

Supply costs were categorized as either office supplies or event supplies. Office supplies likely need little description. Event supplies included costs for refreshments, paper plates, napkins, and so on.

Overall costs for District A were higher than those of District B ($41,862-$52,412 and $24,909-32,524, respectively), but costs per registered voter were lower for District A ($1.50-$1.88) than District B ($2.30-$3.00). The most notable of our findings were differences in costs associated with school district personnel (administrators/teachers) and parent/community volunteers. Opportunity costs were higher for administrators and teachers in District B, as more of their time was consumed by the activities associated with the levy campaign. The reverse was so in terms of parent/community volunteers, with parents/community volunteers in District A having higher opportunity costs than those in District B. While the overall costs appear higher in District A, the human resource costs were borne more heavily by parent/community volunteers, thus freeing up time for school district personnel to do what they are paid to do—teach and lead.

Coda

Following the November 2008 loss, District B went on to be one of 158 districts to place a levy on the May 5, 2009 ballot. District B's November 2008 campaign was characterized as a "central office" campaign, but the May 2009 campaign, in contrast, was one that heavily engaged community members. As the Superintendent of District B explained, "During the November campaign we had forums and did a lot of mailings but this time [May, 2009] we really stepped it up. The urgency was there. The staff got people's attention. They were angry, frustrated. We think that helped. They got parent's attention." Another informant from District B confirmed this, stating, "When we came back in May, we had a lot of staff come on board and not as many kids as we would have liked, but some very vocal and visible parents."

In addition to involving stakeholders in the community, the district, its campaign committee, and its volunteers went to great efforts in communicating to community members a long list of services, programs, and positions that were under consideration for cuts should the levy again fail. These would be in addition to the two million in cuts that had already been made. When asked directly what was the biggest factor in the successful May campaign, the superintendent of District B, responded, "The communication and the reality of the cuts and consequences if it didn't pass. The list [of

potential cuts] and the risks got people out and the communication was huge." The superintendent went on to discuss the heavy use of community volunteers in activities such as the door-to-door campaign. He stated, "[May, 2009] was the first time we did this kind of this engagement…We had a ton of volunteers. We knew we administrators could not knock on 300 doors, but 50-60 people could really get some reach into the community."

In the end, both districts would pass levies with similar campaign strategies and high levels of community engagement. One (District A) met success earlier, while the other (District B) took a longer path to success and one that was reactive to cuts and the potential for more. It is important to note that District B's administrators were not making uninformed decisions. The district had a strong record of past successes at the ballot box. District history had set the precedent. Indeed, informants reported the use of campaign strategies found to be associated with successful levy campaigns, such as the use of board of elections data (Johnson & Ingle, 2009). In the end, the administratively-led, low key campaign targeting "yes" voters was not enough. Levy passage would be the end result, but after multiple campaigns, changes in strategy, painful cuts, and the threat of additional cuts to the budget.

In every Ohio school district, each levy campaign is an experience with lessons to be learned. And winning one does not mean it is over. As District A's Superintendent put it, "We will be back at it when this one expires in four years." As of the writing of this manuscript, both districts are looking to the future and the inevitability of the next campaign.

Conclusions

While an obvious limitation of this study is its lack of generalizability, our comparative case study provides us a deeper understanding of two contrasting approaches to levy campaigns and their associated costs. We found that District A ran a campaign that sought to strategically and "authentically" engage community members while District B ran a "central office campaign" that limited community members' participation to largely ceremonial roles as community campaign committee membership or chairperson. This practice was not done with ill intent or because of disdain for the community. Rather, District B's leadership was guided by precedent and past practices that worked well in prior campaigns. In the end, District B's leadership would learn lessons from their initial loss and eventually pass their levy in future campaigns, adopting similar strategies implemented by District A.

Overall costs for District A were higher than those of District B ($41,862 - $52,412 and $24,909 - $32,524, respectively), but costs per registered voter were lower for District A ($1.50 -$1.88) than District B ($2.30 - $3.00). Furthermore, District A's campaign resulted in lower opportunity costs for district personnel (administrators and teachers) and success at the polls while District B's campaign resulted in higher opportunity costs for district personnel and defeat at the polls.

Given the historic reliance on the local property taxes and in spite of a state Supreme Court ruling that Ohio's school funding formula is overly reliant on its use, it seems unlikely that Ohio is poised to move away from property taxes to any great degree in the near future. Besides, there are those who argue that voting on local property taxes keep citizens connected to their local schools—that this is a means of community engagement. With the election of Republican governor, John Kasich, and a Republican controlled legislature, many of former Governor Strickland's school funding initiatives appear headed for the dustbin. With less state funding earmarked for local districts in the next biennial budget, the burden will be on local taxpayers to make up the difference. Now, more than ever, districts will be on the ballot just to maintain what they have. Now, more than ever, districts need to engage their communities in their levy campaign efforts.

Implications

For Practitioners

Our comparative case study suggests that engaging community members has two benefits. First, community members may lend more credence to the call for additional taxation among fellow community members, whereas the cry for more from school district personnel may likely ring hollow. Second, having community members bear the greater weight in taking the message to the community means lower opportunity costs for school district personnel. There is truth in the old adage that "time is money." Expending time and other resources for one use entails the loss of time and resources for all other uses. As this study has shown, there are opportunity costs associated with volunteerism, but the opportunity costs of parent/community volunteerism is less than that of administrators and teachers. Opportunity costs of student volunteerism are even less than those of parent/community volunteers due to the fact that adults' earning potential is higher than that of students (minimum wage). This was especially so in these two school districts, which serve relatively affluent communities.

This said, school district personnel should caution against a completely hands off approach. Community volunteers need leadership and guidance in developing and delivering a clear message to the voters. District A personnel found a way to effectively craft a clear message and means of training volunteers in cooperation with community members. As Brent (2000) and this study shows, volunteerism may reflect zero (or minimal) accounting costs, but they are not cost free. Indeed, Brent (2000) has noted:

> Although the use of personnel resources does not translate directly into additional budgetary expenditures, they involve significant opportunity costs. After all, the time that principals and teachers

devote to managing volunteers cannot be used for other, perhaps more productive, programs. (p. 508)

For Policymakers

While there are no quick fixes in education funding mechanisms, this study sheds light on the efforts to which school district personnel and the community members they serve will go in pursuit of additional taxation. Policymakers in Ohio must take steps to address problems in Ohio's approach to funding education. Four policy recommendations come to mind; property tax circuit breakers, property tax deferral programs, tax effort incentives or revising Ohio tax policy to allow for reasonable property tax revenue growth.

Property tax circuit breakers provide tax relief to low income and elderly residents whose taxes exceed a given percentage of income in the same way a circuit breaker offers protection from an electrical overload (Allen & Woodberry, 2006). Circuit breaker programs exist in 34 states and are funded at the state level so that unlike most other tax relief measures they do not reduce local school district tax collections (Bowman, 2008). While the specific policy provisions vary from state to state, generally relief is inversely proportional to income with benefits declining as income rises. Most are aimed at the senior citizens (Haveman & Sexton, 2008). In Michigan—a state similar to Ohio economically and demographically—homeowners over the age of 65 and homeowners with qualifying disabilities are eligible for a refund of property taxes in excess of 3.5% of household income.

Along the same lines, property tax deferral programs are designed to allow eligible homeowners the option of delaying the payment of property taxes until the home is sold or the owner's estate is settled. Likewise, these are typically targeted to the elderly and the disabled (Haveman & Sexton, 2008). According to Baer (2005), twenty-five states have some type of tax deferral program. In Oregon, for example, the Senior Program was established by the state legislature to allow qualifying citizens to borrow from the State of Oregon to pay property taxes to the county on their residences. Home owners 62 years or older with a household income of less than $39,500 are eligible to defer their taxes until they sell their home or die. Those who take part in the program may make voluntary tax contributions to their deferral accounts and still remain in the program.

Another policy recommendation involves providing an incentive to those districts that support their local school district beyond what their ability to pay would suggest. While a number of states have funding formulas that provide additional funds to districts impacted by high levels of poverty (e.g., Florida), to our knowledge there are currently no states with an explicit tax effort incentive program.

A final policy recommendation involves the revision of existing tax policy in Ohio to allow for property tax revenue growth. In Ohio, H.B. 920, passed into law in 1976, basically allows for *no* inflationary growth on voted millage. While many states impose limitations that limit abilities of school districts to raise tax revenues, none are as limiting as Ohio's.

Even California's well-known Proposition 13 allows for revenue growth of up to 2.5 % per year. Removing Ohio's 0% growth on voted millage and indexing it to inflation or even a flat percent would greatly reduce the need for Ohio districts to continually be on the ballot.

For Future Research

Future research may want to delve deeper into levy campaigns, quantitatively testing the relationship between specific campaign expenditures and levy outcomes. Such a study would in itself incur opportunity costs, as requesting, analyzing and creating variables for campaign expenditures would be time consuming and logistically difficult. However, research of this kind could provide empirical evidence that might guide school district personnel and community stakeholders in crafting their campaigns, especially in Ohio where levy campaigns will remain an ongoing and onerous activity.

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Where do I Look? Preservice Teachers' Classroom Observation Patterns

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Abstract

During field experiences, preservice teachers are typically required to observe mentor teachers in schools, but what exactly are they seeing? This research examined the patterns and variations that existed with regard to preservice teachers' classroom observations during recent field experiences. Data were collected from 24 preservice teachers during two semester-long Language Arts methods courses where students used a two-step blended observational approach (both guided and unguided) for their observations. Themes of literacy events and classroom organization emerged, and preservice teachers ultimately focused on student outcomes. The blended observational approach helped preservice teachers mediate classroom observations in order to improve learning about teaching.

Preservice teachers are typically required to observe mentor teachers in authentic K-12 classrooms. In fact, throughout their teacher education program, preservice teachers spend a good deal of time observing during their field experiences. Engaging in classroom observations is critical to teacher education because most human behavior is learned by observation through modeling (Bandura, 1986). Consequently, while observing in classrooms is essential to the professional development of preservice teachers, the observer must also recognize the interaction of the minds of the teachers and students they are observing (Dewey, 1974). However, few research studies have focused on preservice teachers' observations of teaching and learning, particularly in early field experiences (Anderson, Barksdale, & Hite, 2005).

In fact, due to claims made by many preservice teachers and teacher educators that teacher education has become irrelevant, the time spent with practicing teachers in the field has increased dramatically, and as a result preservice teachers believe that time in the field equates to learning (Bullough, 2008). However, without guidance, preservice teachers find it challenging to recognize what matters in teaching and to make meaning about what they see (Berliner, 2001; Santagata & Angelici, 2010; Santagata, Zannoni, & Stigler, 2007; Star & Strickland, 2008; van Es & Sherin, 2002). During a number of field experiences at the authors' university, preservice teachers admitted they did not always know what to observe or what was important about their observations when in the classroom. Additionally, in preservice teachers' field notes of observations as well as during class discussions, we frequently heard preservice teachers report that they did not have any contribution to make because "nothing had happened" when observing for four hours in the classroom. It appeared preservice teachers were unable to recognize—or at least explicitly articulate—connections to course content, theorists, or teaching methodologies observed in their field placements. Consequently, this research sought to uncover the patterns and variations exist with regard to preservice teach-

ers' classroom observations during their field experiences as they observed teaching practices. Our purpose was two-fold: first to identify what preservice teachers were observing while in the field and second, to identify connections to instructional practices preservice teachers were making while using a two-step blended observational process (Bender-Slack & Young, 2010) to enhance these field experiences.

Theoretical Framework

The K-12 field experiences can provide rich opportunities to learn about teaching not available in the college classroom. Field experiences afford preservice teachers the opportunity to learn about instructional and curricular decision making and engage in reflective practice (Moore, 2003). As a part of the learning process in these field experiences, preservice teachers spend a large number of hours in observation. A review of the literature revealed that such experiences can, in fact, enrich and refine the thinking and conceptual understanding of preservice teachers with regard to teaching and learning (Cherubini, 2009; Chiang, 2008; Loyens & Gibels, 2008; Parkison, 2009). Moreover, the quality of the time spent in observations as well as the skills, expertise, and feedback of the professionals in the field help to determine the value of the experience (O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007; Shantz & Ward, 2000; Tang & Chow, 2007; Whitney, Golez, Nagel, & Nieto, 2002). However, preservice teachers are often "armed with extensive personal observations of teaching with little or no access to teachers' rationales for acting as they did" resulting in a common and simplistic view of teaching as telling (Martin & Russell, 2009, p. 320). The challenge is that only those who actually teach effectively and are engaged in teacher education recognize the complexity of the classroom. In fact, "the hard work of teaching resides in the careful analysis of how each student is or is not learning and in the careful analysis of how that learning is influenced by the way one is teaching" (Martin & Russell, 2009, p. 320). Preservice teachers can be provided with appropriate

observational tools, experiences, and processes to analyze the complexity of how their teaching impacts student learning.

New technologies, such as electronic networks, have added tools and ways to mediate teaching through observations (Barnett, 2006). For example, when using a web-based professional development system, Barnett (2006) found that online discussion threads demonstrated sustained dialogue among the participants, allowing a more focused discussion on teaching practices. He also found that preservice teachers used both online videos and asynchronous discussions as learning tools to discuss various theoretical perspectives.

Another way to assist preservice teachers in understanding teaching practices is to expose them to those practices through the use of video (Barnett, 2006; Beck, King, & Marshall, 2002; Santagata & Angelici, 2010; Star & Strickland, 2008). Videos can provide a common framework for discussion while allowing multiple viewpoints of the same event. Specifically, video technologies provide preservice teachers the opportunity to view a variety of teaching situations, a number of data specific to an event or issue, and a connection to multiple instructional contexts (Wang & Hartley, 2003). For example, video reflections were found to be ineffective unless specific guidance was provided to guide the analysis (Santagata & Angelici, 2010). In any case, in order to educate preservice teachers about the relationship between observation and learning to teach during these field experiences, teacher educators must provide them with the appropriate tools to utilize within the environment of the classroom.

There are two distinct methods of observing teaching by preservice teachers: unguided and guided (Anderson et al., 2005). In conducting unguided observations, preservice teachers are given only a general area of foci, such as focusing on a literacy event, language arts instruction, or the use of language in the classroom. According to Bell, Barrett, and Allison (1985), unguided observation requires observers to organize their thoughts to individually-devised frameworks rather than a given—and possibly limiting—structure. Moreover, preservice teachers who engage in unguided observations view the classroom through multiple lenses, acquiring a greater understanding of the complexities and realities of teaching (Anderson et al., 2005). In contrast, guided observations allow preservice teachers to identify and focus on a single aspect of teaching or learning. Yet, in viewing classrooms through a single lens, preservice teachers may not see the larger context (Anderson et al., 2005). There appears to be a void in the literature blending guided and unguided methods of observation, and therefore this study addressed this gap.

As an important component of teacher education programs, field experiences play a crucial role in teacher candidates' training to become teachers (International Reading Association, 2003). Moreover, observations during those field experiences play a key role in learning to teach making it imperative to examine those observations in depth. For example, sociocultural theory posits that humans are defined and develop as participants in cultural communities (Rogoff, 2003). Placing preservice teachers in contemporary classrooms with authentic learners (students) and teachers positions them as active participants in existing cultural communities. The implication here is that "experiences in the learning environment must be replicated in the environment in which... teachers would eventually apply their knowledge, as well as one that presents a wide range of learning opportunities that reflect those likely to be encountered in the future" (Hughes, 2009, p. 252).

Moreover, social cognitive theory suggests an interactional model of causation where environmental events, personal factors, and behavior operate together (Bandura, 1986). The ultimate goal of field experiences is that preservice teachers acquire knowledge of teaching by observing classroom teachers. Environmental context, personal interactions, and behaviors influence the observations. As mentors, the classroom teachers are ideally modeling teaching practices, educational theories, and meaningful interactions with their students in order to impact preservice teacher behaviors and future teaching. This learning occurs during the field experiences, which are rich in observational opportunities and must be recognized as important by the preservice teachers to enhance this experience. If preservice teachers understand and duplicate the mentor teachers' practices, and are able articulate this acquisition of knowledge from observations, field experiences can guide and support their understanding of the relationship between meaningful observations and learning to teach.

Methods

The focus of this study was on preservice teachers' observations while using a two-step blended observational tool during field experiences that occurred in one early childhood and one middle childhood, semester-long Language Arts methods course at a Midwestern Jesuit, Catholic university. The preservice teachers completed three hours of language arts observation each week for 12 weeks. The preservice teachers had only one or two field experiences prior to these courses. The courses were taken either one or two semesters prior to student teaching. Data were collected from 24 preservice teachers during their Language Arts methods courses. IRB approval was granted by the authors' institution.

Preservice teachers were placed in a variety of settings. Five preservice teachers observed in a parochial elementary school, eleven were placed in an early childhood public, suburban school, and eight in various urban, middle public schools. Early childhood preservice teachers observed in kindergarten, first, and third grade classrooms. Middle childhood preservice teachers were placed in fourth through eighth grade classrooms.

In order to scaffold the preservice teachers' use of the required observational tools, we provided instruction regarding how to take field notes, offered examples of various forms of doing so, and listed areas to consider and explore when in the field. For example, preservice teachers were taught about their role as an observer and provided the following objectives:

- To observe the activities, people, and physical aspects of a situation

- To use "fresh eyes"
- To observe and record everything you possibly can

Specifically, preservice teachers learned to differentiate between observation and interpretation through examples provided in class. Next, preservice teachers took time to visit a public space for 30-60 minutes and practiced taking field notes. These field notes were discussed during the methods course meeting. The discussion focused on the difficulty in taking notes, the differences between observation and interpretation, and the significance of the observations.

Preservice teachers were then required to participate in a two-step blended observational approach (Bender-Slack & Young, 2010). First, throughout weekly field experiences, preservice teachers took observational field notes during one-hour of unguided observations in classroom language arts instruction. Using the initial notes as a foundation, preservice teachers then chose one significant event to further explore with a guided observational tool called a theory-to-practice log (Appendix). Preservice teachers described the initial event in their observational field notes and provided a more detailed reflection on the theory-to-practice tool. Preservice teachers chose to write about observations that focused on their own experiences interacting and teaching, observations of students interacting with each other, or teaching episodes facilitated by the classroom teacher. The preservice teachers selected observations for their theory-to-practice logs that they deemed significant without outside guidance or influence, therefore moving from unguided to guided independently. In addition to the narrative description, preservice teachers explained their role, made a connection to course texts, engaged in reflection, and made recommendations on the theory-to-practice tool. They completed this step independent of the instructors.

The cultural artifacts of interest in this study were the preservice teachers' field notes and theory-to-practice logs; they were triangulated with the course syllabus/calendar as well as researcher journals to determine if the patterns and variations of their observation were aligned with the course content. For example, students were taught about the read-aloud process during week three of the language arts methods course; therefore, their observations may or may not have focused on this topic. The researchers met weekly to discuss the theory-to-practice logs and used the course syllabi to make connections with the artifacts. Content analysis was conducted with these artifacts to identify and interpret themes (Reinharz, 1992). Cultural artifacts are important because they are produced by people and often used by people in daily activities. As we analyzed the artifacts, we worked "with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what [to] tell others" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 157).

Data from the observation notes and theory-to-practice logs were also analyzed using analytic induction, a process in which initial coding categories were identified from patterns within the transcripts (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In the spirit of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), we allowed themes to emerge from the data; however, we recognized we participated in constructing the categories that surfaced. In this case, qualitative grounded theory coding meant creating the codes as the data were studied (Charmaz, 2004). First the theory-to-practice logs underwent microanalysis in order to generate initial categories, followed by axial coding where categories were related to their subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). At each stage of coding and categorizing, the researchers met to discuss the data and the emerging themes. We agreed that because the field experiences occurred during the language arts methods courses, the themes that emerged related to the modes of language. We did not engage in an inter-rater reliability exercise, however, the two researchers worked together to maintain consistency within and throughout the coding process. After reviewing the data, two themes were identified: *literacy events* and *classroom organization*. Within these themes, the following subcategories emerged: writing, reading process, word study, classroom routines, and classroom management. However, for the purposes of this article, we limited our examination and analysis to the literacy events. Literacy events were defined as classroom practices and interactions that centered on written and/or oral expression. Table 1 identifies the specific subcategories.

Table 1
Literacy Events

Writing	Reading Process	Word Study
Process	Fluency	Language Use
Genre	Comprehension	Phonics
		Spelling
		Vocabulary

The writing process referred to topics or events such as brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, and genre referred to types of writing such as plays, poetry, and friendly letters. Fluency was addressed through read alouds and morning message activities, while comprehension focused on strategies such as making connections, predicting, and identifying story elements. Language use included voice, generalizations, and figurative language. Phonics focused on letter-sound relationships, word families, and vowel patterns. Spelling included assessments and word patterns. Vocabulary was addressed through assessments and in other content areas. The subcategories were indicative of the connections preservice teachers made between the instructional practices observed in the classroom and their knowledge about teaching and learning.

Results

Our purpose was two-fold: First to identify what preservice teachers were observing while in the field and second, to identify connections to instructional practices preservice teachers were making while using a two-step blended observational process (Bender-Slack & Young, 2010) to enhance their learning and understanding of teaching during these field experiences. Consequently, the categories were indicative of the patterns and variations found in preservice teachers' field observations. Preservice teachers did observe

a myriad of events in the classroom, and by engaging in the two-step blended observational approach, we believe that they chose to write about literacy events that specifically addressed instructional practices. The unguided field notes and guided, theory-to-practice logs were used as tools to mediate classroom observations in order to enhance their field experiences. In blending the two observational approaches, the preservice teachers wrote about the complexities of the classroom as they related to specific aspects of teaching they observed. Their choice of literacy events *and* the use of the tools with guidance from the authors led them to describe teaching practices and ultimately demonstrate concern for student outcomes. During initial observations the preservice teachers often remarked that they did not always know what to observe and record or what was important about their observation when in the classrooms. The authors provided weekly written feedback on the theory-to-practice logs and comments noting, for example, when the topic was too broad, or if there were not enough connections to the texts. In addition, whole-group discussions about the observations were part of the course from the beginning of their field experience.

The following samples of preservice teachers' theory-to-practice logs, specifically their narrative descriptions, were selected because they were representative of the overall responses collected and analyzed as well as described the preservice teachers' observations of their cooperating teachers' instruction. The examples illustrated the focus on teaching practices and their comments in reflections/recommendations clearly emphasized student outcomes. To explicate the significance of the blended approach in helping preservice teachers engage in observations in order to learn about teaching and enhance their field experiences, we have included one middle school and one early childhood example from their theory-to-practice logs in each of the following subcategories: writing process, reading comprehension, and word study. The excerpts provide clear illustrations of how preservice teachers were able to annotate their field observations and articulate connections between teaching practices and methodologies whereas before they noted "nothing happened or they didn't know what was important." All names are pseudonyms.

Writing Process

The preservice teachers provided many details in their field logs about helping students with the writing process. Narrative descriptions represented brainstorming, drafting, and for the middle grades, revising, editing and publishing. A few examples also included conferencing techniques and assessment tools. The following excerpts highlighted the use of minilessons and discussions to help students during the drafting and revising phase of their writing.

Early childhood: Julie

In a first grade writer's workshop, Julie described that the students had been working on writing stories with three parts – a beginning, middle and end. "As part of a read aloud, the teacher came to an exciting part of the story, shut the book, and stated that she was done reading." This sparked a class discussion about the importance of endings. Julie

commented on student outcomes in the reflection/recommendation column. She stated, "The students were engaged in the story and quickly noticed when the teacher stopped reading, which was an excellent way to grab the students' attention and engage them in a discussion." However, she also indicated that if she were to use a demonstration like this in her own classroom, she would extend it. She would ask students for more examples or perhaps create an activity which allowed students to better understand the concept of story endings and their importance.

Middle childhood: Natalie

At the end of a lesson on revision, Natalie used extraneous time to discuss revision choices students had made. She explained that during the discussion, "The students gave several new ideas that they came across of ways to revise their paper that we hadn't already discussed.... Then I asked for students to give their own examples, of ways they changed their papers. I had them read parts of their paper how they were before the change and then after the change." She noted that she could use the discussion as part of her informal assessment. In her final column, she stated that she would actually plan for discussion time in her lesson plan because "I think that it added an element to the lesson that served as perfect conclusion to what the students learned."

These examples were indicative of a pattern found throughout preservice teachers' artifacts. Preservice teachers consistently described the writing process in their field notes and theory-to-practice logs. We found that the preservice teachers were interested in extending student learning in order to improve student writing.

Reading Comprehension

Preservice teachers frequently focused on reading comprehension in the narrative description on the theory-to-practice log. Overwhelmingly, preservice teachers described activities that focused on the goal of student comprehension. Preservice teachers examined specific comprehension strategies that helped the students with the reading process.

Early childhood: Mary

Mary described a comprehension activity as part of a thematic unit about bugs in which the teacher focused on asking before, during, and after questions during a read aloud.

In Mary's reflections she commented on the effectiveness of the instruction because it engaged students but she also believed she could extend the activity in the future to improve student learning. "If I used this in my classroom, I would use all the pages that the students created to make a classroom book for the students to read. I would also have the students extend their learning from this book and in their unit by exploring bugs outdoors. They could then pick a bug to write an informational book about."

Middle childhood: Sean

Working with sixth graders, Sean described a reading comprehension activity where, in conjunction with a biography students were reading on Thomas Edison, Sean "presented information on the early years of electric power

and Thomas Edison, drawing upon a biography I read about him and making a connection between what I read and the reading selection." Making intertextual connections was an effective reading strategy, but Sean recognized in his reflection/recommendation column that it may not lead to the student outcome he had envisioned. "One of the things that I noticed about the experience was that students tended to lose sight of what the focus of the lesson was when drawing upon their own experiences. It was hard to steer them back to the subject at hand. I really was excited to see so many interested in sharing their thoughts, but most of those thoughts pertained to personal experiences of stories, not critical thinking about the subject we were discussing." After multiple observations of the classroom and his mentor teacher, Sean was reflecting on his own experiences interacting and teaching, which was one of the options supported by the theory-to-practice tool.

The preservice teachers were concerned with making connections in order to enhance reading comprehension. Students in both early and middle childhood recorded a variety of examples that focused on comprehension instruction. Preservice teachers identified strategies and activities that they deemed useful for assisting students with comprehension.

Word Study

Many of the preservice teachers also focused on word study in the classroom. In the narrative description section, they described specific teaching practices that they deemed useful for the students and for future teaching. The first example described the use of word walls and the second example focused on language and teaching generalizations.

Early childhood: Maggie

Maggie noted she was fascinated by the teacher's concept of a word wall. The cooperating teacher's philosophy was that the children at the very least should know what letter the word began with, and then find the pocket that contained the list of words corresponding with the beginning letter. Students then flipped through the cards to look for the word they were trying to spell. If they could not find the word, the teacher wrote the word on the index card, helped children stretch the word and listen for letter/sound relationships. The word was then added to the chart. As indicated in the reflection column, Maggie really liked this approach of using a word wall but was not confident that it would meet the needs of all students:

> I feel that a word wall like the one used in this classroom is a great idea! It makes children work hard to figure out how the word is spelled, which in turn will help the word stick with them. However, I wonder if the English Language Learners [ELL] who are struggling understand exactly how to use it. This is helpful for the future because I do not think I would use the word wall like this. It is too hard for the ELL students to use, and I want to do everything I can to help them.

Maggie's remarks on the theory-to-practice tool indicated she was able to make connections to the course content as

well as comment on the cooperating teachers' instructional practice. She articulated the teaching practices and the potential implications of these practices on student learning.

Middle childhood: Jamie

Jamie wrote about teaching generalizations to fifth grade students in her narrative description where she described moving around the room and assigning an individual assessment after collaborative group work. In the final column of the theory-to-practice log, her focus was on student outcomes when she stated that she moved around the room in order to show she was paying attention and helping the students. "The last thing you want as a teacher is for your students to be afraid to ask questions. That is why during my circulations I was asking open-ended questions to the groups as well as the individuals to see where they were really at with their content knowledge and comprehension." Jamie further explained that she assigned group work and individual work because "many times it is hard to see which individual is putting what effort towards the results on the page." She was clearly concerned with whether each student would meet the objective. Moreover, she noted that "by doing the group work, they got practice" and "extra time to ask questions and to really apply the new content to their work."

Many of the preservice teachers were concerned in some way with meeting the needs of all students. Understanding students' needs was crucial to learning about instruction and teaching methods. The literacy themes that emerged described specific aspects of literacy instruction and also described student outcomes as it related to instruction.

The examples shared above were indicative of the patterns and variations found in preservice teachers' observations in authentic classrooms and completed on the theory-to-practice logs. By recording these observations in field notes and then completing theory-to-practice logs we recognized patterns in content as well as a noticeable concern for and focus on student outcomes. In the next section, we explore the implications for teacher education.

Discussion

In teacher education programs, preservice teachers spend time observing teaching and learning in classrooms with the goals of understanding the complexities of that space and translating these understandings to their own practice.

> Acquiring rules through modeling for generating behavior involves at least three processes: These include extracting relevant attributes from social exemplars; integrating the information into a composite rule; and using the rule to produce new instances of the behavior. Relevant features can be extracted by repeated exposure to specific exemplars which share the common property. *Exposure alone, however, does not ensure that the relevant features will be noticed* [emphasis added]. (Bandura, 1986, p. 100)

As previously mentioned, a significant amount of time is spent observing in teacher education programs. Therefore, preservice teachers must be taught to effectively use the available tools. In this study, preservice teachers were required to first engage in unguided observations, recording these classroom observations through field notes. Preservice teachers then completed the guided, theory-to-practice log, a tool to help organize their observations and enhance their learning about teaching as they completed their field experiences.

Our two-step blended observational approach helped preservice teachers articulate their observations and reflect on their cooperating teachers' instructional practices. This approach benefitted and extended preservice teachers' observations, connections to course content, teaching methodologies, classroom practices, and their overall field experiences.

We believe that our study demonstrates a need to scaffold preservice teachers in the use of observational tools, specifically unguided observational field notes and the subsequent theory-to-practice tool, as a foundation for thinking about teaching. Borrowing Wertsch's (1998) notion of mediated action as a focus on the agents and their cultural tools, we recognized that in this research, the preservice teachers were the agents, and the observational field notes and theory-to-practice log they produced the cultural tools. In using these tools, we blended the observational approaches, using both guided and unguided methods to help preservice teachers' observations enhance their field experiences as they learned about teaching. The two-step blended observational approach provided a space for preservice teachers to focus on how the methods observed impacted student outcomes and make connections between the observations and teaching practices. We identified what preservice teachers were observing while in the field and connections to instructional practices they were making while using a two-step blended observational process.

In addition, an important finding worthy of discussion concerned preservice teachers focus on student outcomes. Focusing on student outcomes is significant if framed within Fuller's model of teacher development (Fuller & Brown, 1975):

Stage One: Concerns about self

Stage Two: Concerns about tasks/situations

Stage Three: Concerns about impact on students

In choosing a topic and completing the narrative description column, the preservice teachers demonstrated Fuller's Stage Two, which is concerned with tasks/situations. Of ultimate significance, however, is that preservice teachers focused on student outcomes in the reflection/recommendation column of the theory-to-practice tool, which demonstrated Fuller's Stage Three: concerns about impact on students. The two-step blended observational approach not only mediated preservice teachers' classroom observations, it also provided a space for students to move to Stage Three. This supports Conway and Clark's (2003) call to critically evaluate Fuller's model given its continued popularity and relevance.

Conway and Clark (2003) assert that the pattern of concerns moves outward, as suggested by Fuller, but also inward with heightened reflexivity and self-regulation as Interns (preservice teachers) progress through a year-long Internship. They challenge the conventional wisdom about the pace and developmental direction of expressed concerns among preservice teachers. They also clearly support the idea that student teachers develop outwardly focused concerns as they move through early field experiences (not predicted until later in Fuller's model). In their study, outward-focused concerns (what Fuller called Stage 3 ''Impact on Students'') and aspirations became prominent years sooner than predicted by the Fuller model (Conway & Clark, 2003, p. 475). Like Conway and Clark (2003), we contend that when provided with a well-designed opportunity and scaffolding, preservice teachers will move inward and outward as they learn about teaching. As our study indicated, preservice teachers can move within these stages at an earlier rate than identified by Fuller (1969).

We believe that because of the two-step blended observational approach used in our study, preservice teachers were able to focus on teaching practices *as well as* reflect on the effectiveness of those practices and - ultimately – demonstrate concern for student outcomes. As noted earlier, helping preservice teachers learn the most from their field experiences and observations is essential when learning about teaching and the complexities of the classroom. While completing field hours, preservice teachers engage in observation, but they need to make connections between teaching practices and what they are observing. Through our two-step blended observational approach, we can enhance the preservice teachers' observations, and support their making connections between teaching and student learning. We will continue to review and then revise the observational process and theory-to-practice tool to help all preservice teachers realize the benefits of observations when completing their field experiences. Although completed in the language arts method courses, we plan to implement a developmentally-responsive version of the process and tool in other field experiences. Future studies might consider differences in observational patterns at the various levels in the teacher education program. Additionally, future research could attempt to determine the differences of real-time observations versus videotaped with regard to the connections and process used by preservice teachers.

Although we believe that developing preservice teachers' observational skills is crucial to learning to teach, those skills are invaluable once in the field as well.

> When you see your primary role as a teacher as closely observing children and communicating what you see, you find yourself surrounded by learning encounters. Becoming a keen observer is a way to learn child development, to find curriculum ideas, and meet requirements for assessing outcomes. (Curtis & Carter, 2000, pp. xvi-xvii)

Observations can be engaging and intellectually stimulating as they produce learning about teaching, schools, ourselves, and others.

The Mid-Western Educational Research Association's

34th Annual Meeting
October 12–15, 2011

Sheraton Westport Tower Hotel
St. Louis, Missouri

What does it mean to be educated?

As Vice President and Program Chair for the 2011 Mid-Western Educational Research Association Conference let me be the first to welcome you to join our membership at the 2011 conference in St. Louis! The conference will be held at the newly remodeled Sheraton Westport Plaza Tower Hotel just a quick ride to Busch Stadium, Scottrade Center and major St. Louis Attractions. While the area offers exciting appeal and great restaurants, the MWERA 2011 conference promises an interesting program, high-quality presentations, and many professional and social gatherings. I certainly hope you will consider spending the 12th-15th of October 2011 attending this year's conference.

This year's theme, "What does it mean to be educated?" is both stimulating and thought provoking and lies at the root of all we do in education. We are all involved with some aspect of education, yet actually articulating what "being educated" means to our colleagues, our children, our students, and ourselves is a difficult undertaking that is often not addressed. The theme invites teachers and principals, educators and students, experts and novices, to think about the nature of our various education systems in the United States and abroad and to reflect upon the nature and relevance of our current practices and ideas. In addition, our two keynote speakers are willing and able to help us expand our ideas, question our paradigms, and maybe rethink how and what we do every day. Dr. J. Casey Hurley, Professor, from the College of Education and Allied Professions at Western Carolina University will join our membership at the Wednesday night fireside chat and the Thursday morning keynote address. Dr. Mary John O'Hair, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Kentucky, will speak at the Friday MWERA luncheon. Both keynote speakers are enthusiastic about being a part of MWERA 2011!

For those of you who may not be familiar with MWERA, the participants of this organization have a reputation of being extremely collegial and professional. Members and presenters are practitioners and researchers; educators from universities, community colleges, and P-12 schools; those from the academy and the private sector; seasoned professors, graduate and undergraduate students. There is something for everyone. Sessions cover a myriad of aspects of educational research including teaching and learning, schools and school reform, assessment and testing, and institutional planning and effectiveness.

The conference has a rich history and a long tradition of building long term collaborations, professional relationships and friendships. Many of our members have continued to participate and attend the annual conference despite moving out of the mid-western region.

Again, I welcome you to the 2011 MWERA conference and hope to "See you in St. Louis!"

Ellen A. Sigler, Ed.D.

Program Chair

Western Carolina University

Conference and hotel registration information and forms are available at the MWERA web site:

http://www.mwera.org

What does it mean to be educated?

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Thursday Morning Keynote Address

Featured Speaker

Dr. J. Casey Hurley

     Dr. J. Casey Hurley is a professor of Educational Administration at Western Carolina University. He served as secretary of the Faculty Senate from 1996 to 2000 and chair of the faculty from 2000 to 2002. He also coordinates the university's Master of Arts in Education degree program in Jamaica and other international sites. His research interests lie in educational leadership, the principalship, and organizational theory and practice. As the author of The Six Virtues of the Educated Person¸ he describes the definition of an educated person promoted among today's policymakers (achieving high standardized test scores), and then he argues for a definition that is rooted in philosophy instead of politics. Dr. Hurley makes several points in the book, the most basic being that efforts to improve education will continue to be unproductive because we have not defined what it means to be educated.

What does it mean to be educated?

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Friday Luncheon Keynote Address

Featured Speaker

Dr. Mary John O'Hair

Mary John O'Hair's successful history of connecting university innovation to the daily practices of students, principals and teachers has come to fruition in Kentucky through creation of the Kentucky P20 Innovation Lab. As Dean of the University of Kentucky College of Education, she is developing this laboratory to partner school systems with the resources of universities and create a seamless system of education, from birth to graduate school and careers. Ultimately, the Kentucky P20 Innovation Lab will help schools establish innovative and lasting change to meet the future learning needs for all students. As a former teacher, faculty member and administrator, Dr. O'Hair has shown a commitment to educational excellence through her academic and professional achievements, and she brings a strong background of experience in teaching and learning, research and innovation, and professional practice. Dr. O'Hair's research and teaching interests lie in school-university-community partnerships, learning communities in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering and math), and international education networking. She has received over $40 million in funding and grants to support her research. Dr. O'Hair has published numerous articles and books on systemic innovation, organizational learning, and school-university-community partnerships.

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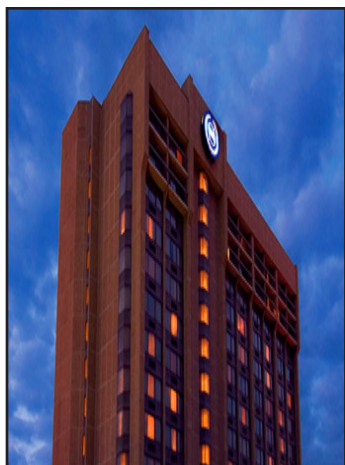
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Appendix – Theory-to-Practice Log

Objective: to purposely create a link between the theoretical grounding provided through course work/materials and the practical experiences you are afforded in the classroom.

Building from your field experiences, you will complete a theory-to-practice log. As well as documenting post-teaching/learning and/or post-observation reflections, the theory-to-practice log entries will serve as a tool for you to record and reflect on in-class learning in application. Your entries may pertain to (1) your own experiences interacting and teaching, (2) observations of students interacting with each other, or (3) teaching episodes facilitated by the classroom teacher. Be sure to include an APA style works cited. You may use the following template as a model to create your log.

Narrative Description	My Role in Events	Interpretation (Connection to texts)	Reflection and Recommendation

Paradigms or Toolkits? Philosophical and Methodological Positions as Heuristics for Mixed Methods Research

Joseph A. Maxwell
George Mason University

My main goal in this paper is to challenge the validity and usefulness of the concept of "paradigm," as this term has been used in the social sciences generally, and specifically in the debates over research methods. This concept was largely drawn from Thomas Kuhn's influential book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. In his 1969 Postscript to this work, Kuhn described a paradigm as "the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community" (1970, p. 175). Despite this broad definition, however, Kuhn primarily focused on the substantive theories and methods of such communities.[1]

In contrast, participants in the methodological "paradigm wars" in the social sciences have focused on the *philosophical* beliefs and assumptions of different methodological communities, and have seen these philosophical positions as foundational for research practices. They generally assumed that quantitative and qualitative research are based on different philosophical paradigms—positivism or postpositivism for quantitative research, and constructivism for qualitative research.

The discussion of paradigms in the mixed method community has largely accepted this emphasis on philosophical beliefs, and has mainly sought to determine *which* philosophical position(s) is, or are, an appropriate basis for mixed methods research. A currently widespread view within the mixed methods community is that pragmatism is the appropriate philosophical paradigm for mixed methods research (Biesta, 2010; Johnson & Gray, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), and mixed methods research itself has been promoted as a "third paradigm" alongside quantitative and qualitative research (e.g., Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

My critique of this view is motivated by, and grounded in, my skepticism about some of the assumptions that have informed the concept of "paradigm" and how this concept has been used in the debates about social research methods. First, I question the assumption that communities are united primarily by their shared beliefs and values, a view that was central to Kuhn's argument and has been retained in almost all subsequent discussions of paradigms in the social sciences. Teddlie's and Tashakkori's (2011) advocacy of "a core set

of conceptual and methodological ideas that could bring the field [of mixed methods] together" (2011) seems to me to reflect this assumption.

This is a premise that is deeply rooted in Western social thought. It influenced, and draws from, the anthropological concept of "culture" as the beliefs, norms, and values shared by members of a society or subgroup. However, the assumptions that culture is intrinsically shared, and that shared cultural beliefs are what unify societies, have repeatedly been challenged in anthropology (Atran & Medin, 2008; Hannerz, 1992; Kronenfeld, 2008; Shore, 1996; Wallace, 1970), on both theoretical and empirical grounds; see Maxwell (1999, in press) for a detailed discussion. These critics have usually taken what is called a distributive view of culture, seeing cultural beliefs and values as differentially distributed within a society, rather than intrinsically shared, and arguing that societies are united to a significant extent by the interaction and complementarity of *diverse* views, rather than solely by sharing or commonalities. Wallace (1970) referred to these two approaches to culture and cultural transmission as, respectively, the "replication of uniformity" and "organization of diversity" positions.

For this reason, I am skeptical of the call (e.g., Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011) for "convergence on core principles" in mixed methods research. I would argue that what "brings us together" is *not* core principles or supposedly foundational beliefs or practices, but mutually productive dialogue. This issue is one that I have addressed elsewhere (Maxwell, in press; Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010), and cannot discuss in detail here. However, if the premise that shared beliefs and values are fundamentally what unites a community is questionable, then many of the arguments for the role of paradigms, or "core principles," in research communities are also questionable.

In addition, I am concerned that any attempt to define "core ideas" will marginalize or exclude people who don't share these ideas. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2011) acknowledge this concern, but seem to see it as a problem that will disappear as the field becomes more "mature." I am skeptical both of the perceived need for "core ideas" and of the view that the problem of marginalization is a temporary one. To take a specific example, Teddlie and Tashakkori list as two of their "core characteristics" of mixed methods research an "iterative, cyclical approach to research" and "a set of basic signature designs." I disagree with both of these characteristics, and in a chapter (Maxwell & Loomis, 2003) in the first edition of the *Handbook of Mixed Methods* I criticized

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[1]   Kuhn (1970) emphasized that a second meaning of "paradigm," as a concrete puzzle-solution adopted as a model or exemplar for practice, replacing explicit rules for scientific practice, was more fundamental than the meaning of paradigms as shared beliefs and practices. However, this second meaning has received almost no attention in the debates over paradigms in research methods.

these views, and proposed an alternative, systemic model for mixed method design.

Second, I do not believe that paradigms themselves are typically logically consistent and unified systems of thought, a claim that Kuhn never made. The concept of unified paradigms has frequently been challenged within the mixed methods community (e.g., Bergman, 2008; Biesta, 2010; Hammersley, 1992), and similar challenges have been made to supposedly "paradigmatic" positions within both the qualitative (Pitman & Maxwell, 1992) and quantitative (Gigerenzer, 2004) traditions. There has been ongoing debate within anthropology over the extent to which cultures are "unified" in this sense.

I am not denying that cultures, and "mental models" (Greene, 2007) in general, exhibit *some* form and degree of coherence—for example, the mental models that Mohr (1982) called "variance theory" and "process theory," which represent the approaches to explanation of many quantitative and qualitative researchers, respectively. I am simply arguing that such coherence is not necessarily a matter of philosophical consistency, but of pragmatic compatibility, and is in principle an empirical question, rather than a strictly logical one (Maxwell, 1990).

A more extensive critique of this view of "paradigms" has been developed by the sociologist Andrew Abbott (2001, 2004). Abbott argued, on the basis of numerous examples from a range of the social sciences, that philosophical and methodological positions, rather than being unified sets of premises that strongly shape the practices of particular communities of scholars, function instead as *heuristics*, conceptual and practical tools that are used to solve specific problems in theory and research. He stated that, "the idea of heuristics is to open up new topics, to find new things. To do that, sometimes we need to invoke constructivism . . . Sometimes we need a little realism" (Abbott, 2004, p. 191). Wimsatt (2007) has provided a detailed philosophical justification for such a heuristic approach, and applied this approach to numerous issues in biology.

Similar views were presented by Hacking (1999), who analyzed how particular phenomena (mental illness, child abuse, nuclear weapons, rocks) can be usefully seen as both "real" and "social constructs," and by Seale (1999), who argued for seeing different philosophical positions as resources for thinking. Koro-Ljungberg (2004) similarly discussed how qualitative researchers could address validity issues when they employ divergent and potentially contradictory theories, without attempting to reconcile these theories.

My views on this issue are similar to Greene's (2007; Greene & Hall, 2010) dialectic stance for mixed methods research. The goal of this approach is to create a dialogue between diverse perspectives on the phenomena being studied, so as to *deepen*, rather than simply to broaden or triangulate, the understandings gained. The main difference between my approach and Greene's is that she deals mainly with dialogue

between discrete paradigms or "mental models," while I emphasize the decomposability of paradigms into separate conceptual tools that can be used somewhat independently of any larger paradigmatic framework. This perspective relates to another of Teddlie's and Tashakkori's "core principles," methodological eclecticism, but applies this principle to philosophical ideas, rather than simply to methods. If such ideas can function as heuristics, as tools in a toolkit, rather than as "core" or "foundational" ideas and strategies, it is not clear why researchers would need to *agree* on these. [2]

I want to emphasize that in criticizing what I see as the misuse of the paradigm concept, I am not arguing for dismissing or ignoring philosophical ideas and stances in mixed methods research. This is not only because such ideas can be useful heuristic tools for mixed methods researchers, as argued above. It is also because these ideas and stances are real properties of researchers, and have an important influence on their research practices. These assumptions and influences are often unconscious, and thus it is critical for researchers to become aware of and to understand the philosophical views that they hold, how these are shaping their research decisions, and how they can use these views productively as tools for understanding the phenomena they study (Maxwell, 2005).

The view that I am presenting here draws on a key idea of postmodernism: that diversity itself is fundamental rather than superficial (Bernstein, 1992; Rosenau, 1992). This view is closely linked to a second aspect of postmodernism, a skepticism toward totalizing, foundational theories. While I have serious reservations about much of postmodern thought (Maxwell, 2010), I find these two ideas to be particularly useful conceptual tools for making sense of paradigms.

This paper is itself an example of the approach that I advocate. I am borrowing particular ideas from different authors and perspectives, and I am attempting to put these together into a toolkit that can be useful in thinking about mixed methods research. Thus, I have taken the distributionist view of culture, the critique of paradigms as unified philosophical stances for research, Abbott's idea of philosophical premises as heuristics, a realist understanding of researchers' philosophical assumptions and their influence on practice, a constructivist epistemology, and postmodernism's assumption that diversity is fundamental, and its critique of foundationalism, and tried to show how, together, these ideas can be useful in thinking about mixed methods research. My approach is also pragmatist in that I am more concerned with how these ideas can be productively combined than with their logical implications.

There is a term that captures much of this approach—*bricolage*, which was used by the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss to distinguish mythological from "scientific" thought (In current French usage, *bricolage* means "do-it-

2   Biesta (2010) takes a very similar position to the one I'm defending here, arguing that "pragmatism should not be understood as a philosophical position among others, but rather as a set of philosophical tools that can be used to address problems" (p. 97).

yourself," and is used to refer to stores like Home Depot.)[3] Levi-Strauss described the *bricoleur* as someone who uses whatever tools and materials are at hand to complete a project. The key idea is that, rather than developing a logically consistent plan in advance and then systematically following this plan, the *bricoleur* spontaneously adapts to the unique circumstances of the situation, creatively employing the available tools and materials to create unique solutions to a problem.[4] This concept was applied to research methods by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), and developed more extensively by Kincheloe and Berry (2004).

From this stance, I do not think it is generally appropriate or useful to attempt to synthesize different philosophical approaches or assumptions into a single, logically consistent paradigm for mixed methods research. Different situations and research problems may require different sets of assumptions and models, as well as different combinations of methods. In this, I am borrowing the philosopher Nancy Cartwright's concept of "causal pluralism" and applying this more broadly to research methods and mental models, not just to causation. Cartwright (2007) stated that different approaches to causality "are not alternative, incompatible views about causation; they are rather views that fit different kinds of causal systems" and that "there is no single interesting characterizing feature of causation; hence no off-the-shelf or one-size-fits-all method for finding out about it, no 'gold standard' for judging causal relations" (p. 2).

Also, it may be fruitless or counterproductive to attempt to resolve all of the contradictions among different premises. As the philosopher Richard Bernstein (1992) argued with respect to Habermas and Derrida,

> I do not think there is a theoretical position from which we can reconcile their differences, their otherness to each other—nor do I think we should smooth out their "aversions and attractions." The nasty questions that they raise about each other's "project" need to be relentlessly pursued. One of the primary lessons of "modernity/postmodernity" is a radical skepticism about the possibility of a reconciliation—an *aufhebung*, without gaps, fissures, and ruptures. However, *together*, Habermas/ Derrida provide us with a force-field that constitutes the dynamic, transmutational structure of a complex

phenomenon—the phenomenon I have labeled "modernity/postmodernity." (p. 225)

I am also skeptical of the view that successfully combining diverse methods depends on what they have in common. For me, "coherence" is best understood not as a matter of similarity or shared characteristics, but of pragmatic compatibility. Such a pluralist view of coherence undercuts "incompatibility" arguments against mixed methods research, which are based on the assumption that differences in *premises* lead to incompatibility in practice.

However, I am not endorsing an eclectic, "anything goes" approach to research design or to one's philosophical premises. As Bernstein states, the different implications of diverse premises for one another, and for the research, need to be "relentlessly pursued." I advocate seeking the deeper understanding that can be gained from juxtaposing diverse approaches and "mental models," but also systematically *testing* one's premises and conclusions against plausible "validity threats" and alternative understandings. This approach requires playing what the writing teacher Peter Elbow (1986) called the "believing game" and the "doubting game," asking, for each conceptual model or assumption, what believing this model or assumption enables us to see, and also in what ways this model or assumption is misleading, incomplete, or unhelpful (Maxwell, 2010).

The overall point that I want to make here is that philosophical stances and assumptions, like theories, are lenses through which we view the world. These lenses are essential for our understanding, but the views they provide are fallible and incomplete, and we need *multiple* lenses to attain more valid, adequate, in-depth knowledge of the phenomena we study.

This approach recognizes the importance for research of philosophical premises, without assuming that these premises are "foundational." It also recognizes the connections among the specific premises of an approach, without assuming that these constitute a unitary, coherent "paradigm." As a flexible toolkit of different methods and "lenses" for understanding the phenomena we study, I believe that this is both a more logical and a more productive stance for mixed method research than locking ourselves into a single paradigm or worldview.

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3 I realize that the term "bricolage" itself is subject to a variety of interpretations, and I agree with the critiques of bricolage as interpreted in many of these ways (e.g., Hammersley, 2008). In this paper, I am emphasizing the aspect of bricolage that challenges the necessity of following a logically consistent paradigm or predetermined plan.

4 A similar point was made by Shadish, Cook, and Campbell (2002), in what is widely regarded as the pre-eminent work on experimental and quasi-experimental research design, of focusing on design elements, rather than a finite series of designs. The former allows the creation of new designs, and the use of specific elements of experimental design in non-experimental research. They state that, "we hope to help readers acquire a set of tools that is flexible enough so that some of them will be relevant . . . in almost any research context" (p. xviii).

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Do We Need Paradigms? A Mixed Methods Perspective

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When the editors of this journal asked me to provide my evaluation of the concept of "paradigms" and provide a commentary on Joseph Maxwell's article on the subject, I responded positively because I believe that too often important ideas are not clarified, discussed, and debated in the literature. Below, I first define some relevant terms that I have been writing about. Second, I provide some thoughts on the concept of paradigms. Third, I comment on some key themes in Maxwell's article on paradigms in this issue.

Some Background Concepts

I believe the paradigms and qualitative versus quantitative research debates are about knowledge and power (and personality) (Johnson & Gray, 2010). This is seen in the schism in universities between humanities and natural-science-oriented research. This knowledge war (about what knowledge is, who has it, and arguments surrounding relativism vs. realism) goes back, at least, to ancient Greek times. This "knowledge war" about what is real or true continues to the present, and I do not think this war will ever end. Still, I hope each generation will try to do better than (building on ideas seen in) their predecessors and continue to add new thoughtful viewpoints to the discussion.

Often, I advocate what I will label "mixed methods perspective" or MMP (for lack of a better label). If you take the MMP, you will attempt to systematically dialogue with, engage, understand, respect, and combine/integrate multiple concepts and perspectives (e.g., about meaning, epistemology, ontology, what is "seen," what is important, emic vs. etic viewpoints, etc.). This kind of thinking is dynamic and the thinker is always listening to learn something different, challenging, and new. The thinker is not afraid of difference, contradictions, and lack of certainty. He or she will carefully listen to but also ultimately reject dogmatisms and reductionisms. He or she typically finds some truth in very divergent ideas, places, and people. Rather than accepting binary arguments (such as it must be "either a or b") the person taking the MMP typically says both are correct in some ways and prefers a combined package of "some of both."

I am no longer advocating a single philosophical paradigm for mixed research (my preferred label for mixed methods research) such as pragmatism. Instead, I advocate a metaparadigm that I call *dialectical pluralism* (DP). I first explicated DP in a paper presented at the 7th International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry (Johnson, 2011). Dialectical pluralism (DP) is a philosophy designed to produce the MMP, but its potential use is much broader than its use in a methodological paradigm. The key idea of DP is to understand and purposively, dialectically, and dialogically engage with difference and interact with multiple paradigms, disciplines, positive values, and concepts. Research conducted in this way should help produce justified knowledge that is "thick" (i.e., value laden knowledge), provisionally true, useful, and widely accepted (especially when one dialogues with practitioners and users). In my original paper on DP (Johnson, 2011), I articulated DP as an intellectual process, examined some tensions that DP mediates dialectically and provided a set of principles for conducting DP in a group or team composed of people with different paradigms. I also showed how DP can dialogue with multiple ontologies, multiple epistemologies, multiple ethical theories and values, and multiple methods and methodologies.

In 2007, I began constructing a list of criteria/tenets of what I call *Inclusive Education Science*. My current list builds on the one first articulated in Johnson (2009). An *inclusive science* asks all of us to, at least sometimes, empathetically and carefully "listen to and learn from" each other and work together for causes that we care about. There are sets of researchers from multiple epistemological and methodological backgrounds that care about similar broad issues, for example, educating children, reducing mental illness, reducing violence, reducing radical inequalities within and across nations, understanding and promoting ethnic understanding and appreciation, and producing basic knowledge to build upon for future research.

Common to both DP and the MMP is a respect for and continual striving to literally "thrive on our differences" as well as our similarities, as we attempt to create new integrative knowledge. These ideas background my thinking, and I will refer to these three ideas occasionally in this article: MMP (the mixed methods perspective), DP (dialectical pluralism), and Inclusive Education Science. The reader should be able to predict at this point that I will advocate listening to multiple paradigms and combining or integrating ideas and values found in them. This operation can be done by a highly trained individual or by a team that is willing to work together while respecting and retaining key differences.

Paradigms

To orient one's self to the word paradigm, it is instructive to examine how the term has been used in some of our academic literatures. An ontological point, regarding the term paradigm, is that there is no essentialist definition (i.e., no *single* eternally correct definition) for the word or term paradigm to be found. As Wittgenstein (1991) said in the latter part of his career and published shortly after his 1951 death, "for a large class of cases … the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (p. 18). The word paradigm has been socially constructed multiple times and it is used in multiple ways by different writers to refer to something they care about. Exhibit 1 shows a few examples of the use of paradigm in a few social-science-related literatures.

A key point is, again, that researchers define paradigms differently and use the term in multiple ways. Because of the

Exhibit 1 Examples of Paradigms in the Social and Behavioral Science Literature

Here are some entities that have been called paradigms: action research (Bargal, 2008), humanistic psychology (Aanstoos, 2003), organizational discourse (Bargiela-Chiappini, 2004), an approach to identifying individuals at risk for psychosis (Cannon, Cornblatt, & McGorry), a device to define and direct a social movement (Chiappe & Flora, 1998), type of therapy such as psychomedical therapy paradigm (Cottone, 1989), an area of empirical research (Vervliet et al, 2005), mixed methods communities of practice (Denscombe, 2008), participatory research (Cocks, & Cocram, 1995), design based research (Dix, 2007), pragmatism in mixed methods research (Feilzer, 2010), randomized clinical trials (Goldfried & Eubanks-Carter, 2004), theories of social change (Jorg, Muller, & Olaf, 2003), perspectives for the analysis of social phenomena (Hassard, 1991), a conceptual framework in demography (Thorton, 2001), a collection of roles, relationships, and authority structures (Horling & Lesser, 2005), empowerment paradigm (Haber, 2009), a way of studying language comprehension (Just, Carpenter, & Wooley, 1982), multidisciplinary research (Kappas, 2002), a multi-methodological theory-testing framework (Noar & Mehrotra, 2011), solution oriented research (Robinson & Sirad, 2005), an approach for use of library space (Scott, 2009), theoretical construct such as emergency paradigm, monetary paradigm, social justice paradigm, and bankruptcy paradigm (Spector, 2009), and phenomenology (Suransky, 1980).

multiple uses of the term paradigm, I would find it helpful if writers more often defined their uses of the term to help maximize communication (and minimize confusion and equivocation of meaning). Sometimes, authors also use the term in multiple ways in the same article or book. Maxwell, by the way, appropriately defined his usage. Now I will compare several definitions of the term paradigm found in some key writings.

As pointed out by Maxwell, modern usage of the term began in Thomas Kuhn's 1962 book entitled *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.[1] Kuhn's book is now republished in its original form in a third edition. The only difference across the editions is that the second and third editions include Kuhn's "1969 Postscript" where he replied to some of his critics and clarified some of the points he made in the original text (Kuhn, 1962; 1970; 1996). In the philosophy of science (and social science), in social/behavioral research methodology, and in the qualitative research revolution, Kuhn's book was of epochal importance. I consider Kuhn to be the "father" of the modern concept of paradigm, not because he invented it but because he articulated it at an important time in intellectual history.

As Maxwell points out, Kuhn's (1962) discussion of paradigms included multiple usages of the word (e.g., Masterman, 1970), and Kuhn in his "1969 Postscript" decided to rename and explain his two major meanings (1970). In the Postscript Kuhn suggested that we drop the term paradigm and instead use the more accurate terms that he coined. His first meaning of paradigm is called a *disciplinary matrix*:

> I suggest 'disciplinary matrix': 'disciplinary' because it refers to the common possession of the practitioners of a particular discipline and 'matrix' because it is composed of ordered elements of various sorts, each requiring further specification. (p. 182)

A disciplinary matrix included, for example, the following: symbolic generalizations (e.g., $f = ma$), shared models (including heuristic models) that supply "permissible analogies and metaphors" and metaphysical commitments (p. 184), and widely shared values (e.g., about how to judge theories; about the importance of prediction; and important characteristics of theories such as consistency, plausibility, and simplicity).

Kuhn labeled his second major meaning of paradigm *exemplars* that referred to the following:

> … the component of a group's shared commitments which first led me to the choice of that word [i.e., paradigm]. Because the term has assumed a life of its own, however, I shall here substitute 'exemplars.' By it I mean, initially, the concrete problem-solutions that students encounter from the start of their scientific education, whether in laboratories, on examinations, or at the ends of chapters in science texts. To these shared examples should, however, be added at least some of the technical problem-solutions found in the periodical literature….exemplars provide the community fine-structure of science. All physicists, for example, begin by learning the same exemplars…. (p. 187)

Here is how Kuhn (1977) explained these ideas of disciplinary matrices and exemplars in another of his books: "Constituents of the disciplinary matrix include most or all of the objects of group commitment described in the [1962] book as paradigms, parts of paradigms, or paradigmatic" (p. 297); "the term 'exemplar' provides a new name for the second, and more fundamental, sense of 'paradigm' in the [1962] book" (p. 298); [exemplars are] "a community's standard examples" (p. 306). Kuhn thought exemplars were especially important for the operation of research in scientific communities during normal science.

Against this Kuhnian background, Egon Guba (1990) defined paradigms with regard to philosophy and methodology. Guba emphasized that there were three major components of a paradigm, including ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Guba identified several "paradigms" including positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, and constructivism. Unlike Kuhn, Guba emphasized the philosophical (rather than problem solving) aspects of paradigms as being of primary importance. Because of this emphasis, when talking about Guba's approach to paradigms, I add an adjective for clarity, calling them *philosophical paradigms* (even though it includes methodology).

Guba's approach has been of epochal importance and helped spark a "qualitative revolution" of sorts and promoted the rise of qualitative research (that takes on many different and more specific forms). Guba's approach has been particularly popular in education (though its influence cuts across

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[1] For a history of Kuhn's usage and use before Kuhn, see Wray (2011).

many disciplines). One contributing factor to this influence is the internationally recognized *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, now in its fourth edition. To stay up-to-date, here is Denzin and Lincoln's (2011) latest summary of their construction of "paradigm":

> In our introductory chapter, following Egon G. Guba (1990, p. 17), we defined paradigm as a basic set of beliefs that guide action. Paradigms deal with first principles or ultimates….Perspectives, in contrast, are not as solidified nor as well unified as paradigms…. A paradigm encompasses four terms: ethics (axiology), epistemology, ontology, and methodology. (p. 91)

Comparing this definition, one sees that ethics is now included, unlike in the original 1990 definition. They also seem to claim that paradigms are "solidified" and "unified." Guba's approach to paradigms is what I will label *philosophical* paradigms.

I often talk about research or *methodological* paradigms, to add yet another twist to the concept. I do this, perhaps, because I am a methodologist with a strong interest in the philosophy of science. I also do it because when I hear professors and students talk about their identities, the vast majority of the time I hear them identifying with "qualitative research" (not constructivism), "quantitative research" (not postpositivism), or, more recently with "mixed methods research" (not pragmatism or realism). In short, there seems to be a place for the concept of methodological paradigms.

A methodological paradigm includes the same components in Denzin and Lincoln's paradigms (ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodology) but it is *named* differently (quantitative research, qualitative research, mixed research). By the way, if anyone wants to claim that methodological paradigms "ignore philosophy" then they simply have ignored what I have said. Also, if anyone decides to claim that Guba's definition of "paradigm" is wrong or Kuhn's is wrong or Johnson's is wrong, I hope they will first ask themselves if they are ontological realists and go as far as Plato when he said we must "carve nature at it joints" and get the *one* real or essentialist or true definition of an idea (e.g., paradigm). I think most will find that they do not wish to make that commitment. I know I do not; I am not an essentialist, especially when it comes to social constructs. Furthermore, I think is it good to have multiple perspectives and definitions of paradigm *as long as the writer "defines" his or her meaning in use of the word*. I look forward to thinking about additional definitions/uses of paradigm that other writers might want to add to the dialogue. Again, however, we all need to keep the reader in mind and make sure that our meaning in use is clear in our publications.

Here are two key statements about what I refer to as research or methodological paradigms. The first statement is, probably, the statement Maxwell was referring to when he pointed out that I view qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research as "paradigms" (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007):

> [In its modern use,] Thomas Kuhn (1962) coined the term *paradigm*. In a recent article we coined a term we thought might work for delin-

eating the three major research approaches in the social and behavioral sciences: qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed research (or mixed methods research). We used the term *research paradigm* (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 24) as follows: "By *research paradigm* we mean a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and conduct of research. The beliefs include, but are not limited to, ontological beliefs, epistemological beliefs, axiological beliefs, aesthetic beliefs, and methodological beliefs. In short, as we use the term, a research paradigm refers to a research culture. We will be arguing that there is now a trilogy of major research paradigms: qualitative research, quantitative research, and mixed methods research." (pp. 120-130)

My colleagues and I elaborated on the issue as follows:

> A synonym for our concept of "research paradigm" would be the term *methodological* paradigm. The point is that a paradigm can develop around what it means to conduct research and how it is undertaken…. For Kuhn, the term *paradigm* was clearly not limited to epistemology, which is one of several popular usages today, but not ours. We find it convenient to speak of research or methodological paradigms as a way of separating and organizing qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research. (p. 130)

In short, I find it convenient to refer to qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research as research or methodological paradigms because I want to be able to have a name for what we all call "qualitative research," "quantitative research," and "mixed methods research." I think it works fine because methodology can be construed in a large sense to include anything of possible relation to research methodology including history, philosophy, and methods. Yet another reasonable way to conceptualize a social research paradigm would be around the categories Greene (2006) constructed for what she called social inquiry. Her conceptual categories included (a) philosophical assumptions and stances, (b) inquiry logics, (c) guidelines for practice, and (d) sociopolitical commitments (Greene, 2006; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Similar to Guba's philosophical paradigms and Johnson's methodological paradigms, Greene's social inquiry includes philosophy, values, and methods or guidelines for practice. Common elements abound but the preferred *emphases* and *names* vary.

In my writing, I think of a paradigm as a sort of community culture with shared understandings (much like Kuhn). In Kuhn's (1996) words, "a paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share" (p. 176). A culture (and a paradigm) can be large or small. Cultures (and paradigms) can have very different cores. Here are a few possible cultural cores: baseball culture, University of Michigan football culture, Williamson High School band culture, emergent culture in an ethnographic scene, African American culture in the United States, feminist culture, national culture, and, increasingly, world culture. We also can belong to many different communities and cultures concurrently; this is a key idea in mixed research. For me (and Kuhn) a key part

of culture or paradigm is viewing one's self as a member (identifying with the culture or paradigm). Maxwell makes a good point when he emphasizes that cultures are distributed and heterogeneous (within a culture), and this is what I meant above by shared understanding. This idea is encapsulated in George Herbert Mead's concept of "the generalized other" (see section 20 in Mead, 1934) that we have after successful socialization (i.e., we know our place, but we also have come to understand through the process of "role-taking" other statuses and roles in the community and its culture). From my reading, my view of cultures is similar to Kuhn's. Perhaps we should always emphasize that cultures include both homogeneity and heterogeneity.

One can see many identifiable cultures in social and behavioral research. For example there are disciplinary cultures (sociology, psychology, education, business) and theory cultures (in psychology and education one might see behaviorism, cognitivism, constructivism, and biological psychology). I also have already mentioned research or methodological cultures/ paradigms. During the 1980s social science started dividing more clearly into qualitative research in addition to quantitative research, and in the 1990s and beyond also into mixed methods research. Furthermore, there are many smaller paradigms in these disciplines and methodologies, and they come and go relatively frequently as communities-of-practice (Denscombe, 2008).

A question one might ask is "What are the philosophical and methodological aspects of the three major methodological paradigms as ideal types?" I would say the methodological paradigm of *quantitative research* tends to rely on (with much intra-paradigm variation) the following: (a) an ontology of either phenomenalism (this was the approach of the logical positivists) or scientific realism (this is a development over the past 30 years or so), with ontological physicalism/ materialism being popular in the natural sciences); (b) an epistemology of naturalism and empiricism (i.e., empirical research/data are viewed as providing the best evidence); and (c) the use of multiple quantitative methods (e.g., structured surveys, laboratory and field experiments, structured observation). *Qualitative research* tends to rely on (with much intra-paradigm variation) the following: (a) an ontology of ontological relativism and idealism, although there also are realist groups; (b) multiple epistemologies, with individual/cognitive constructivism and social constructivism (or constructionism) and critical theory being most popular; and (c) multiple qualitative methods (e.g., ethnographic and phenomenological interviews, ethnographic observation, auto-ethnographic methods, constructivist grounded theory, and so on). Third, *mixed research* tends to rely on the following: (a) ontological pluralism and ontological complexity; (b) the purposeful use of multiple epistemologies that allow the construction of a complex emergent epistemology (sometimes on a project-by-project basis); and (c) an emphasis on the importance of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Themes in Maxwell's Article with My Thoughts

I turn now to a more specific commentary on Maxwell's article in this issue. My commentary surrounds 11 themes that I found in the article. A different reader would likely "find" a different set of themes. I make no claim that my identified themes are either mutually exclusive or exhaustive.

Theme 1

Maxwell says the "validity and usefulness of the concept of 'paradigm' needs to be challenged." This is perhaps the major theme of Maxwell's article. I do not think the concept of paradigm is especially popular among practicing mixed researchers, but I like the concept. I agree that the usefulness of the concept of paradigm always needs to be *challenged* (just like other concepts), and I attempted to do that in the previous section. If one wanted to "throw away" the concept of paradigm (I do not think Maxwell does, but I am not sure), I would disagree because I think the concept has an important place in philosophy, methodology, history of science, and academic culture. What is important is that different writers inform readers of their intended meaning or meanings of paradigm in their articles and books. An example of this type of definition is found in Table 3.1 in a chapter in the *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research* (Johnson & Gray, 2010). I think construction of this kind of table (defining one's terms) would be a useful general practice especially when contested terms are used.[2]

Second, I am a little concerned with Maxwell's use of the word "validity" in the above quote (and in several other places in the article) because I do not know what he means by the term. I am worried he might be using it in a deductive logical way, which I would not agree with because empirical research is about probabilities not deductive certainties. "Validity" is a contested term in social/behavioral/educational research, with many different meanings, and it usually needs to be defined. If Maxwell had defined his meaning of validity, I might have a different assessment. For the purpose of dialogue, I wonder "What exactly is a 'valid paradigm?', and "What is an 'invalid paradigm?'" Examples of any paradigms (held by a number of scholars) that are deemed to be invalid would be helpful. Coming from the MMP, I usually expect that most paradigms today will include at least some truth value and offer an interesting perspective that adds something of value "to the conversation." Speaking of paradigms as valid or invalid harks back to the days of logical positivism (where theories were a series of sentences that were taken together to be true or false).

Again, although some in mixed research might readily drop the concept of paradigm, I would not. Rhetorically, the use of the concept of paradigm is one important way of attempting to communicate what one believes, identifies with, and values. Also, I have learned very much from consideration of and listening to what different paradigms have to say. They all have added to "the conversation." My listening has helped me to become (I hope) more intellectually well rounded. Many writers like the term paradigm and some researchers passionately identify themselves with a paradigm, and I certainly would not want to take away that freedom and mode of identification and communication. I suspect Maxwell's point in his article is more of a challenge to defend how one uses the term, and I agree with him. On the other hand, I think it is possible that Maxwell might also inadvertently be searching for the one true definition of paradigm.

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2   If you happen to look at the table just mentioned, you will not find paradigm in it, but I define paradigm later in the text of the chapter.

Theme 2

Maxwell says he takes a "distributive view of culture" and "I question the assumption that communities are united primarily by their shared beliefs and values." Maxwell views this as an assumption in the background of the paradigms debate, and he thinks it is false. This sounds like an empirical question to me, but it is not one that will be readily determined at the level of paradigms in the world. I would argue that communities are held together by many factors, but I would *emphasize*, unlike Maxwell, that some sharing of beliefs and values are quite important. Thus, I disagree with Maxwell *if he contends that shared beliefs and values are not important* for community solidarity.

Let us consider the case of qualitative research. I believe the beliefs and values described in paradigm descriptions provide many people with a message and an ideology to rally around (when it fits their values and beliefs better than competing paradigms) and this has helped spark the social/intellectual/methodological movement known as qualitative research across the world. I think the philosophical and methodological paradigm descriptions of qualitative research have been powerfully influential because they have hit upon something (issues, values, beliefs) that many people share; that is why they decided to identify with the movement. At the same time, qualitative research includes much heterogeneity, which is a healthy phenomenon and adds many helpful perspectives within qualitative research. The same is true for mixed research.

If one could separate the variance, I suspect he or she would find that similar views unite people more than different views, but that is an empirical question. Furthermore, I would assume we agree that both are important. I will claim for now (until the empirical literature tells me otherwise) that paradigms are both homogeneous *and* heterogeneous, and both of these characteristics contribute to solidarity in some way. I believe that Maxwell has failed to appreciate the uniting effect of shared values and beliefs. Also, as I have mentioned, one of the most important shared values and beliefs for mixed research is the importance of understanding difference and purposively bringing those differences into new wholes to work toward ends we value.

Taking the MMP tells me to appreciate homogeneity and heterogeneity within and between paradigms. The MMP is a very inclusive view indeed. I appreciate the presence of multiple paradigms because they provide me with different useful ways of looking at the same named "object." I know more and see better when I use multiple paradigmatic lenses. Paradigms are just one of many ways that researchers identify themselves and see the world, but I think it is a useful one. If we eliminated the word paradigms from our writing and speaking, a new replacement word would quickly appear.

Theme 3

Because of his distributive view of culture, Maxwell next says "I am skeptical of the call (e.g., Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2011) for 'convergence on core principles' in mixed methods research" because, for example, (a) "what 'brings us together' is not core principles or supposedly foundational beliefs or practices, but mutually productive dialogue," and (b) "I am concerned that any attempt to define 'core ideas' will marginalize or exclude people who do not share these ideas." This theme overlaps with the previous one, but it also is different.

I believe (a) offers a false choice. Why cannot both core principles *and* dialogue bring us together? Maxwell's point (b) is quite important, and mixed research like every other paradigm must continually attempt to minimize its presence. I suggest that it is useful to have some very general core principles in mixed research that are *specifically designed to include everyone* who would possibly hope to be in the paradigmatic community. In a moment I will show that many of Teddlie and Tashakkori's core principles are focused on inclusion and the valuing of difference.

Here is an example of a general core principle designed to be inclusive: Individuals engaging in mixed research should attempt to understand, listen to, and fully respect both difference and commonality. I suggest this core principle will not marginalize or exclude people, and if it does, that is okay. Here is an "asterisk principle" that should be applied to any set of core principles, and it too should help eliminate marginalization and exclusion: It is not expected that everyone will adhere to all core principles because the principles are merely suggestions that a number of mixed researchers and methodologists have provided; our principles should be flexible and subject to continual modification over time as the mixed research community changes. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) suggested that

> whereas there might not be a perfect or essentialist definition [of mixed methods research] forthcoming, dialogue and social construction of a workable definition is a worthwhile goal for the field, understanding, of course that definitions can and will usually change over time as the approach or 'research paradigm' continues to grow. (p. 112)

If mixed research constructs core principles, they must be flexible and inclusive.

Getting back to Teddlie and Tashakkori's principles (originally outlined in 2010), I am confident that Teddlie and Tashakkori did not in any way intend to suggest that anyone be marginalized. Let us look at the principles or core ideas to which Maxwell was referring from Teddlie and Tashakkori (2010):

- "The first general characteristic of MMR [mixed methods research] is what we call methodological eclecticism….A researcher employing methodological eclecticism is a *connoisseur of methods*, who knowledgably (and often intuitively) selects the best techniques available to answer research questions that frequently evolve as a study unfolds" (p. 8).

- "The second contemporary characteristic of MMR is paradigm pluralism, or the belief that a variety of paradigms may serve as the underlying philosophy for the use of mixed methods" (p. 9).

- "The third characteristic of contemporary MMR is an emphasis on diversity at all levels of the research enterprise, from the broader, more conceptual dimensions to the narrower, more empirical ones….There is a growing awareness that an equally important result of combining information from different sources is *divergence* or dissimilarity" (p. 9).

- "The fourth…is *an emphasis on continua rather than a set of dichotomies*" (p. 10).

- "The fifth…is *an iterative, cyclical approach to research*, which includes both deductive and inductive logic in the same study" (p. 10).

- "The sixth characteristic endorsed by many [but not all] writing in MMR is *a focus on the research question (or research problem) in determining the methods employed within any given study*" (p. 10).

- "The seventh characteristic of contemporary MMR is a set of basic 'signature' research designs and analytical processes, which are commonly agreed upon, although they go by different names" (p. 11).

- "The eighth ... is a tendency toward balance and compromise within the 'third methodological community" (p. 11).

- "The ninth…is a reliance on visual representations (e.g., figures, diagrams) and a common notational system" (p. 11).

To be fair to Teddlie and Tashakkori, I think the reader will see that they are far more receptive to diversity than Maxwell seems to imply, and they do not want to force everyone into a single common approach. What is common is a respect for diversity. Principle 3 literally advocates diversity of approaches and perspectives. Although Maxwell makes a useful point (we should never force everyone to follow the same set of principles), I think he might not have listened carefully enough to what Teddlie and Tashakkori were trying to say and I think he might have missed the point that "core principles" can emphasize diversity and wide inclusion.

Theme 4

Maxwell says "I do not believe that paradigms themselves are typically logically consistent and unified systems of thought, a claim that Kuhn never made." I fully agree, and I argue further that *no one in mixed research makes this claim*. Perhaps Maxwell was referring to someone in qualitative research or quantitative research. The argument for "logically consistent and unified" sounds like something one might have heard from the *logical* positivists in the mid 20th century (remember, they wanted theories constructed as logical systems that were true or false). I think most researchers in mixed research, like Maxwell, are suspicious of the word "unified." There still are some calls in the natural sciences for a "unified science" (that started with the logical positivists), but no one in mixed research makes this claim.[3]

Virtually everyone in mixed research, I suspect, would agree with Maxwell's statement that, "coherence is not necessarily a matter of philosophical consistency but of pragmatic compatibility, and is in principle an empirical question, rather than a strictly logical one." From the MMP, any paradigm will value multiple goods and will typically have to deal with tradeoffs all of which could be consistent with the paradigm. Paradigms are wholes with many components and it is not

a requirement that all of the components naturally agree. A MM-like paradigm would purposively include consideration of conflicting/different perspectives. Paradigms are not like mathematical equations, but rather are heavily value laden social constructions that we think help us in dealing with our lives and worlds.

Theme 5

Maxwell says "My views on this issue are similar to Greene's (2007; Greene & Hall, 2010) dialectical stance for mixed methods research." I am in strong agreement with Maxwell and Greene about the importance of dialecticalism. One of my motivating reasons for developing dialectical pluralism was to expand on Greene's dialectical view for mixed research. Furthermore, I contend that *the basic idea of dialecticalism is a popular idea in mixed research*. While many mixed researchers do not label themselves as following dialecticalism, they also do not label themselves as following any other theoretical paradigm. Again, although this is an empirical question, I believe that the vast majority of people in mixed research like the basic concept of dialecticalism and view it as both useful and important. I do not think Teddlie and Tashakkori have any reservations about a dialectical view. For example, see pages 73, and 99-100 in Teddlie and Tashakkori's mixed methods textbook where the dialectical approach was praised (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). For quite some time, I have believed that perhaps the one thing that virtually all mixed researchers believe is that we should listen to and dialogue with divergent concepts, people, and perspectives (i.e., dialecticalism) to better understand and improve our world.

Theme 6

Maxwell says "that diversity itself is fundamental rather than superficial" and we should be skeptical "toward totalizing, foundational theories." I certainly agree with this point, but, I claim that this is the position held in mixed research. *Mixed research, one could argue, was developed because it was thought that diversity was important*. Diversity is a key theme in mixed research.

Let me now say a little more about the term foundationalism. Whenever a writer in any area of human research uses the term "foundationalism" I consider it a red flag because I do not believe that any empirical researcher holds the position of philosophical foundationalism. Perhaps we should all define what we mean by foundationalism. I draw my definition from philosophy, and there it is a long debunked epistemology that was most notably found in the philosophy of Rene Descartes and the philosophy of rationalism. Foundationalism held that one could identify certain a priori truths (Descartes' "clear and distinct" ideas) that are necessarily true and that can act as axioms or as a secure foundation upon which one can deduce additional certain truths. Foundationalism is not about probabilities; it is about certain, deductive truth. It many ways, foundationalism is an application of mathematics and/or deductive logic to knowledge building. Here is how Feldman (2003) put it:

Foundationalism involves two fundamental claims:

F1. There are justified basic beliefs.

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3   Although I am not at all fond of the word unification, I have argued that humans should universally agree *on a few ethical issues*. I hope everyone agrees with these two statements: (a) We should conduct research directed at ethical ends, and we should conduct it ethically; and (b) No one should be held in slavery. There are many more statements of this sort (see Johnson, 2011).

F2. All justified nonbasic beliefs are justified in virtue of their relation to justified basic beliefs. (p. 52)

Foundationalism was a key part of the philosophy of rationalism which stood in contrast to the philosophy of empiricism. The vast majority of researchers in the social/behavioral sciences are much closer to empiricism than rationalism.

My point is that foundationalism in the sense that I am familiar with is not present in mixed methods research. I suspect that Maxwell either had a different meaning for foundationalism or perhaps he is thinking of someone not in the area of mixed research. Foundationalism is one of a number of words that I attempt to always avoid because of possible confusion and because it is not held by anyone in the research domains that I study.

Theme 7

Maxwell says "I have taken a distributionist view of culture, the critique of paradigms as unified philosophical stances for research." I have already touched on the distributionist view of culture, so I will just make a couple of extra points here. First, as to the "correct" definition of culture, I suggest such a definition will never be found, but that dialogue and debate about definitions is usually helpful. Second, coming from a sociological perspective, I have traditionally emphasized the shared aspect as have many anthropologists, and I have found that kind of concept useful for explaining societies and groups. I have traditionally used different concepts to examine the non-shared aspects of groups and societies. I looked at several very recent introductory cultural anthropology books and they are still including the "shared" aspect of culture (Eller, 2009; Haviland, Prins, McBride, & Walrath, 2010; Hiebert, 1999; Lenkeit, 2004; Nanda & Warms, 2011; Robbins, 2008).

According to the principle of completeness (which is important for the MMP), perhaps what is especially important in defining culture is that we do not miss anything important. Eller (2009) includes the following characteristics of culture: learned, shared, symbolic, integrated, and adaptive. His list is incomplete, but it could offer a useful starting point for a more complete perspective of culture. In agreement with the MMP, we could view the five starting characteristics as not essentially true of culture but as true in the sense of family resemblance (they all are in some sense "culture like") and then start building. I will start by adding *distributed and different meanings* as a sixth family member. In general, one can use the principle of combination to put the ideas together, but combination and integration must be done very carefully. Why not view culture as partially shared and partially distributed? Both the shared and the distributive views of culture seem to have some merit, and taken together one has a "third" viewpoint or perspective that seems useful.

Theme 8

Maxwell says the following:

There is a term that captures this approach [the view taken in this article for mixed research]—*bricolage* which was used by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss to distinguish mythological from "scientific" thought. (In current French usage, bricolage means "do-it-yourself," and is used to refer to stores like Home Depot.) … The key idea is that, rather than developing a logically consistent plan in advance and then systematically following this plan, the *bricoleur* spontaneously adapts to the unique circumstances of the situation, creatively employing the available tools and materials to create unique solutions to a problem.

To help readers not familiar with this concept, I will provide a reasonable definition of bricoleur from an online dictionary of anthropology (http://www.anthrobase.com/Dic/eng/):

A term introduced by Lévi-Strauss (1962), describing a type of thinking and symbolization; the opposite of "engineer". The engineer creates specialized tools for specialized purposes. The bricoleur is a "jack-of-all-trades", who uses few, non-specialized tools for a wide variety of purposes. There is a loose connection between, on the one hand, the bricoleur and "primitive" societies, and, on the other, the engineer and modern societies (see evolutionism). For Lévi-Strauss, the two concepts are the point of departure for a complex theoretical discussion of "the science of the concrete" in premodern, "primitive" cultures.

I agree with Maxwell that bricolage is a useful concept, and I expect many people in mixed research will use the concept once they hear about it and become more familiar with the concept.

Many characteristics of the *bricoleur* are important if one is going to conduct mixed research successfully. Here are a few characteristics that are bricoleur-like (in varying degrees) or bricoleur-related that are very important for a mixed researcher to have available in his or her persona and toolkit: creativity, spontaneity, ability to create unique and apropos solutions to particular problems at hand, openness to the new and different situations, ability to use traditional methods and techniques in new ways, ability to cross ideas found in multiple disciplines, ability to make Gestalt switches between conflicting paradigms (Kuhn, 1996), ability to use whatever is at hand for the job, have an ability to "do it yourself," obtaining and acting on tacit knowledge (Kuhn emphasized this), acting recursively, listening to multiple viewpoints and perspectives, viewing the world as complex, ability to see differences, patterns, relationships, and solutions, and ability to use metaphors creatively. I try to work these ideas into my writing as often as I can, because I value them and hope others will too. I also see those ideas in the writings of many mixed methodologists and researchers. I hope to see more writers in the domain of mixed research incorporate the term bricoleur into their writing more frequently in the future.

Let us also consider, however, some opposite or different ideas that also are important. In many circumstances, I would not want to *only* use the approaches of a *bricoleur*. Here are a few more characteristics of the *bricoleur* (Lévi-Strauss, 1966):

• "His [sic] universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand', that is to say with a set of tools and materials which is always finite and is also heterogeneous because

what it contains bears no relation to the current project" (p. 17).

- "The elements which the 'bricoleur' collects and uses are 'pre-constrained'" (p. 19).
- "The engineer questions the universe, while the 'bricoleur' addresses himself to a collection of oddments left over from human endeavors, that is, only a sub-set of the culture" (p. 19).
- "The engineer is always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization while the 'bricoleur' by inclination or necessity always remains within them. This is another way of saying that the engineer works by means of concepts and the 'bricoleur' by means of signs" (pp. 19-20).
- "The scientist, on the other hand, whether he is an engineer or physicist, is always on the look out *for that other message* which might be wrested from an interlocutor in spite of his reticence in pronouncing on questions whose answers have not been rehearsed. Concepts [used by scientists] thus appear like operators *opening up* the set being worked with and signification [used by bricoleurs] like the operator of its *reorganization* which neither extends nor renews it and limits itself to obtaining the group of its transformations" (p. 20).

In the original French version of Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind*, the *bricoleur* is contrasted with the *ingénieur* (e.g., Duymedjian & Ruling, 2010; Eriksen, 2004). In contrast to the *bricoleur*, the *ingénieur* is like a modern scientist and engineer who is a planner, tries to develop new concepts and theories, acts carefully and linearly, and attempts to produce specific desired outcomes. Duymedjian and Ruling (2010) constructed "ideal types" (in a Weberian sense of a construct developed for comparison) of *bricoleur* and *ingénieur*:

> Our proposition is to consider the two notions of the bricoleur and the ingénieur as they are juxtaposed by Lévi-Strauss. We consider them as designating two opposed but complementary ideal-typical regimes of action, which can each be understood through a particular combination of acting (practice), knowing (epistemology) and an underlying world view (metaphysics). However, at the same time regarding the bricoleur and the ingenieur as ideal-types also acknowledges that truth that, in fact, all 'real world' actions are situated somewhere in between the two—in concrete, empirical terms, there is no such thing as 'pure' bricolage. (p. 139)

The *bricoleur* is weak in the area of constructing new concepts and new theories. He or she also is weak in the area of planning for a project. Pasteur was not completely wrong when he famously said in 1854 that "chance favors the prepared mind." Perhaps some balance between planning and doing-it-yourself with what you have is prudent for many research projects. My key point is that the *bricoleur and* the scientist or engineer or *ingénieur* have some useful characteristics, and Lévi-Strauss would agree. He says: "But it is important not to make the mistake of thinking that these are two stages or phases in the evolution of knowledge. Both approaches are equally valid" (p. 22). I think virtually everyone in mixed research would *agree* that both or multiple approaches are preferable.

Theme 9

Maxwell says, "I do not think it is generally appropriate or useful to attempt to synthesize different philosophical approaches or assumptions into a single logically consistent paradigm for mixed methods research" and "It may be fruitless or counterproductive to attempt to resolve all of the contradictions among different premises." I argue that no prominent writer in mixed research makes these claims.[4] I searched the second edition of the Sage Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research (using the Google Books search function), and the only time the string of words "logical consistency" occurred was in the Maxwell and Mittapalli chapter. (The string "logically consistent" also appeared only once, and it was in the same chapter.) I also did not find any instances of those strings of words in the newest Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. In short, I agree with Maxwell's perspective on these issues, but I think most everyone else also agrees. From a mixed methods perspective, what I think is especially important (rather than "logical consistency") is juxtaposition of divergent ideas, dealing with the tensions created by listening to these divergent ideas, and creating a new combined or "dialectically integrated" perspective on a project-by-project basis.

Theme 10

Maxwell says, "I am also skeptical of the view that successfully combining diverse methods depends on what they have in common." I agree with Maxwell and, again, I think virtually everyone in mixed research also agrees, including Teddlie and Tashakkori. In contrast to Maxwell's point, many writers in the field of mixed research argue that just the opposite is typically true. A common and important strategy is to combine methods that do *not* have much in common. Here is what I wrote in my recent International Congress of Qualitative Research paper where I introduced dialectical pluralism (Johnson, 2011): "In mixed research, one should typically attempt to privilege the mixing of methods that are quite different from one another (Greene, 2007) because convergence and divergence are equally important to equal-status mixed research." In Maxwell's article, I very much like his praise of Elbow's "believing game" and "doubting game." The believing and doubting game offers an excellent strategy for researchers to use and it fits very well with dialectical pluralism and mixed research.

Theme 11

Maxwell says, "Philosophical stances and assumptions, like theories, are lenses through which we view the world. These lenses are essential for our understanding, but the views

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4   In the Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) article, we were arguing for mixed methods research as a methodological paradigm as discussed above. Furthermore, diversity and some commonality are both parts of our view of any sort of paradigm for mixed research. Tony Onwuegbuzie and I have many times discussed how broadly we view mixed research. We view mixed research as including qualitative-dominant mixed research, quantitative-dominant mixed research, and equal-status mixed research. Perhaps most of the researchers practicing qualitative-dominant mixed research would even self-identify with qualitative research, and perhaps most of the researchers practicing quantitative-dominant mixed research would self-identify with quantitative research. That certainly includes much diversity, correct? We were not arguing for synthesizing different philosophical approaches or assumptions into a single logically consistent paradigm for mixed methods research.

they provide are fallible and incomplete, and we need multiple lenses to attain more valid, adequate, in-depth knowledge of the phenomena we study." I agree with Maxwell's point, and I suspect that *most everyone in mixed research also would agree*. Mixed research is typically conducted because researchers want multiple lenses through which to view phenomena. I agree with Kuhn that we view the world through our paradigms, and individuals from two different paradigms literally "see" the world differently. Kuhn (1996) says that people with different paradigms "do in some sense live in different worlds" (p. 193). Kuhn spends much space showing how difficult it can be for individuals operating from different paradigms to communicate or "see" the same thing. Kuhn also provides some strategies for seeing through the lenses of two or more paradigms (e.g., language translation and Gestalt switching). According to my mixed methods perspective, we *can* (with difficulty, but with extensive training) and *should attempt to understand multiple paradigms so that we can "see" the world from multiple useful perspectives and so that we can use these perspectives to build a better and more just world.*

Conclusion

My conclusions here are that (a) the term paradigm is not a singular concept with full agreement on definition, (b) there never will be a *single* correct definition of paradigm that "carves nature at its joints," and (c) I recommend that authors define paradigm in their publications and provide adjectives to help clarify the type of paradigm they are considering (e.g., epistemological paradigm, philosophical paradigm, methodological paradigm, theoretical paradigm, paradigm example, paradigm model, etc.). Regarding the themes in Maxwell's article, I believe the vast majority of methodologists and researchers in mixed methods research *agree with Maxwell's beliefs,* and not the beliefs Maxwell projected onto mixed methods research.

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EcoJustice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities

R. A. Martusewicz, J. Edmundson, and J. Lupinacci (2011). New York: Routledge.

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In today's bungled notion of what constitutes "success-ful" and "excellent" public schools and colleges, such as accreditation reports, high stakes test results, and state and federal mandates, teachers and teacher educators can easily lose sight of why they do what they do. To be an educator concerned with such pressures (on top of educating students well!), it can be difficult to navigate the throngs of research and literature on how to do our work effectively *and* with good heart. Yet, every once in a while, a text appears that cuts through the educational dogma and gets to the crux of how and why to educate well. *EcoJustice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities* does just that.

EcoJustice Education is an essential course of study for students of education, practicing teachers, and teacher educators in that the authors ask the right questions in a refreshingly unique and engaging framework: What is the purpose of education? What does it mean to be human? How might we learn to live well? What is community? What do all of these questions have to do with educating for a sustainable and viable future? Rebecca Martusewicz, Jeff Edmundson, and John Lupinacci challenge the reader to reflect on these questions and many others, while daringly unveiling the myths that shroud our lives. At the same time, they give teacher educators and students of education the tools to tackle the ecological and cultural crises in creative and hope-producing ways. Their call is one of reclamation. They demand it is time to reclaim relationships not just between human and human, but between humans, other living things, and the places that sustain all life, all the while making clear how and why these relationships are vital to teachers and students of education.

Martusewicz, Edmundson, and Lupinacci's scholarship is experientially grounded in public school life. They are con-scientious public school educators with deep and ever-lasting relationships with the public schools in their neighborhoods. Their active experience frames the text's discussions in practical ideas while simultaneously building an ecojustice framework to do "the good work." The authors cast nets that critique our current ecological and cultural crises and reel them back into the shores of how schools, classrooms, and other communities are affected by these crises and what we as teachers can do to curb the destruction. The book and its supported resources, including a companion website with lesson plans, are loaded with practical hands-on activities for educators to aid in bringing this discussion into the classroom.

In short, there is no ivory tower hoop-la while upholding the content to graduate and undergraduate level course standards.

From the beginning, the authors are clear in their pur-pose: "The overall goal of this book is to provide teachers and teacher educators with the information and classroom practices they need to assume the responsibility for preparing citizens ready to create democratic and sustainable communi-ties in an increasingly globalized world" (Martusewicz et al., 2011, p. 18). They begin their charge in Chapter 1 by asking why school in a world seemingly committed to ecological and global destruction? And, what is the root cause of the envi-ronmental crisis? In response to such questions, the authors examine the environmental crisis through a cultural lens. They deduce that the root of our current ecological crisis lies in many of the West's destructive cultural beliefs and values. Here, the authors heed the call to understand and reclaim the relationship between ecology and culture by offering the ecojustice model to examine "the cultural roots of the eco-logical crisis" (p. 9). The ecojustice analysis is defined while comparing and contrasting it with other approaches such as environmental education, experiential/outdoor education, place-based education, education for sustainability, holistic education, and others. The chapter ends with a discussion of the main goals of the book while acknowledging other environmental and cultural theorists such as C.A. Bowers, Wendell Berry, Vandana Shiva, Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash, Val Plumwood, Carolyn Merchant, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Wolfgang Sachs, and others.

What makes an ideal community? To answer such a question through the ecojustice lens, the reader is challenged to rethink the concepts of diversity, democracy, and sustain-ability. This challenge is the purpose of Chapter 2. The text frames the rethinking of these three concepts around ques-tions of defining community. This discussion is carefully and purposefully unpacked by asking thought provoking questions, the telling of personal stories from the authors themselves, and including a careful explanation of ideas and terms while clearly defining guiding ecojustice principles. Here, the foundation is laid for the rest of the text. It is a carefully designed roadmap, and by Chapter 2's conclusion the reader senses that adventure awaits. However, this is no armchair journey. It is a journey, which requires active participation if we are to truly live well and in community.

Drawing on the work of Gregory Bateson, C.A. Bow-ers, Carolyn Merchant, and others, Chapter 3 invites a deep

discussion of the relationship between language and many of the West's cultural beliefs and values. The authors vividly make the connection between how our words and the ideas they represent contribute to our lack of an ecological understanding, which allows a license for our culture to abuse the living systems of the planet. The authors also deliver a set of tools, allowing the ecojustice student to reflect upon this abusive relationship, so that we may analyze our "cultural ways of knowing" by examining the metaphors we live out. Through this analysis we begin to understand the deep-seeded underpinnings of our anthropocentric, androcentric, and ethnocentric relationship to the earth. We also are given the tools to start rethinking, transforming and leading these metaphors towards sustainability.

Chapters 4-6 lay out the violent histories of gender, class, and race: an all too common yet essential discussion for the social foundations educator and student. Yet, the authors of *EcoJustice Education* take these discussions to a deeper understanding by examining each of these forms of violence through a cultural-ecological lens. This leads to an understanding of the logic of domination, or an analysis that clearly paints the direct relationship between gender, class, and race to the domination of other life forms. Each analysis is laid out carefully while making the contribution of how each relate to schooling.

Chapter 4 lays out how androcentrism is taught and learned in society and school, while providing a historical understanding of gender issues, including the history of educating women to current day LGBTQ issues. Chapter 5 examines the concept of social hierarchy by closely looking at issues of socio-economics, how SES affects testing and tracking, and understanding class and its relationship to the cultural-ecological analysis. This chapter also chronicles a thorough analysis of how and why class is reproduced in schooling while delivering reflecting exercises to personalize this discussion. Chapter 6 looks at race and how it is learned by carefully examining the history of racial justice and its consequences. The authors begin this discussion by asking why racism exists, and unpack the logic of domination and its relationship to science, or more specifically the taxonomic classification, Social Darwinism, and eugenics and slavery (both institutional and non-institutional forms). This leads to a deeper discussion of race and its relationship to public school life, such as zero tolerance policies and academic achievement gaps. As with all the chapters in the text, Chapter 6 concludes with the tools for educators to confront these problems in a culturally and ecologically responsive manner. There are also comprehensive lists of teaching tools in books, films, and websites that enrich student understanding.

The heart of *EcoJustice Education* lies within Chapters 7, 8, and 9. Chapter 7 pulls from the work of C.A. Bowers and explains the cultural and ecological commons and their enclosure. These concepts, the backbone to ecojustice education, are explained as:

[The commons include] the non-monetized relationships, practices and traditions that people across the world use to survive and take care of one another on a day-to-day basis. This included both the 'environmental commons' such as air, water, seeds, and forest, and the 'cultural commons,' which include practices, skills and knowledge used to support mutual well-being. (p. 247)

Furthermore,

...much of the process of enclosure involves making private property out of what was once freely shared. A central aspect of this 'privatization' involves the process of 'monetization'... 'commodification'... Internalizing these ideologies as 'truths,' we accept enclosure as normal and lose sight of the commons because we are immersed in a belief system that makes money and the accumulation of things more important and even more 'real' than protecting life. (p. 216)

By challenging these "truths," or this sense of reality that many of us in the Western world take for granted, we are forced to ask how we came to accept globalization and progress forward so blindly without asking questioning the long-term effects. To support such a question, the authors guide us through a brief history of enclosure and the logic of domination by giving us a primer on influential post-World War II "development agencies," such as General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades (GATT), World Trade Organization (WTO), International Money Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The chapter ends with a thorough discussion on how the commons and its enclosure relate to education by asking how schools are recreating the assumptions and habits that enclose the commons. The authors examine this question by presenting seven in-depth and moving global case studies that explain, in detail, globalization and resistance in relation to the commons and its enclosure.

Chapter 8 asks how we might learn about ecological sustainability from the wisdom of indigenous communities in order to shed light on possible alternative solutions to current problems. The authors make their intentions clear on the chapter's first page:

There are many, many cultures on this planet who for hundreds, even thousands of years developed highly complex ways of knowing and being that recognize the human interdependence with all the other creatures we share this world with; we cannot be them; we ought not speak for them, but neither ought we ignore what they have to teach us. ... We begin from the assumption that Indigenous cultures should have a right to exist as they see fit, like any other culture, without foreign cultures being imposed on them. But beyond this, they also offer alternative pathways and centuries-old wisdom for how to live on the planet, and as such they can offer

valuable lessons to an increasingly unsustainable modern world. (p. 250-251)

One area of indigenous wisdom this book reminds us as important to education is that of oral history. As Native American scholar Gregory Cajete (1994) points out, the "difference between the transfer of knowledge in modern Western education and that of Indigenous education is that in Western education information has been separated from the stories and presented as data, description, theory, and formula" (as cited in Martusewicz et al., 2011, p. 256). While encouraging teachers to become storytellers once again, Cajete suggests that a "curriculum founded on American Indian myths in science might revolve around stories of human relationships to plants, animals, natural phenomena, and the places in which Indian people live" (as cited in Martusewicz et al., 2011, p. 256).

There are plenty of scenarios detailing the friction between Indigenous and Modernist cultures to spawn educative debate in the classroom. Through these scenarios and the debates they encourage, the authors remind us of the following: the Western ways of being in our world are largely taken for granted and by no means shared globally by all people; while many technologies aid us, they need critique while understanding that ways to live sustainably do not need to be invented; Indigenous education is holistic, meaning sustainable living is taught through oral traditions in the native language about all subjects, and not just about schooling; it is vital to protect and preserve the commons, a source of important ecological wisdom (Martusewicz et al., 2011, p. 270-271).

Chapter 9 brings the previous chapters back home, literally. It asks how communities and schools are working to teach from an ecojustice framework while recognizing and reclaiming the commons to live well. This chapter continues to build the book's message of hope as it identifies what educators and schools are already doing, so that the rest of us will heed the call to teach and live more sustainably while building community. To do just that, the authors weave personal narratives to help the reader identify the cultural and ecological commons in our own backyards. These narratives challenge the reader to think differently about what it means to be wealthy, successful, and well-off:

> ...more and more people are becoming aware of how tending to local relationships—economic, social, educational, and ecological—can help us to create more sustainable communities. What we're interested in here are all the ways people in communities the world over are working to revitalize traditional social patterns as an intentional way of addressing serious social and ecological problems. In the process, they are slowing down, spending more time talking with one another, creating important mentoring relationships that have deeply healthy consequences—for the individuals, for the groups, and for the planet. (Martusewicz et al., 2011, p. 283)

Once again, Martusewicz, Edmundson, and Lupinacci warn of romanticizing the commons, while building a set of "guidelines" to reclaim the commons. To demonstrate these guidelines in action, eight communities are profiled and their inspiring stories told on how they have revitalized their ecological and cultural commons. A number of stories exemplify what is happening in schools that are educating for ecojustice and community-based learning. The chapter concludes with useful tips to teach for sustainable and democratic communities, or ecojustice.

The authors take nothing for granted, clearly defining terms and concepts in a variety of ways that leads to a deep understanding for both the inexperienced and seasoned ecojustice student. There is also considerable attention given to clarifying ambiguous terms such as democracy, diversity, racism, while tackling core and fundamental questions that lead to an understanding of the roots of the environmental and cultural crises.

This book is much more than an ecojustice manifesto and handbook for ecologically and culturally conscious educators. *EcoJustice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities* rethinks what it means to be well-educated by asking deep-rooted questions that deliver an approach to education that demands educators and students of education to reclaim their communities and take local action while understanding global relationships. *EcoJustice Education* is a steroid shot, reminding us of the *deep-seeded* purpose of why we care about education, our communities, and the planet that supports all life. Its impact is handcrafted and designed to encourage us to reclaim not only our schools but all living beings, including ourselves.