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COMMUNITY AS DIFFICULT LABOR: BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

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This dissertation examines the barriers to building successful, sustainable school-university partnerships. Partnerships have emerged as promising vehicles to affect institutional reform of schools and universities. However, more than a year of ethnographic research of the beginning stages of a major school-partnership initiative at a large, research-intensive university, Midwestern University (MU), yielded a discouraging amount of obstacles to partnership. I focus on the disconnects between schools and universities to consider the disjuncture between a persistent sense of mistrust and disengagement from MU's efforts on the one hand, and the illusory claims of reform and revitalization put forth by both the partnership literature and higher education discourses that re-cast outreach and engagement efforts on the other. The partnership literature largely depends on either a Rhetoric of Hope or a Discourse of Crisis that belies the fact that relatively few healthy models exist. Although the literature acknowledges the inherent difficulties of the partnership process, it largely glasses over their gravity. I employ Critical Discourse Analysis to analyze a set of higher education policy statements on the mission of the land-grant university in contemporary times to link the policy to the university practices they seek to inspire. I juxtapose the textual analysis with data from a year-long multi-sited ethnographic study at an urban "partner" high school, the campus, and in the community. I argue that insufficient attention to power and the instrumental reasons behind partnership, combined with vague notions of an influential construct in
the field of education, "community," exacerbate the inherent difficulties of building school-university partnerships. These three forces, when combined, may contribute to a context in which the university assumes a patronizing posture of an expert, containing the community within a "narrative of community decline" that further widens the chasm across the sites.
Dedicated to Mark Yunovich,
Grandma K. and
Grandpa L.

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PREFACE

This dissertation explores the panacea of school-university partnership for fixing institutional woes and the very difficult labor of building sustainable partnerships. The study grew from three prominent themes within a series of pilot projects: desires for clarity, the “absent presence” of the university, and mistrust and disillusionment. These themes led to a dissertation focus on partnership barriers. Their glaring visibility was jarringly at odds with the frequency which educational literature and higher education discourses call forth partnership, collaboration, and community. These themes also mapped on to my readings of contemporary critiques of ethnography and educational research in ways that became the central motor of the project. The emerging themes became all the more vibrant when read against calls for research practices that interrupt the tidy “victory narratives” that may be fueled, in part, by the efforts and desires of researchers to ‘show good stories,’ often in the interest of “doing good” (Lather, 2000b; Pillow, 1997). The themes from the pilot studies provide a context for the dissertation.

Desires for Clarity

When I began thinking about how to explore the barriers to partnership, an underlying descriptor from the pilot studies that proved helpful was “messy.” Within a school-university partnership, there is a convergence of muddled, tangled, and disorderly forces. Building partnership is a messy process; my research questions are messy;
classrooms are messy places; and social-science research in general is a terribly messy endeavor. Yet a research project is supposed to de-muddle such messes, to bring a semblance of order to the confusion. Researchers are to make the world an intelligible place. Consider the following excerpt from my research notes during a pilot project:

My co-researcher tells the other guy that our fieldwork is going well—some of the classes are great, while others are more chaotic. He describes a new data-gathering technique—counting how many times the class “erupts” into chaotic ‘talk-over-talk’ among the students within five minute time frames. “Oh, that is so important. It really is,” says the other guy. I recognize the importance of this counting, but I feel a nagging concern that counting will take over and decontextualize the many things going on in the classroom. Will it tell us why the ‘talk-over-talk’ occurs? the nature of the talk? Will it tell us what happens after it occurs and how topic, gender, language, ethnicity, race influence the occurrences? Or why we even want to count these things in the first place? I’m concerned that when the data get written up, it will be hard to resist the appeal of those magical numbers that allow tidy explanations to be made. (April, 2000)

The exchange led me to wonder about what might be hidden by easy-to-count research strategies. What conditions of possibility for seeing, hearing, and thinking might be thwarted by researcher desires for the clean lines of clarity cut by the exact-o knife of an easily-explained tale? How will the murkiness hidden behind the easy explanations further contribute to the ineffective, inequitable conditions found in schools? Does it remain unseen or is it simply ignored? Researcher desires for clarity may very well prop up the many barriers to partnership. In addition, ignoring the more complex forces within partnership may allow the university the possibility of absolution of its responsibility to fulfill its professed intentions.

The University’s “Absent Presence” in the Community

In the high school AP Physics class I spent a couple of minutes explaining the consent form. I discussed the importance of the project and that we were interested in exploring the relationship between the university and the high school in order to inform future directions of the partnership efforts between the two institutions. One young man, who had heard this spiel before in another class, had his hand raised much of the time I spoke, patiently waiting to ask.
“Does the university have a partnership with the school?” he asked quizzically. (Fieldnotes, March, 2000)

“Well, I suppose the university is like a neighbor since it’s right there. But, you know, it’s like one of those neighbors that you see every day because you live on the same street and sometimes you wave at each other, but you never say hello.” Says Mary Ellen, 12th Grade, who has lived a few streets over from the university all of her life. (Interview, May, 2000)

“Jill, what’s a “clinical educator”? Is that a [union] position?,” Asks a teacher who has been teaching at a university Professional Development School (PDS) for four years. (Fieldnotes, April, 2000)

The university has begun a variety of partnerships with nearby schools since the late 1980’s, and it has recently reaffirmed its commitment to being a more engaged member of the community. In spite of this, these quotes refer to a condition in which the university appears to be not visible. Perhaps the university has not been successful in its efforts to translate its efforts, its intent, or even its sincerity to engage in partnership with the community. Spivak’s (1987) argument for the importance of “reading silences” is helpful here. How is it that the three people above see an ‘absence’ when asked about the university’s position within the community/school? The university has professed to be an active partner, a presence in the community, yet this presence is absent, it is not seen—at least not by these three individuals. What does this mean and how has it come to be?

Mistrust and Disillusionment

The teacher cornered me after my co-researcher had walked away. He shook his head as he told me how busy all the teachers are. But “Anything for the University,” he said as he held back only the sharpest edge of his sarcasm. “I know, I know, you’re going to write an expose about the school.” (Fieldnotes, 2/17/00)

Within a minute of introductions the community service provider stopped mid sentence to ask me, “hey, do you do program evaluation? Someone at the university was supposed to help us but it fell through. I was kind of angry about that because I called her and told her about the program and sent her our materials. I never heard from her again. CDC finally called to tell us that she couldn’t do it. Why didn’t she call us herself?” (Fieldnotes, 4/13/00)
“They got all this money but they didn’t really do their end.” Says a teacher speaking about a failed research partnership between the school and a research center on campus. (Fieldnotes, 4/3/00)

These last three quotes speak to issues of mistrust, derived from experiences in which members of the university community did not fulfill their commitments to the school-based educators. The previous three excerpts spoke to the specter of the university in the community. Its promise is great, yet only fleeting displays of partnership have been visible. The first quote hinted at the dangers of expecting to find easy answers to complex social questions. This dissertation explores Midwestern University’s renewed efforts to construct successful, sustainable school-university partnerships, and it argues that each of these three themes must be struggled with in order to attend to the ways that the university’s privileged, more powerful position shapes its partnerships and presents numerous barriers to their construction.
CHAPTER 1

THE (IM)POSSIBILITIES OF “COMMUNITY” IN SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

In this dissertation I focus on the beginning stages of the efforts of a major research university, Midwestern University (MU), to become more engaged in its surrounding community through numerous partnership initiatives. The university’s efforts are comprehensive in scope; however, active participation in P-12 education plays a prominent role as it does in many university-community partnership projects. After more than a year of ethnographic research, I saw a disheartening number of barriers placed in the way of building effective school-university partnerships. There are multiple disconnects between the schools and the university that obstruct partnership despite the hard work of many university and school-based educators. I have concentrated on these disconnects as specific sites from which to learn about building sustainable partnerships. I argue that the disconnects which obstruct partnerships are aggravated by the following: not attending sufficiently to power within school-university partnerships; limited attention to the more instrumental reasons feeding partnerships; and vague notions of a powerful construct within education, “community.”
School-university partnerships are increasingly identified as a promising mechanism to achieve a number of objectives. These range from effecting institutional change within universities and schools, improving teacher education, raising academic achievement levels, reducing the achievement gap among students, providing valuable community-based learning opportunities for university students, and making higher education more accessible to traditionally underserved populations. In addition, partnerships provide universities the opportunity to argue for additional public funding, obtain funding from other external sources, as well as to secure a viable way to control the shape of their surrounding neighborhoods for the enhancement of their own reputations and living conditions. The latter, more instrumental objectives, however, are less likely to appear in partnership discourse than the former. Sustained focus on the university’s more powerful position within partnership, and the effects that this positionality engenders, are also less likely to occur.

I focus on many of the gaps that appear within the discursive construction of school-university partnerships. As a critically minded educator, a former teacher of English to non-native speakers, I am committed to working toward many of the promising claims put forth by partnership proponents, especially those relating to equity and access in education. However, I have lost patience with the preponderance of illusory promises rather than the effecting of tangible results. The “promise of partnership” remains merely a rhetorical promise for the most part. This can be partially attributed to an uncritical lens in education that celebrates rather than recognizes the value of a generous critical examination. While there is certainly much “crisis talk” in education, this is not to be confused with “generous critique,” and it too is illusory as its
tenor is so heightened that little occurs beside the invocation of imminent catastrophe.

Instead, I maintain that educators should critically examine the gaps, silences, and barriers underlying their teaching and their research. This point marks the epistemological foundation of this research study.

The Absent Presence: Looking for the Gaps and Silences

Prior to my dissertation research, I was a research assistant on a team that conducted several related inquiry projects to inform ways that the university, particularly the College of Education, could more effectively partner with its nearby schools to raise student achievement levels. The team was committed to conducting this project ethically and to contributing to a comprehensive partnership that would be cognizant of issues of race, gender, and class-based inequities and that would be based on a model of reciprocity between the College of Education and the schools. In addition, an awareness of the university’s problematic history in the community had been incorporated into the design. I collected ethnographic data at a nearby high school on the context of student learning in community schools. However, despite the team’s efforts to attend to the politics of the past, the following questions were never far from my thoughts as I was in the field: From the perspective of the school, a pertinent question was what happens when your “partner” gets in the way? From the vantage point of the university the question was what happens when your “partner” wants little to do with you?

These questions always remained on the surface because at the very same time the university was embarking on a major initiative to be a better partner with its neighborhood schools, there were numerous instances pointing to a preponderance of barriers to the university’s partnership desires. First, the local city school district superintendent hinted
that university research may be hindering education. As a manifestation of this attitude, the research team had to work with the utmost care and diplomacy to satisfy the objections of the administration of an “overburdened” high school who did not want university researchers to enter without proof of a direct, demonstrated benefit to students. A teacher in that same school confided that many teachers in his building no longer accept the “burden” of working with student teachers anymore—largely because teachers do not trust university professors. Another teacher expressed near disdain for the quality of educational research by describing participation in the process as “something stupid that you do and it’s over with.” There was other evidence of mistrust in the work of university researchers. For example, a teacher characterized his understanding of our research project in the following way: “I think a thing like this is just another study that somebody needs to work on a higher degree or to write a book. And it’s never going to be put into practice.” While another teacher urged us to be “professionals” and to focus on the larger context of anything we might see. Expressing frustration with the work of the university, still another teacher groaned, “I hope you’re more in touch with reality than the professors are!” when he learned he was speaking to someone pursuing a PhD in education. These examples speak to the existence of numerous points of disconnection between the process of educational research and the work of schools among university faculty, graduate students, and school-based educators. They are examples of disconnects which receive too little critical attention.

There were also gaps in respect to the foundational concepts of partnership. In working on a project to identify best practices within university-community partnership, I identified sixteen urban partnerships across the United States that were comprehensive in
scope, but that prominently included an educational component. I conducted a content analysis of all available partnership-related documents to identify a set of best practices of programmatic and organizational structures of effective partnerships. In the course of preparing this report, I noticed that in describing “community” within the partnerships, the term not only lacked a consistent meaning across the sample, but indeed, that very little space was even devoted to descriptions of the “community” part of the university-community partnerships. The terms “community,” “partnership,” and “collaboration” were liberally invoked, but they were not explicitly defined or described. When a definition of community was provided, it dealt almost exclusively with themes of an impoverished community, i.e., a definition invoking a deficit model.

There were additional silences in the web-based partnership documents. Some programs, such as the University of Pennsylvania’s extensive engagement and community-based education efforts, emphasized a commitment to partnership and acknowledged their value in enhancing the quality of undergraduate education. However, many did not acknowledge the resources of the community, nor articulate explicitly what the community contributes to the university, and by extension, the education of undergraduates. In other words, the transfer of expertise, informed action, and knowledge creation was uni-directional. In addition, my initial review of various partnership models, which included more than the sixteen sample universities, yielded only two examples of discussions that could be broadly categorized as being informed by liberatory perspectives of praxis (e.g. Freire, 1985). This was the case despite the

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1 One was an educational policy analysis center at New York University offering assistance to community members/organizations to engage in the political work of education; and the other was the Participatory
widespread objectives of revitalizing urban communities—an endeavor that crosses a variety of contentious political, social, and economic discourses.

The many absences that were present in the texts concerned me as I compiled the list of best practices. First, there was the lack of attention paid to defining the foundational concepts under consideration—in this case “partnership,” “collaboration,” and “community.” Second, the community’s contributions were accorded little value within the relationship. The third category of absence circulates around power. For example, there was little evidence of wrestling with issues related to the intersection of power and knowledge. There was no attention devoted to the privileged position of the university in the relationship. Finally, a miniscule amount of attention was paid to the implications of class, race, or gender on questions of equity. Information was presented clearly and concisely, but what work does this presentation of information perform? Importantly, what work do the absences perform?

These findings supported an argument that a paternalistic model of “reaching out” into the community is often present in a partnership relationship—despite the definition of partnership being premised on an egalitarian ethos. This patronizing attitude likely serves to distance the community from the university even more. Oakes and Rogers (2001) locate the university’s dubious legacy to working with poor and diverse communities of color in the misguided assumptions of the Progressive Era:

(1) That there is a broad public consensus on the meaning of social betterment (and hence the meaning of social problems); (2) That social problems can be reduced to technical problems that are amenable to technical fix; and (3) That university-trained experts will invariably act in the general interests of society in addressing these problems. (p. 25)
A faculty member active in MU’s partnership efforts described the university’s efforts as falling within the traditional confines of a program that does not reach out into the community; instead, it reaches “down and out.” She elaborated, “when I say reaching down and out, it’s always clearly a step down to something that’s a problem more so than an initiative that enriches.” If this is a prevailing perception of the university’s actions outside its boundaries, perhaps it partially explains the high level of suspicion encountered by the research team. Following Oakes and Roger’s (2001) argument, I maintain that this “down and out” perspective positions the university in the role of the expert choosing to focus on institutionally-identified problems, unquestioningly assuming that its identification and resolution of the problem is the correct one, and applying this “solution” in a manner that flows outward from the university down into the community.

In sum, the absences present in the university-community partnership documents were compounded by what I was learning in my field research about teacher and administrator suspicion of the university and of its intentions. Emergent data suggested that MU’s presence in the community was largely an absent one. Thus, I began to consider the possible intersections of these two contradictory contexts. On the one hand, the idea of university-community partnerships brings forth positive and passionate conversations in higher education, yet this particular partnership between MU and its nearby schools seemed to be fraught with many barriers and points of disconnection. On the other hand, difficult and hard-hitting questions about partnership and the possibility of community-within-difference-and-diversity were nearly absent from the discussion of
university-community partnerships. Thus, I wanted to explore the possible connections between these conditions.

Important questions became how do the texts constructed to influence university outreach and engagement impact the social practices that they inspire? What can we learn by focusing on these points of disconnections, or phrased another way, the ways that community members resist the efforts of the university? As Grosz (1994) points out, "It is...no longer appropriate to ask what a text means, what it says, what is the structure of its interiority, how to interpret it or decipher it. Instead, one must ask what it does, how it connects with other things" (in Alvermann, 2000, p. 117). Because many of the most compelling reasons for universities to engage in partnership revolve around a set of instrumental concerns arising from within the boundaries of the university, I wanted to juxtapose higher education policy statements on outreach and engagement and their ensuing conversations with the social practices that they call forth. Thus, I have placed the university's partnership initiative within the larger discourses of questions regarding the identity, mission, and role of the university in contemporary times.

The Context: Re-Asserting the Mission of the University

Higher education in the United States, as it has done repeatedly in its history, finds itself confronting a need to clarify, or to re-assert, its position, role, and mission within the larger community. The reasons range from increased public critiques of the work of the university, decreased public funding, and philosophical discussions on the nature of teaching, research, and service (Aronowitz, 2000; Checkoway, 2000; Readings, 1996; Kirk, 2000; Berube & Nelson, 1995). An increased call for universities to be more actively engaged in their surrounding communities, particularly in urban areas, reflects
this context. In addition, a call for university engagement in the community to be premised on a more collaborative partnership marks a possible shift away from the more traditional academic culture in which the university assumes the privileged stance as expert within the relationship (Harkavy, 1999). A plethora of grants for community-based projects and scholarship is available from state and federal sources as well as from major philanthropic foundations (see e.g., Kellogg and the DeWitt Readers Digest Foundation).

Conversations regarding university engagement in their respective communities intersect with the increased urgency for comprehensive school reform. The great promise of collaborative partnerships between schools and universities has emerged as a potential source of school revitalization (see e.g., Erickson & Christman, 1996; Kirschner, Dickinson, & Blosser, 1996; Noffke, Clark, Palmeri, Sadler, & Shuja, 1996; Osajima, 1989). The amount of partnerships has increased dramatically. For example, Wilbur and Lambert (1995) surveyed 2,600 U.S. colleges and universities and found that the number of university-school collaborative programs had increased from 525 in 1985 to 2,088 in 1995. John Goodland (1993) calls for the “necessary joining of K-12 and university cultures,” referring to the growing trend as a “long-overdue effort here to stay” (p. 24) despite the inherent difficulties in partnering across the two institutions.

A salient issue within the partnership trend, however, revolves around questions of “community” because the construct frequently frames the quality of relationships sought through partnership. Educators often use the term “community” to put a name on partner-building. Indeed, university policy statements wrestle with fixing definitions of community on the pages of their action plans. Definitions of the concept vary across
universities in the descriptions of community outreach and engagement programs. A recently released set of higher education policy statements repeatedly call for universities to take on the difficult work of defining “community” (Kellogg Commission, 1999-2000). The term is also commonplace in school improvement and teacher education discussions. For example, the three reports on the state of education and teacher preparation released by the Holmes Group (1986, 1990, 1995) conjure the ideal of “community” repeatedly throughout its discussions.

Building “learning communities” is one solution to the troubles of the nation’s schools, just as the construction of partnership relationships are held up as another solution. The urgency of ‘building partnerships’ and ‘building community’ overlap in educational discourses. Another reason to explore the intersection of these two conversations is the problematic ways in which communities were treated within the partnership documents. The frequency with which “community” is invoked in educational discourses may contribute to its acquiring a set of commonsense meanings that are often not subjected to a critical examination. Community is quite difficult to define and categorize despite the fact that so many educators so heavily rely upon it (Hillery, 1955).

Partnership appears to be easier to define. I can define it very generally as signifying a relationship between equals to work toward achieving a particular goal. That simple definition, however, points to one of the greatest barriers to partnership—the power imbalance between the university and the community (and its schools). While this imbalance might be gaining more recognition within partnership discourses, it is not attended to sufficiently. In addition, some practices within higher education discourses
may even serve to veil the negative effects of the university's assumption of a more
privileged, powerful role. One example is the assertion that the university can serve as a
"neutral facilitator" in the resolution of society's most pressing problems in outreach and
engagement policy statements (e.g., the Kellogg Documents, 1999-2000). I maintain that
partnership is inherently difficult to affect when not paying attention to the multiple
effects of power. In sum, I take my inquiry into the processes of school-university
partnerships a step back to concentrate on that which precedes partnership—community.
Within this focus is a consideration of the ways that an imbalance of power detrimentally
affects the progress toward the often-time elusive goal of collaboration.

The Local Context: University, Community, and School Collaboration

A plethora of university policy statements from national higher education
associations have been released discussing the university's changing mission in the
United States. Universities around the country have reaffirmed their commitment to
society and community partnerships are coming, and unfortunately, also going rapidly.
Importantly for colleges of education, K-12 education is increasingly linked to the
missions of higher education institutions. This nationwide trend has clearly influenced
Midwestern University and its establishment of a non-profit organization, not without
controversy, to engage in community, education, and economic revitalization through
myriad programming. In addition, Midwestern University released an "Academic Plan"
in 2001 to guide its mission over a period of the five years. This public document is
reflective of the ways MU has been engaged in linking its strength as an institution to the
overall economic and social health of the state. The plan includes five objectives. One
specifically relates to K-12 education and has two prongs—to carve a place for the
university as a stronger player in setting state educational policy as well as an action plan to partner with 13 schools in its surrounding neighborhood. An additional component of this objective is to sponsor multiple conversations around campus regarding the university’s mission to prepare future teachers and how best to do so. These recently-identified educational initiatives cross many concurrent discourses—including, but not limited to, micro and macro conversations about the mission of higher education, renewing a campus-wide commitment to teacher education, and ways for the university to more effectively translate its contributions to a wider public in an effort to secure more stable state funding. Thus, implications from the findings of this dissertation are meant to be applied to the myriad kinds of partnerships between the university and the schools in its surrounding neighborhoods, including partnerships within teacher education.

Why Be So Critical?

Renewed attention is being paid to the interdisciplinary nature of education. This facilitates my drawing from many sources in designing and conducting this study. In particular, my critical orientation regarding school-university partnerships is informed by Bill Readings’ (1996) ultimately optimistic critique of the university in post-foundational times as it re-articulates its mission and relevance to society.

The wider social role of the university as an institution is up for grabs. It is no longer clear what the place of the university is within society nor what the exact nature of that society is, and the changing institutional form of the University is something that intellectuals cannot afford to ignore (p. 2).

My research questions are not offered solely for the sake of critique. Instead, they are intended to capitalize on the pivotal moment described by Readings to move toward school-university-community collaborations that are more successful and sustainable than the ones I have examined thus far. This work employs a “strategic” spirit in its focus on
barriers and limitations as possible locations from which to move forward. I chose to
explore the difficult processes of school-university partnerships because I think it a
strategic moment to push against the conceptual limits of education as an applied,
technical discipline. For example, there is increased recognition of the need to apply
interdisciplinary perspectives to tackle many of society's problems (e.g., Kellogg
Documents, 1999-2000). In addition, there is a growing demand for university-based
partnerships despite the acknowledgement of their many difficulties. This multi-sited
ethnographic project of a school, university, and their community, is combined with
critical discourse analysis of text in order to speak to Reading's challenge to re-work
commonsense definitions of community within the university:

we recognize that the loss of the University's cultural function opens up a
space in which it is possible to think the notion of community otherwise,
without recourse to notions of unity, consensus, and communication...
[and the university is a site where] the question of being-together is raised.
(p. 20)

I expand his call to consider how the "question of being-together" in a context that
welcomes diversity, complexity, and even difficult questions can inform the relationships
between the university and K-12 schools. Such an environment may be more conducive
to the overarching project of re-asserting the university's mission than a context that tries
to effect a coherent, homogenous community environment,

Opportunities within "Crisis"

Throughout my studies I have been struck by the variation in the tone and tenor of
the conversations about higher education—its competing objectives and its seemingly
contradictory obligations to society, as well as the struggle over whose interpretation of
these questions will prevail. At the annual meeting of 2001 American Educational
Research Association (AERA) in Seattle, I attended three sessions focusing on university-community partnerships. All were scheduled in large rooms and each drew a sparse crowd. All presentations largely reported successes, with a few key insights and lessons learned from a mistake here and there. Participants and audience members did not discuss the power/knowledge axis that inevitably works through any university’s engagement with the community, and there was no exploration of the multiple motivations for university engagement. These questions seemed quite pertinent within Midwestern University’s partnership initiative. In contrast, the two sessions I attended, and the one in which I presented, focusing on post-modern critiques of education, were scheduled in small rooms and gathered standing-room only crowds. What can we say about the race to determine narrative authority upon a reading of attendance at these sessions or on the size of the room in which each was scheduled? Why are different groups of educators largely racing instead of engaging with each other?

Post-modern critiques raise important questions about the stability of the basic categories used to interpret and experience life (e.g., Butler, 1992; Nicholson, 1990; Scott, 1991; Trinh, 1992; Villenas, 2000). For example, Joan Scott’s (1991) critique of the category “experience” informed the way that I approached the construct of “community” within partnerships. She argues:

The absence of definition allows experience to resonate in many ways, but it also allows it to function as a universally understood category—the undefined word creates a sense of consensus by attributing to it an assumed, stable, and shared meaning (p. 788).

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2 See Noyes, D (2000) for a discussion of competition to claim the power to narrate the “official” story of an event.
While the stability of categories is frequently referred to as the “crisis of representation,” Spivak (1987) raises a specter of hope that comes from this crisis with her comment that “the greatest gift of deconstruction [is the ability] to question the authority of the investigating subject without paralyzing him, persistently transforming conditions of impossibility into possibility” (p. 201). I seek this opportunity, yet I note that the two groups of educators often do not engage with each other.

The perceived “crisis” in education can be mobilized for a variety of purposes. Gregory Cizek (1999), in a review of the “crisis-in-education” literature, points out that the federal report, *A nation at risk* (1983), is often thought of as the point of origin that called forth a flurry of responses on how best to attack the diseased state of the nation’s schools. The Holmes Group, a coalition of deans at many of the leading schools and colleges of education, responded to this report and other similar ones (e.g., Carnegie, 1986) by releasing a series of documents outlining the ways that schools and colleges of education are uniquely prepared to respond to the crisis in the nation’s schools. These are just the more prominent of the more recent “baleful bonanza of epistles on emergencies” (p. 5). Such epistles are not new; Cizek cites an example as far back as 1632 when prominent educator John Comenius bemoaned the unsystematic methods present in schools and the lack of impact of reform efforts over the previous several decades. A crisis theme was prominent in the writings of common school reformer Horace Mann in the mid 1800’s, and schools were again in crisis during the social upheavals of the turn of the 20th century. Sputnik launched yet another series of calls to crisis, particularly in the state of the math and science curriculum in the nation’s schools; and the same grave
threat to the nation was invoked three decades later with *A nation of risk* despite the increased intensity called forth in the previous crisis. I concur with Cizek’s observation that “even a cursory review of the literature reveals that the claims of crisis are enduring, omnipresent, and multifarious” (p. 2). He argues that common sense perceptions of schools-in-crisis have been strongly influenced by educational researchers who are often likely to advocate top-down solutions that attend too little to the complexities of schooling.

**Questions and Methods: Ethnography in “In-between” Spaces**

The deconstructive sense of task is to move to some place interrupted, out of balance, extreme, against the leveling processes of the dialectic and for the excesses, the nonrecuperable remainder, the difference, in excess of the logic of noncontradiction (Lather, 2000a).

My research objectives and questions are multi-layered. At their broadest is the exploration and analysis of the *processes* of partnership, or the processes of community building. That I need to specify both “partnership” and “community” is significant in that educators often use the words interchangeably within partnership discourses. They may intersect, for example, in that one person may desire a partnership to achieve a particular objective, while another may speak in terms of forming a more broad based community. The second objective is an examination of the work that “community” does as a commonsense, often opaque ideal within education. What can we learn about partnership by exploring desires for community within and across each site? My third objective is to create a space for ethnographic research, informed by critical and post-structural theories, in the construction of educational policy by focusing on

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disconnections as enabling spaces. Combining all three of these points, I have asked whether community within partnership isn’t an example of a “pie in the sky” ideal that prevents us from seeing the very real barriers that exist within any effort to form a community. Do common sense definitions of community keep us from seeing and attending to what Alice Pitt and Deborah Britzman (in press) call the “difficult knowledge” of education? Does it mask the power imbalance that impedes the possibility for partnership?

My research questions and methods have been in a state of flux throughout the process, and I have come to think of the methodology as an “ethnography of becoming” which takes place in an “in-between space” (Lather, 2000a) of “overlap and displacement of domains of difference—[where] the intersubjective and collective experiences of .... community.... are negotiated” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 2). Still following Bhabha (1994) I wonder:

How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities, where despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable (p. 2).

I have applied this set of questions and concerns to a study of an emergent community partnership between the College of Education and the schools in the University Neighborhoods. I want to consider what thinking about the content (partnership), the methodology (ethnography of becoming), and the site (the University Neighborhoods) as all being profoundly “in-between,” can contribute to understandings of the intersections of educational research and educational policy and practice. This
network of forces implies a messy, complex, contentious process rather than the neat and tidy methods and explanations desired by so many, including the demands of policy-makers and grant donors for “evidenced-based findings.” Few examples of sustained, successful partnerships exist. Few examples of evaluations of partnerships exist. I have meticulously placed a body of literature on school-university partnerships, an analysis of policy statements, and findings from an ethnographic study in dialogue with each other in order to ask a different set of questions about partnership. I have done so because partnerships exist as a panacea in an environment that largely impedes their construction. Thus, this single case study has the dual objective of theory-building and of providing an exemplar for others to assess their own partnership efforts.

Defining a Common Sense Ideal

“Community” is an example of a concept with such immense commonsense appeal that it may, in fact, be dangerous in that its hidden, and therefore more potentially dangerous meanings do their work undetected. The field of education is saturated with calls to community. Its very promise is so great that it may become easier not to subject it to serious examination. While largely uncritical in education, other social theorists have developed a critique. Community has been described as “an invention” (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983), as “imagined” (Anderson, 1991), as “elusive” (Magolda and Knight Abowitz, 1997), and as a “dilemma” that often relies on “vague and romantic” language (Merz and Furman, 1997). Community has been explored in sociology, anthropology, and literary theory. Dorothy Noyes (1995) points out that folklorists have long been aware of the “fragility” of the concept of community. However, such conversations,
debates, and theorizing have not extended extensively into the field of education (Yon, 1999).

Definitions of community are hard to settle on. Indeed, very few of the people interviewed in this study were able to provide one without considerable thought, even though the term frequently appeared in general conversation. Uncannily, the most common answer provided contained the following idea somewhere in the beginning, “well, I don’t think my definition is much different than the dictionary’s or anyone else’s.” This study sought to examine which ideas are privileged within commonsense definitions of community and the ways they affect the experience of community. What discourses does the term “community” invoke and what effect do they have on educational policy and practice?

One example is that the Holmes Group (1986, 1990, 1995) invokes the ideal of community repeatedly throughout their reports. How do the authors conceive of community, and did they take into account that communities are both inclusive and exclusive? John Caputo (1997a) discusses the etymology of community in Deconstruction in a nutshell: Conversations with Derrida. One interpretation of the term’s history is as follows: Communio means military formation and is related to the word “munitions.” Thus, he points out that communio means to be fortified from within, “to build a “common” (com) “defense” (munis), as when a wall is put up around the city to keep the stranger or the foreigner out” (p. 108). Thus, by its very nature a community must exclude in its efforts to form a common life.

One oft-cited study of community yielded 94 different definitions of the term; that “they all deal with people” was the only loose meaning that these categories shared.

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Thomas Bender’s (1978) review of the sociological literature noted that in addition to the traditional definition tied to locality, the “experience” and “emotions” of community are key components. Other important components include the following: that it is difficult to distinguish between a sense of self and of community; that members share of an all-encompassing set of interests; and that a community does not “exist to serve external or instrumental purposes.” In contrast, Robert Nisbet (1962) argues that a community requires a function, that it thrives on problem solving, and that it entails status, security, membership, and a moral certainty. Michael Sandel (1982) posits that belonging to a community means the removal of opacity as membership in a community is based upon common identities. What effects might these contradictory definitions have on developing university-school partnerships? Does community thrive purely on the strength of intrinsic forces, or might a community come together for external, goal-oriented purposes? Are common identities necessary—or even possible, in order to create of a sense of community within a school-university partnership?

Both Bender (1978) and Nisbet (1962) eschew what the latter refers to as “The gospel of homogeneity” (p. 89), referring to a tendency within sociology to ignore evidence of conflict within community. Bender, in particular, locates his analysis in the classic typology of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft—loosely translated as community and society. He argues that social scientists simplistically took up this typology to explain the massive changes in society due to urbanization, immigration, and industrialization. This has contributed to the concept’s link to a narrative of community decline within academic discourse. Nisbet succinctly describes the “problem” of community as “community lost, therefore community to be regained” (p. xix).
Feminist theorists Iris Young (1992) and Shane Phelan (1994) argue that although the appeal of community is great, its commonsense definitions are dangerous as they rely on a narrative that depends upon unity. This pattern homogenizes and denies difference and must necessarily exclude. Speaking to Sandel's (1982) observation that community means transparency among its members, Young argues that our words and interactions have multiple layers and interpretations, thus, knowing another as one knows oneself is a simplistic, impossible idea. This definition also reduces the ability to understand social change and how to work for it because a desired community is put forth in its ideal form as opposed to from its existing form. As Young points out, this "provides no understanding of the move from here to there that would be rooted in an understanding of the contradictions and possibilities of existing society" (p. 302).

Both Young and Phelan recognize the appeal of a narrative of community that expresses unity, however, they conclude that it is a dangerous appeal. Young advocates an abandonment of thinking/working for community toward what she calls the "politics of difference." Phelan welcomes the post-structural critique for its emphasis on the instability of community but concludes that it is only a first step---after all, the effects of community and attempts to build them are indeed felt. She calls for ethnographic study of community to learn about the processes communities undergo as they are "becoming." Indeed, communities are "constantly becoming" (P. 87). Young’s call for the abandonment of the ideal of community is simply unworkable in education given its prominence (Knight Abowitz, 1999).

Community, as a term and as an ideal, is indeed very common. It is simply too popular, too common, and in many cases, too beloved to be abandoned. Thus, I suggest
that exploring commonsense definitions of community in education is an example of what Lather (2000a) calls “a praxis of stuck places” where community is an example of “terms understood as no longer fulfilling their promise do not become useless, their very failures become provisional grounds, and new uses are derived.” In speaking of “community,” Derrida comments that “There is doubtless this irrepressible desire for a “community” to form but also for it to know its limit—and for its limit to be its opening” (in Caputo, 1997a, p. 107). In this dissertation, I have used conversations that re-theorize community, and critiques of community, as a different lens to look at the data to produce an analysis that will encourage dialogue. Rather than reporting on the dismal state of affairs within the formation of school-university partnerships, I take seriously the challenge of deconstruction for the limits to be sites of new possibility, to “interrogate what the theoretical move that establishes foundations authorizes, and what precisely it excludes or forecloses” (Butler 1992, p. 7).

Concluding Thoughts

“The breeding ground of institutional change is the sense of institutional failure” (Metzger, 1955, p. 42). Public and higher education may be headed to such an assessment if the dramatic pronouncements over the “crisis in higher education” are to be believed. However, this is unlikely to be a useful line of thought. Instead, I agree with Miller (1998), who in his case-study discussion of the contemporary university, makes the following argument about the inherently “impure space” of educational reform:

sustainable educational ventures have always worked within local, material constraints and that, more often than not, they have papered over their involvement in such bureaucratic matters with rhetorics that declare education’s emancipatory powers. To pursue educational reform is thus to work in an impure space, where intractable material conditions always threaten to expose rhetorics of change as delusional or deliberatively
deceptive; it is also to insist that bureaucracies don’t simply impede change: they are the social instruments that make change possible.4

My question is whether a re-imagined space of the university, one that relies on neither the romantic visions of the idea of the university, nor the discourse of crisis currently invoked, can make room for critical discussion, analysis, and action in reference to the university’s mission to society in general, and its engagement with community schools in particular. As members of the academic community, colleges of education participate in the contentious discourses surrounding the mission of the university in contemporary society; as such, this project attempts to join those conversations about working in an “impure space” that resists both romanticizing and being overly critical. Such an impure space, one that recognizes its strengths and its complicities, will certainly complicate the more comfortable position of power that the university traditionally assumes.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter two synthesizes three bodies of literature relevant to the dissertation: recent critiques of the university; a brief outline of the university’s history in the United States; and the literature on school-university partnerships. The three sets of literature are considered together to suggest possibilities for re-thinking the mission of the university in ways that avoid romanticizing both its history and its potential for the future. More complicated visions of the university may subvert the understandable desires for coherence and intelligibility that occlude the many difficult questions and obstacles sure to present themselves within the university’s partnership efforts in the community.

4 I do not accord sole power to the weight of administrative bureaucracy as this quote may seem to imply.
Chapter three presents a discussion of the dissertation's two principle methodological strategies. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is used to explore a set of policy statements regarding the links between outreach and engagement and contemporary efforts to reaffirm the university's mission to society. Ethnographic methods are employed to consider the work that the policy statements do "on the ground" in respect to the beginning stages of a school-university partnership and the many barriers along the way. The juxtaposition of text through critical discourse analysis and insight into every day practice through ethnography provides a rich case from which educators within universities and schools may consider themselves and their contexts in order to glean insight to inform their own practices (Demerath, in press).

Chapter four presents a critical discourse analysis of three of six policy statements prepared by a specially-convened Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities to link the analysis to the concrete practices of Midwestern University. First, I explore the possible intersections between one discursive strand that seeks to affect a more homogenous, coherent culture within campus boundaries and a second prominent strand seeking to extend the university's influence beyond its boundaries. Second, I analyze a series of speeches by MU's president for the ways they re-assert MU's identity through its relevancy to the state. Between chapters four and five is a coda consisting of a brief "data conversation," constructed from interviews at each site, regarding the university's partnership efforts and the relationship between the school and the university. In addition, I present contextual information about one of the university's "partner" schools, Guilford-Park High School, and its surrounding community.
Chapter five draws on ethnographic data to juxtapose two events that function as performances of community, a celebratory “gala” to honor the university’s newly minted partnership initiative and an Awards Assembly at an urban high school. The performances are analyzed for ways they point to disconnects between schools and colleges of education, as well as how these disconnects may be fostered by idealistic notions of community. Barriers to partnership are many. In order to consider the larger question of how to build partnership, I narrow the lens by closely examining a construct that precedes partnership—“community.” I maintain that a critical examination of the hidden meanings of “community,” as well as the community-building efforts present at each site, illuminates possibilities and barriers to partnership across the sites.

The final chapter ties the discussion from the literature, policy, and ethnographic findings together by highlighting possible ways that desires for coherence, intelligibility, instrumental control, and an ‘easily-explained-research-story’ obstruct the construction of successful and sustainable partnerships. In addition to offering a summative discussion of the arguments raised in the dissertation, the chapter has an ancillary objective of tying together the literature, data, and analysis to illustrate the ways that this in-depth, single case study links to larger bodies of literature and other partnership efforts across the country.
CHAPTER 2

THE UNIVERSITY, NATION, AND COMMUNITY: COMPETING CLAIMS ON THE MISSION OF THE (POST) MODERN UNIVERSITY

This chapter is composed of three interrelated sections. First, I outline recent critiques of the university that question its foundation as the transmitter of culture and the institutional home of a disinterested search for knowledge. I explore romantic visions of the university and take up Bill Readings' (1996) challenge to consider what it might mean to “dwell in the ruins” of idealized conceptions of the university. The second section lays out the foundation of this challenge, an exploration of the somewhat messy development of the university, especially in terms of questions of the “utility” of knowledge and research, and the relationship of these questions to the mission of the university to society. Rather than following a single trajectory, the post-secondary educational system has been flexible to the needs of society in terms of supporting the continuously evolving social, industrial, political, and philosophical underpinnings of the national project, while at the same time maintaining a strong connection to the Western heritage of scientific and philosophical inquiry. The third section explores the growing trend for universities to be more engaged within the larger community. School-university partnerships have emerged as a common strategy within higher education discourses on the re-articulation of the university’s mission to society. I weave a consideration of themes of complexity, messiness, and coherence throughout all the discussion to argue
that any kind of strategic intervention to effect social welfare, such as more meaningful engagement of the university in community schools though both direct participation and educating future teachers, must be informed by active engagement with the institutional practices that both constrain and enable the academic labor of the university. \(^5\) I combine a reading of the history of higher education and current trends in outreach and engagement to "unsettle" the tensions between romantic visions of the university on the one hand, and the increased urgency of calls-for-utility in setting its mission on the other.

**A New University Mandate?**

We must accept that we have a new mandate, and a new reason for being in existence. There was a time when universities weren't held accountable for much—people just threw money at them. [Today] People with money are more likely to give you money if you have restructured and repositioned yourself, got rid of stuff that you don't need to have. They have a very dim view of giving you money to run an inefficient university. —Alan G. Merten, President of George Mason University\(^6\)

In the (post)modern world of higher education where The Disney Institute in Orlando offers training workshops for top university officials of a prominent Northeastern state university,\(^7\) the above quotation from a university president raises important questions for the university. Although there is ample evidence to question the veracity of Dr. Merten's proposition that the university has not been accountable to the larger society and that it has benefited from large pools of dollars for seemingly no apparent reason, his statement does serve as a fitting stand-in to highlight several contemporary issues facing Western academic communities. These include questions regarding the mission of the university in a changing society, increased accountability

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\(^5\) See Richard Miller's *As if learning mattered* (1998) for an analysis of the university centering on the same argument. Using what could be described as a case-study approach, he explores educational reform, Matthew Arnold's impact on the university, the "Great Books" debate, distance education, and uses of ethnography.

\(^6\) Press & Washburn (2000), p. 51
attached to monies, the urgency for direct relevancy of the university's work to society, greater influence of corporate interests on university research, and the application of business models of administration that weed out "inefficiency." Finally, and perhaps most importantly, his statement reflects a growing popular opinion, marked by suspicion and misgivings, about the practical, as well as the ethical, responsibilities of the university in a changing society.

Many of these questions have been in circulation for some time, and my purpose is not to exhaustively detail their trajectory in to the development of higher education in the United States. Nor do I wish to contribute to the call for "doom and gloom" to idealized notions of teaching, research, and service. Instead, I explore how the discursive conditions of the "corporate university" are both dangerous and enabling to effecting a more strategic praxis that moves beyond critique of the "excellence" and "equity" in education toward what Jill Blackmore (2001) identifies as "interdisciplinary communities of practice that have a well-developed sense of social justice and difference as situated practices in ways that offer strategic interventions" (p. 37).

**The University in Ruins**

An analysis of the modern-day "post-historical" university by humanities professor Bill Readings, published posthumously in 1996, has generated a great deal of both interest and critique. In *The University in Ruins*, Readings argues that the role of

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8 Special issues of several journals have been published that engage with Readings' critique, and the "idea" of the university in general. These include the in 1995 the *Oxford Literary Review* (vol. 17, nos. 1-2); in 1997 *The University of Toronto Quarterly* (vol. 66, no. 4); and in 2000 *boundary 2* (vol. 27, no. 1). The *University of Toronto Quarterly* issue is based on the conference proceedings on the topic of the "university in ruins" held at the university in January 1997. Wortham, in *Rethinking the university* (1999), bases a substantial portion of his analysis on Readings' work. The potential consumer of *The university in ruins* can read portions of the multiple reviewers of this book on the barnes & noble web site.
the university, along with the standards by which it is to be measured, are somewhat blurred and uncertain in the present moment. Society, the nation, the market, and the university's relationship among these dynamic, unstable forces are in flux as the university is no longer clearly tied to the nation state. As a "post-historical institution" the university has outlived its modernist mission to produce a "liberal, reasoning, subject" (p. 9). Readings describes an institution that is increasingly less in service of the nation as it becomes a stronger player in the transnational flow of capitalism. Without a clear mission tied to the transmission of culture in the service of the nation-state, the university appears to be moving toward a managerial system that is more concerned with supporting a global economy, or itself within such an economy, than society. Administration is emphasized, as it is in Dr. Merten's words above, and a cultural model of the university consisting of "conversations among a community" increasingly yields to one dominated by a "discourse of excellence" (p. 5) that more easily incorporates ideological diversity. In addition, it ties performance to clear evaluative measures conforming to a logic of capitalism rather than one more amenable to the logic of academic freedom. Wortham (1999), in summarizing this argument, paints the following picture.

The university faces a legitimation crisis which...it tries to disregard by embracing corporate-style management and bureaucratic rationality, now thinking of itself as simply a business needing to compete among others, so that the last (action) hero of the university is neither the student nor the professor but the administrator (p. 4).

The implication of an administrative model of practice based on corporate logic is that investment within the university frequently follows success. Indeed new stories in
the popular press echo these concerns. If Readings’ analysis is on target, and as Merton’s argument hints at, a pertinent question might be where does this leave colleges of education in which there is only the slightest chance for a tangible profitable return on investment (e.g. Giroux, 2001a)? In addition, exploring the effects of the de-politicized discourse of excellence is pertinent to colleges of education in that they are professional schools that regularly face the urgency of wrestling with ideologically-charged questions regarding popularly mobilized constructs of “equity” and “excellence.”

I find the image of the “corporate university,” and the alarm bells that it sounds, potentially enabling in that it provides such a stark contrast to the idealized conceptions of the university. It can force the rethinking of romantic visions and the ways in which they inhabit and inhibit the work of academics, especially those interested in effecting social change. This is not to suggest that the calls to “crisis” from the left, the mainstream, as well as the administration within the university are not important, or real, enough in themselves to receive attention. Instead, it is to point out that we would do well to consider the discursive conditions of the “corporate university” in relation to more idealized ways of thinking about the university as part of these conversations. A review of the history of the university as well as a consideration of its modern-day

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9 “The Kept University” was the feature article in the March 2000 edition of Atlantic Monthly. It explores the relationship between academic research and the corporate world is a feature article. “Eminent Domain” published in January, 1999 explores the increased competition for funding and enrollment in the SUNY system. Also featured is SUNY-Binghamton’s ‘relation’ with and attempts to model the Disney Institute. “A piece of the action,” published in the Columbus Dispatch on June 11, 2000 explores the efforts of universities in Ohio to join academia and corporate research. A feature article in the Metro section of the Columbus Dispatch on December 29, 2001 extolled the increased levels of “research funding pouring into the university”. The university ranks 36th for federal grants for science and engineering research and fifth in private sector research. According to the Provost, “We’re always talking about the quality of the faculty we have here and the importance of their work. This is just one of the dimensions along which one could measure the fact.” The first weekly email bulletin sent to students by the university in 2002 prominently touted the increased levels of research dollars.
manifestations illustrate a complex network of competing, complementary, and contradictory forces that sometimes intersect in surprising ways.

**Discourse of Excellence**

Readings argues that part of the power of the discourse of excellence, an effective language of administration, rests in its being dereferentialized. This means that because "excellence" has no inherent content of its own, it can more easily accommodate ideological diversity within the institution. An introduction to a recent report on higher education published by UNESCO, for example, asserts that the quality of education depends on the central project of the university—a "search for excellence." After this assertion, the report then concentrates on the administration of the university (cited in Readings, 1996, p. 5). The question is, however, what exactly are the standards for excellence and who determines them? What is relevant and who decides it? The power of the discourse of excellence rests in its flexibility through its everyday meanings, and that it may lead to an emphasis on the (profitable) bottom-line as a relatively easy way to assess excellence. In fact, "excellence" carries such commonsensical meanings that perhaps relatively few would even think to question or be able to mount a serious argument against it. For example, how can one disagree, let alone mount a "hear-able" argument against "excellence" in undergraduate teacher education? Nevertheless, how exactly is "excellent" undergraduate teacher education implemented and evaluated? Indeed, how can such a project be designed without considering the ideologically-charged positions and contentions marking out questions of equity, access, and efficiency within education? Thus, it is important to consider how a deferentialized concept of

\[10\] An increasingly common term used to describe the university. See Giroux & Myrsiades (2001) and
excellence might do its work within colleges of education, and even more vitally, whether the “discourse of excellence” will further marginalize colleges of education within the university or allow them the possibility to participate in new conversations.

**Dwelling in the “Ruins”**

Recognizing the University as ruined means abandoning such teleologies and attempting to make things happen within a system without claiming that such events are the true, real, meaning of the system. (Readings, 1996, p. 171)

The most important source of the power of the discourse of excellence is that as a language of administration of a perfectly fine ideal (excellence), it is much easier to incorporate ideological diversity within the university. Exceedingly difficult to dispute its value, the elusive concept provides little in the way of concrete information about which to critique. This, along with a growing importance of the *economic* rather than the *political*, as far as the nation-state is concerned, allows Readings to argue that it is no longer possible to think of the university as a structure within Althusser’s ISA model.

“The contemporary University of Excellence should now be understood as a bureaucratic system whose internal regulation is entirely self-interested without regard to wider ideological imperatives” (p. 40). The crux of his argument is that the mobilization of the discourse of excellence de-politicizes the university, making it difficult for people within the institution to destabilize the more inequitable forces of society. This tension has been productive for the university for quite some time—in both its ideal form and practice—in that the university is simultaneously a force to preserve and transmit tradition and a source of innovation (Kroeber, 2000). An alternative way to frame this is that the university has been both a site that respects authority while also demonstrating a

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Aronowitz (2000) as examples.
commitment to intellectual autonomy and scholarship. Hindess (1995) states that the greatest tension currently facing the university is "the survival, not so much of either pure reflection or the utilitarian activities of the university, but rather of the manner in which the university is thought to bring the two together" (p. 36). Where Readings helps us is his challenge that we ask ourselves the difficult question of what might happen if the inherently political portions of the university’s mission are subsumed into a discourse of excellence and accounting. Readings argues,

This hollowing out of the state is a process that appears... as "depoliticization," the loss of belief in an alternative political truth that will authoritatively legitimate oppositional critique. The loss of faith in salvation is actualized in the rise of the modern bureaucratic state as an essentially unipolar society. (p. 47)

The deferentialized discourse of excellence can help us further understand the university’s complicity in fostering the potentially immobilizing conditions that Giroux (2001b) describes as public institutions become increasingly less able to develop a critical, democratic subject. A “privatized model of citizenship,” he argues, increasingly dominates the public sphere in which:

Divested of its political possibilities and social underpinnings, freedom finds few opportunities for translating private worries into public concerns or individual discontent into collective struggle. And increasingly, collapsing intellectual ambition and social vision are matched by a growing disdain toward matters of equality, justice, and politics and how such issues might be addressed critically by educators in higher education, especially the humanities. (p. 3)

Central to Readings’ project is that his critique is not a purely pessimistic one. A university in ruins does not mean that all vestiges of a ‘traditional university,’ in both real and imagined form, have disappeared once and for all. Rather, naming and questioning the discourse of excellence can lead to powerful forms of critique and new spaces of opportunity as a necessary site to re-imagine the university. Living in a ‘university in

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ruins,' however, does not restore a nostalgic view of knowledge as mastery and progress. Readings calls for a rethinking of both 'university' and 'community'—a rethinking of a university in which a community in 
\textit{dissensus} dwells. Dwelling in the ruins "is not despair or cynicism; it is simply the abandonment of the religious attitude toward political action, including the pious postponement or renunciation of action" (p. 178).

This seems a more ethical position—abandoning, or at the very least making problematic, the almost religious faith in the "cult of the expert," and the ability of the "righteous," in terms of either moral rectitude or superior expertise, to prevail in solving society's ills. This naïve faith may make it easier to ignore some of the pressing questions and problems that get in the way, in this particular case, of university engagement in the community. In this project, I attempt to apply Readings' critique to a consideration of possible ways that the university might dwell "in the university of ruins" and what it might mean to create a "community in 
\textit{dissensus}" through its renewed commitment to community engagement. While my project is an admittedly idealistic one, much of my discussion is devoted to the barriers to such efforts. However, I hope to consider the ways that these very barriers might serve as specific sites for thinking, talking, and moving toward building more effective university-school partnerships (e.g., Lather, 2000a). At this point I move the discussion to important shifts in the history of higher education in the U.S. The purpose of the discussion may appear to weaken Readings' analysis. However, quite the contrary, I hope to strengthen my application of his analysis through an examination of a more nuanced reading of higher education in the United States than that provided by Readings.
Influences on American Higher Education; 
Classicism, Competition, and the "Uses" of Knowledge

Laurence Veysey (1965) posits that there have been three influential forces in the history of the U.S. university: production of leaders to serve society; an abstract concept of research (a German, Humboldtian model); and diffusion of a liberal notion of culture (p. 12). Readings locates his critique of the university along slightly different lines: A Kantian concept of reason, the Humboldtian idea of culture, both of which have gradually given way to the third, a "techno-bureaucratic notion of excellence." Readings, however, quite clearly states that he does not read the university's historical narrative as following a linear line of development and that his "emphasis throughout this book is that the debate on the University is made up of divergent and non-contemporaneous discourses, even if one discourse dominates over the others at certain moments" (p. 14). Despite this qualification, other forces have been powerful and the extent that the three discourses have been "non-contemporaneous" is arguable. In addition, his treatment of the history of the university may leave a reader with a desire for a much more carefully laid-out delineation of the material history of the university in the United States.

An initial reading of historical accounts of the university in the U.S. combined with a cursory reading of Readings' arguments may lead to the conclusion that his are most certainly not new ones, and therefore, easier to dismiss as irrelevant. In contrast, I would argue that it nevertheless provides a powerful source of critique, raising vital questions about the mission of the (post) modern university in contemporary times. However, an extensive discussion of what I consider to be some weaker areas in his historical treatment would be distracting in this context. Instead, I will discuss some key
aspects of the development of higher education in the United States. My discussion is not extensive, however, a certain amount of historical contextualization is helpful when considering the contemporary issues facing the university. In addition, I included it as a strategy to avoid the temptation to take up Readings' naming of the "Discourse of Excellence" too simplistically.

A classical curriculum, one popularly defined as "liberal arts," predominated for a substantial portion of the university's trajectory. In the beginning stages this was propelled by prevailing attitudes on the nature of knowledge, the conservative task of educating a leadership class, religious fervor, and fiscal constraints. Colleges and universities have also struggled with being able to convincingly establish and defend a definitive answer to the question of the "best" way to educate democratic citizens, as indeed, definitions of and the criterion for membership to the ranks of "democratic citizen" have changed in the United States since Harvard College was established in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636. The university has served the national project of the United States well, from preparing citizens for a new democracy founded on Enlightenment principles-- educating first the ministry, and then the doctors and lawyers that communities desired; training teachers as the common school movement spread, to creating the basic research needed to move the nation's industrial-military complex to ever more dizzying heights. Charges that the university had atrophied and that higher education was not teaching "useful" knowledge were launched well before the Civil War.

It is also not new to suggest a link between the university and market forces, nor is it new to criticize it, indeed, a quest for economic and technological progress make up

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11 See Veysey (1965) and Rudolph (1962) for succinct discussion on the earliest colleges and universities in
a significant portion of American culture and society, the development of which the University has contributed. Indeed, clear links between the university and the business and technological needs of the country were laid down more than a century ago. Thus, Readings’ claim that a university model based on the transmission of national culture has moved to one based on market principles is not so easy to see when the two have been intricately connected in the United States throughout its history. The reverse is also true; corporate philanthropic foundations, particularly the Rockefeller trusts, greatly facilitated the growth of elite research institutions and the work of scholars and scientists in the creation of basic scientific research (Geiger, 1999; Gumport, 1999). However, the point that most interested Readings was how does this equation change when the unit of the nation state decreases in import.

The rise of the research university and the emphasis on the creation of knowledge, as well as more explicit links between the university and the needs of society, greatly loosened the university curriculum (Wilson, 1999). In addition, economic motivations also contributed to greater flexibility in the curriculum through the creation of undergraduate electives as such a move appealed to student demands for a more “useful” education (Lucas, 1996). In the mid 1800’s colleges and universities began to organize alumni societies which became an increasingly important source of financial support, and as such, asserted more influence on the inner workings of higher education (Lucas, 1996; Metzger, 1955). While we may raise our eyebrows in the year 2002 that consumer philosophy honed by the good folks at Disney World might influence university operations, such relationships were decried as far back as the early 1900’s when
Thorstein Veblen, spurred on by his distress over what he perceived to be the university’s turning its back on its mission of learning as “disinterested and dispassionate,” scornfully labeled university administrators “captains of erudition,” and “business-minded predators who corrupted the scholarly mission of a real university by packaging education in saleable units, weighing scholarship in bulk and market-value, promoting the growth of a corps of bureaucratic functionaries.”

Competition emerged as a shaping force from the beginning as the earliest colleges were founded by different religious denominations, at first, and then motivated by regional pride shortly thereafter. Denominational colleges continued to proliferate into the first half of the nineteenth century, “animated by the desire to bring the word of God and the chance of salvation to the heathen frontier” as well as to educate citizens for adequate participation in governance. However, Metzger (1955) argues that competition among the denominations, rather than the thirst for salvation, was one of the most “powerful and sustained of their motives” (p. 20). So great was the proliferation of institutes of higher learning in the early part of the nineteenth century that more than 700 colleges failed to survive past the Civil War. Colleges were often severely under-funded and relied on both denominational and public support. The difficulty in securing adequate funding, maintaining sufficient enrollment numbers, and a mistrust of higher education all contributed to a context which required the university to be sensitive to public opinion at all stages in its development. One telling example is a gubernatorial race in the 1890’s in which a candidate included the abolishment of the University of South Carolina in his platform (Rudolph, 1962).

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Opinions on the role of the university in preparing a professional class have changed to meet societal needs as well as the demands of a more heterogeneous population. The earliest colonial colleges primarily educated future ministers and the "intellectual caste" of the new society. The early curriculum was largely classical, but science, along with new empirical practices, slowly crept in to the classrooms. However, an emphasis on classics as well as on educating an elite class were not to last indefinitely as the Colonial Colonies transitioned into the new republic informed by Enlightenment principles of progress and the perfectibility of the individual and society. On a more pragmatic level, an increased, heterogeneous population and institutional competition for students soon created conditions whereby the colleges would feel compelled to meet the demands of students (Geiger, 1999; Labaree, 1997; Veysey, 1965). However, the transition from a classical education to a more vocational one did not progress linearly and a public demand for more practical education is found rather early in the university's history. Responding to these calls, an early president of Yale opined that "higher learning... is in no sense the servant of public opinion when public opinion is superficial or erroneous—but it is called to be its corrector and controller."14

Colleges were rapidly founded on the western frontiers as the country expanded across the continent, at a much faster rate than primary or secondary schools. According to Rudolph (1962) "one unwritten law of the early education history in the U.S. would be: Where there are no elementary or secondary schools, there you will find a college" (p. 48). Opportunities for higher education expanded significantly with the rise of normal schools, many of which later became regional state universities. Land-grant colleges and

universities were established with the assistance of two legislative acts in the mid to late 1800's. By 1930 municipal universities established to provide the necessary training for jobs in the region had a larger enrollment base than research universities (Geiger, 1999). Thus, sentiments regarding the relationship between university administration and the general public, such as the one above expressed by the president of Yale, were neither economically, nor culturally viable for long. The rapid expansion created opportunities for a more heterogeneous population to access higher education. Curriculum decisions, whether fueled by a desire to boost a particular region or denomination, or to conserve vestiges of continental traditions of maintaining an elite leadership class, were influenced by the prevailing opinions on the question of “utility” and its relationship to knowledge.

The tides can be seen to gradually shift in respect to the nature of the university’s mission and its curricular content, as early as the 1820’s when definitions of “utility” and its relationship to knowledge were noticeably changing (Geiger, 1999). The influential Yale Report of 1828 was responding to emerging complaints against classical languages remaining in the core curriculum more specifically and to the general question of how to educate for the professions more broadly. The Report spoke to “the suggestion, that our colleges must be new-modelled; that they are not adapted to the spirit and wants of the age; that they will soon be deserted, unless they are better accommodated to the business character of the nation.” However, the authors of the report were not to be swayed from a commitment to classical education. Influenced by the prevailing theory of Faculty Psychology, they argued that the purpose of higher education was to “lay the foundation

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14 In Veysey (1965), p. 31-32.
of a *superior education*.” “The two great points to be gained in intellectual culture, are the *discipline* and the *furniture* of the mind; expanding its powers, and storing it with knowledge. The former of these is, perhaps, the more important of the two.” The authors explicitly state that the purpose of an undergraduate education is most certainly not professional training, but rather “to lay the foundation which is common to them all.”

The dispute over the best way to prepare for the professions—through a pursuit of the liberal arts or concentration in a professional concentration of study has been contentious for approximately two hundred years (Lucas, 1996). The same debate can be found more than a century ago over the university curriculum in Great Britain. British universities did not factor in any significant way in the industrial revolution and the expansion of the sciences and they too were under assault with demands to ‘modernize’ (Altbach, 1999). Cardinal John Newman addressed the “theory of Utility in Education” in a series of lectures that were published in 1858 as *Idea of a university*. He argued that the purpose of the university is the following:

> And what ought the term University to mean, but a place where every science is taught which is liberal, and at the same time useful to mankind? Nothing would so much tend to bring classical literature within proper bounds as a *steady and invariable appeal to utility* in our appreciation of all human knowledge ... Looking always to real utility as our guide, we should see, with equal pleasure, a studious and inquisitive mind arranging the productions of nature, investigating the qualities of bodies, or mastering the difficulties of the learned languages. We should not care whether he was chemist, naturalist, or scholar, because we know it to be as necessary that matter should be studied and subdued to the use of man, as that taste should be gratified, and imagination inflamed.

Speaking to those who were urgently demanding “utility” within a university education, he responded with the following argument:

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16 Ibid. All points of emphasis in original.
how do I propose directly to meet the objection? Why, Gentlemen, I have really met it already, viz., in laying down, intellectual culture is its own end; for what has its end in itself, has its use in itself also. I say, if a Liberal Education consists in the culture of the intellect, and if that culture be in itself a good, here, without going further, is an answer to Locke's question; for if a healthy body is a good in itself, why is not a healthy intellect? and if a College of Physicians is a useful institution, because it contemplates bodily health, why is not an Academical Body, though it were simply and solely engaged in imparting vigour and beauty and grasp to the intellectual portion of our nature?

This argument does not preclude that useful results arise from the cultivation of the intellect, it "can not but be" so. Or as some more contemporary critically-minded theorists often say, utility, or its potential, is 'always already' there. However, his argument lies in opposition to the position that a "useful" result must 'always already' be seen as an end product before it is labeled "useful." The training of the mind in such a way, is not, in Newman's argument, cultivation of the intellect, nor preparation for effective stewardship of society, and as such not the purpose of the university. The crux of Newman's argument is that the preparation of the university student for the professions, is, of course, the domain of the university, but this is not the end of the university's mission to society. Cardinal Newman's words hold great power in that as the title of the lectures denote, his "idea of a university" is a powerful one, and it is oft-cited in higher education literature, however, it seems to hold more rhetorical weight than actual weight as time has unfolded.

While it is tempting to consider curriculum debates of the mid to late 1800's as principally philosophical, it bears mentioning that despite the increased call for "utility" in higher education in the early 1800's, a liberal arts curriculum satisfied many needs of society during the university's first two hundred years, and was quite importantly,

17 From an on-line version of Cardinal Newman's lectures on the Idea of the University. URL is
inexpensive. Cost-efficiency was a vital consideration for institutions which struggled with securing adequate endowments from the start (Lucas 1996). Metzger (1955) argues that the severely limited finances greatly accounted for institutional resistance to change from the antebellum period through approximately the time of the Civil War. “Change meant expansion, expansion meant expense, and theirs was a destitute economy. A scholastic and tradition-bound curriculum was, aside from its other supposed virtues, decidedly cheap” (p. 38). The motivation and ideals behind the mission of colleges and universities, and the determination of the best way to educate students have never been without controversy, nor determined by a single strand of thought. Instead, they have been complex and often in competition or in reaction to one another.

Complex Meanings of “Service” in the University’s Mission

The post-Civil War era ushered in a transition from colleges to universities and a continued call for the university to serve the nation. This call to service included at least two senses: utilitarian/technological and social. George Howard of Stanford linked the university to “that spiritual utilitarianism whose creed is social perfection.” The president of the University of Illinois conceived of the university as “a great civil service academy” (Veysey, 1965, p. 72-73). A senate committee exposed a similar philosophy, referred to as the Wisconsin Idea, for its state university: “We are done with the conservatism of the past.” Similar sentiments were also found among private universities. President Wayland of Brown University argued that “we must carefully survey the wants of the various classes of the community” and adapt the curriculum


**18** In Lucas (1996), p. 60.
accordingly to include the "useful arts." Primary evidence of the intertwining of the university’s vocational and service mission is the first Morrill-Land Grant Act which set aside federal land for state governments to sell to raise funds for the establishment of institutions of higher learning that included classical, scientific, and "practical" instruction. Each state was to establish a college within a five year period. Signed by President Lincoln in 1862 the bill followed Congressman Morrill’s argument advanced in 1848 that colleges should "lop off a portion of the studies established centuries ago as the mark of European scholarship and replace the vacancy ... by those of a less antique and practical nature." The passage of the two Land Grant Acts led to an institutional difference between the United States and Europe in that separate, less-prestigious institutions were established on the continent for more practical studies whereas in the United States “the progeny of the industrial classes would eventually study in the same institutions as those from the professional classes” (Geiger, 1999, p. 53).

Veysey (1965) points out that the utilitarian view (vocational) grew in tandem with a movement of professionalization, or the "culture of professionalization" (Bledstein, 1978). At first, preparing for the ministry was a principal motivation for higher education. Harvard, Yale, and William and Mary, the nation’s first three institutions of higher learning, all addressed this mission in their founding documents. Two-thirds of Harvard graduates entered the ministry in its early years (Geiger, 1999). In fact, the ministry was the only profession for a time to receive systematic preparation, doctors and lawyers prepared as apprentices. Universities gradually began to prepare students for professional careers in the latter part of the 1800’s.
Metzger (1955) theorizes that the diminished power of religion on post-Civil War higher education greatly impacted questions of utility and knowledge because without “truths to speak for or purposes to defend, the new university would incline toward utility, and jeopardize its initiative and independence in order to answer client needs” (p. 44). However, he goes on to argue that this shift also brought a powerful argument for academic freedom within the university. A more heterogeneous population diminished the hold of the church on colleges (Rudolph, 1962). Another powerful curb on the power of the church on higher education was the growing import of the role accorded to the application of scientific knowledge, heralded by Darwinism, to the resolution of society’s problems. Metzger also makes the link between the rise of empiricism and the need for an increasingly specialized university administrator. The traditional college administrators, ministers, were often not suited for the demands of the changing mission of the university. The debate over Darwin’s work and its underlying principles profoundly influenced conversations about “utility” and knowledge and as a result, shaped the university curriculum and the standards by which to evaluate scholarship, as well as provided a more powerful logic for the notion of academic freedom.21

The rise of the research university and the development of graduate education were greatly influenced by wealthy benefactors and their philanthropic foundations. They were the earliest sources of research sponsorship, and in the 1870’s monies were largely granted to individual scientists. Substantial donations by “captains of industry,”

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20 Ibid. p. 61.
21 This discussion on the effect of Darwinism on the university is definitely sparse. See Metzger (1955, pp. 46-92) for a more complete discussion. Metzger organizes his discussion on the impact of Darwinism in three ways: the formula for tolerating error; limitations on administrative power; and the morality of science.
modeled after the newly established graduate research university, Johns Hopkins, facilitated the founding of Clark, Cornell, Vanderbilt, Stanford, and the University of Chicago. However, by the end of the century funding was largely instrumental and the industrial philanthropists were “directing funds to emerging universities for their potential contributions to industrial growth, employment, and commercial endeavors” (Gumport, 1999, p. 404). A harbinger of things to come at American colleges and research universities can be found in the words of Andrew Carnegie, writing in 1889, about his frustrations with the classically-dominated curriculum:

While the college student has been learning a little about the barbarous and petty squabbles of a far-distant past, or trying to master languages which are dead, such knowledge as seems adapted for life upon another planet than this as far as business affairs are concerned...[whereas] the future captain of industry is hotly engaged in the school of experience, obtaining the very knowledge required for his future triumphs... College education as it exists today is fatal to success in that domain. (in Lucas, 1996, p. 58)

In addition to the desires of the tycoons funding the drive for a practical education, the development of research universities was influenced by a model imported from Germany.

Readings devotes substantial discussion to the influence of the German model of academic scholarship in the U.S. Whereas much of his discussion focuses on the development of a national culture through the scholarship of the university, he does not discuss the ways this model was adapted, aspects of which were selectively applied to fit the American context. American colleges were influenced by students returning from

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22 See Lucas (1996) and especially Metzger (1955) for more extensive treatment of the German Research University and its influence on the western higher educational system. They include a more elaborate discussion on the nuanced meanings of Wissenschaft, as well as Lehrfreiheit, academic freedom, and their adaptation onto American universities. Discussion of Lehrfreiheit is completely omitted by Readings. In particular, it is interesting to consider in more detail how the adaptation of the German model, in respect to the university’s service mission and academic freedom, intersected with the history of the research universities endowed by the philanthropic foundations tied to American leaders of industry. See Metzger (1955) as an introduction to this discussion.
Germany. Their numbers increased in the mid-1800's and peaked in the 1880's as those trained in the German research model found more welcoming conditions at home as denominational control of higher education lessened and scientific research began to find an institutional home in the university. The German model was dedicated exclusively to graduate education, and in its ideal form, the university was dedicated to “pure research.” In addition, the work of the university was specifically charged with supporting nation-building for a newly united Germany. The more spiritual and integrated meanings of knowledge, Wissenschaft, yielded to a much more narrowly defined definition of science tied to a product of empirical investigation in the United States. “The contemplative and integrative side of the term in its original German context was lost altogether, and for it was substituted empiricism, a connotation it had lacked.”

The influence of a definition of knowledge tied to empiricism extended into the social sciences. Lucas (1996) notes that the chief proponent of this model, Harvard’s president Charles Eliot, seemingly failed to detect the inherent tension between the increasingly popular model of the university pressed into the service of the community on the one hand, with that of the “disinterested pursuit of knowledge” as advanced by the German academic community on the other. Another important borrowing is the ideal of academic freedom; its adaptation was also altered to fit the complex, eclectic higher education system in the United States which yielded to a variety of influences. Indeed, the complexity of its mission would only expand even more with the demands, scientifically and culturally, of the two World Wars as well as those of the Cold War era.

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Higher Education and the "Professionalization" of Teachers

David Labaree (1997) presents a view of the trajectory of teacher education as an example of the intersection of competing forces on the mission of higher education: student-as-consumer, producing experts for the social good, and the culture of professionalism. As the nation's population increased and the common school movement caught fire, an enormous number of teachers were needed, and normal schools were established to rudimentarily train future teachers. The huge numbers of teachers needed precluded the possibility of selective admissions or completion requirements. Social mobility was attached to a normal school education as it often was the only advanced education available. Eventually normal schools competed with other post-secondary institutions seeking to capture a portion of the market and became increasingly sensitive to the desires of students and as such, began to offer other curriculum options in addition to teacher preparation. Labaree traced the original normal schools as they became a "people's college" with the teacher training component, for a number of reasons, becoming less rigorous and less popular. Gradually the normal schools became 4-year state teachers college as the US economy "professionalized," then liberal arts colleges, and were then replaced by regional state universities. The mission of the normal schools to prepare teachers in service of the nation gradually shifted in response to institutional competition for students as well as to meet the demands and interests of area students.

Crisis, Nationalism, and the Mission of Higher Education

Increased public support for universities during and after World War II illustrate the university's role to serve the nation for both its contribution to nationalist pride as
well as for the benefit of society. Federal funding for university research, particularly in
the physical sciences, increased substantially in the decade following World War II. The
bulk of the increase was delivered by the defense establishment in the nation (p. 62).
Post-war increases came at the heels of a boom in funding for university-based R&D
during World War II. Idealism in the role of higher education in society was fueled
during the post-World War II exuberance and the changes in enrollment patterns caused
by the GI Bill. Returning veterans took advantage of the opportunity for advanced
education in unforeseen numbers. College enrollment before the war stood at 1.5
million; in 1947, a nearly equal number, 1.1 million, of ex-GIs enrolled (Geiger, 1999, p.
61). Annual growth in public funding to universities increased 12-14% from 1953-1968
as public money filled in the gap during a time of declining corporate grants (Press &
Washburn 2000, p. 46). The Sputnik crisis provided additional funding from the various
civil organizations within the government as well as an increased direct support from the
federal government to support university infrastructure and graduate programs. Cold
war-inspired crises also provided the supportive conditions to overcome strong resistance
within Congress for student aid programs through the National Defense Education Act in
1958. The Higher Education Act of 1965, part of President Johnson’s Great Society—
and linked to the discursive conditions of the “War on Poverty”, established the first
clear link between the federal government to ensuring more equitable opportunities to
higher education for needy students. Prior to the launch of Sputnik, Congress had been
highly resistant to the use of federal funds for student aid packages; the prevailing
opinion was that students must “pay their own ways” (Gladieux & King, 1999).
However, Louise Morley (1999) argues that these measures were much more likely taken
to address a perceived crisis to the nation state than to create more equitable conditions for accessing higher education among a broader segment of society.

**Re-imaging the University in an Impure Space**

The information presented in this section has been abbreviated, but it was provided, nevertheless, to contextualize Readings’ arguments as well as address possible critiques of his analysis based on different readings of the development of the university, in both its material and idealized forms. The complex relationship between the university and the changing definitions of the mission of education, competing claims on the “utility” of knowledge, its reliance on public and corporate sources of support, and technological developments have simultaneously constrained and produced tangible gains for the university. Considering the complex development of higher education and the dual meanings of “utility,” for the benefit of society and for material gain, can be a site for new ways to re-imagine the university. Where Readings is helpful is his insistence that these forces are even more extreme now, and importantly, that they are not tied to the nation-state as the multiple flows of the economy increasingly operate without regard for national borders. Thus, it becomes easier for the university to eschew its traditional link to culture and easier for administrators to incorporate divergent ideologies within the discourse of excellence. Re-imagining the mission of the university in contemporary times will not be enhanced by a romantic view of higher education in the past, nor will it be helpful to adopt a “crisis” posture that now suddenly the entire academic project is in jeopardy.

If, as a number of critics now seem to agree, the university is in ‘division’ or ‘ruin’, not just now but from its very beginnings, then under such conditions how is leverage exerted within or around the institution? To what extent is this leverage fundamentally disoriented, an ongoing part of the university’s ruins?

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Can leverage be exerted in such a way that disorientation need not simply be negatively marked? (Wortham, 1999, p. 6)

At this point, the discussion moves to a review of the literature on university-community partnerships. Chapter Four will take up the key questions asked in this chapter through a critical discourse analysis of university policy statements regarding the mission of the university.

Rhetorics of Hope and Reform: (In)coherent Possibilities within School-University Partnerships

The literature on school-university partnerships is voluminous and there are any number of ways to narrate my interpretations of the literature. Indeed, the organization of any material, and the key themes around which it is woven, add another important layer to any interpretation. For example, one common 'organization story' in the school-university partnership literature is to focus on the cultural differences between schools and universities (e.g., Brookhart & Loadman, 1990, 1992; Richmond, 1996; Selke, 1996). Other common strategies include organizing around the difficulties of building partnerships (e.g., Bullough, Zath, Hensley, & Waite, 1999; Feldman, 1992; Teitel, 1991, 1998); differing sets of priorities and concerns (e.g., Moguel, 1997); factors that impact the necessary balance between reflectivity and activity (Knight, Wiseman, & Smith, 1992); and a tapestry bringing in different voices to de-privilege the traditional hierarchy of the relationship (e.g., Benton et al., 1996; Christenson et al., 1996; Lemma, Ferrara, & Leone, 1998; Sandholtz & Finan, 1998). I did not wish to replicate the above strategies, nor to organize my discussion around one of the most striking impressions of the literature review, which is the relatively simple observation of the plethora of work in
existence simply detailing the initial processes of building a partnership and the difficulty of collaborating. Thus, to connect the two sections of this chapter I juxtapose my focus on the messiness of competing claims on the university throughout its development with a discussion of school university partnerships as an example of a project that seeks coherence and consistency.

The first section focused on the possible dangers of holding onto a simpler, romantic version of the university's history that overlooks or ignores its "messy" development. This section considers the dangers and possibilities of wishing to fix coherence within the discourses of hope and reform. While the messy, difficult nature of the process may be acknowledged, much effort is concentrated on quickly imposing 'coherence' and 'clarity' on the process. Because I contend that a significant portion of the motivation behind the partnership trend stems from current calls for the university to re-establish its role in a changing society, the discussion is organized around the ways in which hope, crisis, and reform are mobilized to lay the foundation for the partnership movement.

Hope and Reform

It is hoped that the creation of school-university partnership cultures will help tear down the walls of "separation" in the American society by providing a working example of cultural coherence and integration. In the end, the present dominant, hierarchical society may be replaced by a partnership society. The future ahead of us may very well witness a return to "the partnership society of the forgotten past", as Eisler (1987) predicts. Therefore, let us be alert and have an eye out for our partners—the key ingredients of a healthy ecosystem. (Su, 1991, p. 103)

The rhetorics of Hope and Reform are fundamental components of the discursive construction of school-university partnerships that have emerged as beacons of light in the bleak discourses of crisis in regards to schooling. Indeed, it is difficult to extricate the
two themes as each is propped up by the other. Our communities are in crisis. Our urban cities are in crisis. Youth is in crisis. Schools are in crisis. Our very nation is in crisis. Without the dreary calls to crisis, accountability, and reform, there is little need to roll up one’s sleeves with hopeful fervor to effect institutional change in both schools and universities through partnership. Not only do partnerships hold the possibility of improving teaching and learning at the nation’s schools and universities, but as the above quote illustrates, they are the salve to be soothed upon the nation’s wounds--capable of returning the nation to its mythical, rather than “forgotten,” past when society [supposedly] lived together naturally, peacefully, and coherently. However, quite often it seems that educators do not get much further than the ‘rolling up the sleeves’ part.

An urgent sense of crisis has been constructed by many educationalists who do not simply face challenges, problems, or ‘issues.’ Such descriptors are not dramatic enough. Instead, there is a “crisis” in nearly every layer of the educational system: school leadership (Esparo & Radar, 2001; Malone and Cadell, 2000); school infrastructure (Crampton and Thompson, 2001); content areas such as reading (Barton, 1997; Thompson, 2001) and math (The Glenn Report, 2001); homework (Glazer and Williams, 2001); teaching (Rosenfeld, 2000); urban schools (Carlson, 1992); and teacher education (the Holmes Group, 1986). Incongruous strategies are proposed to diminish the crisis. Some propose that school choice and the application of competitive economic models to the running of schools is the answer (Johnson & Kafer, 2001); whereas others contend that over-reliance on technical, economic models has lead to a “spiritual and moral crisis” in schooling (Purpel, 1989). A “crisis-management panel” has recently been formed by the Maryland legislature to “rein in” the school board of Prince George’s
County (Keller, Bess, 2002). One local district school board member wore fatigues to school board meetings for more than two months over the summer of 2001 to signify his being “at war” with other members of the board. While there are numerous challenges facing today’s educators, the sense of crisis in respect to the nation’s schools is pervasive despite the existence of sometimes contradictory evidence. Labaree (1999) points out that in a recent Gallup Poll of American attitudes toward education revealed that respondents displayed a sense of satisfaction and even approval of their local schools while simultaneously expressing grave concern about the quality of education in other schools. “The vision is one of general threats to education that have not yet reached the neighborhood school but may do so in the very near future” (p. 35).

The construction of crisis enables numerous “battles” to be waged by educators and policy-makers, and hence, the proposing of the various top-down resolutions (Cizek, 1999). Just a sample of the educational “battles” include: ideological battles over curriculum (Cody, Woodward, & Elliot, 1993); the validity of educational research hinged on the acceptance of teacher research (Gallas, 2001); more effective ways of educating African-Americans (Hurd, Roach, & Smiles, 2001); the determination of educational beliefs and visions (McAdams, 2000); and of course, battles for the hearts and minds of today’s youth (Marciano, 2001). School reform efforts have been described as a “convenient battle cry for those who blame the educational system for societal problems” (Gomez, 1996, in Kersh & Masztal 1998, p. 219). There are even battles of near biblical proportions such as that for the “soul” of rural school reform (Sher, 1995). At the next level up, there are the “wars” over k-12 standards (Stotsky, 2000); school choice (Merrifeld, 2001); tracking (Loveless, 1999); and math (Reys, 2001). School
reform efforts waged in response to the attacks, crises, and battles have largely been
described variously as a “wide spread failure” (Zetlin and MacLeod, 1995, p. 411), a
“maelstrom…. hastily conceived and implemented” (Kersh and Masztal, 1998, p. 218),
and likely to fall within the realm of simply a “quest for a quick fix” (Lieberman, 1998, p.
717). School-university partnerships have emerged as one very promising cure for the
nation’s current woes in respect to schooling.

The Partnership Movement

There are numerous kinds of partnerships, as well as multiple objectives feeding
them. Many in the academic community look to school-university partnerships as a way
to affect institutional change in both schools and universities (Darling-Hammond, 1994;
partnerships as “a vehicle for massive restructuring of curriculum at all pre-college
levels, as well as for the professional development of teachers” (p. 214). It is helpful to
refer to this movement as the Professional Development School (PDS) model, despite the
degrees of difference among these authors and in its implementation in schools and
colleges of education across the country.

School-university partnerships have emerged as a widely popular technology to
transform both schools and teacher education programs. In an extensive review of the
partnership literature, Su (1991) describes these partnerships variously as a fad—they’ve
“become the “in” thing to do” (p. 1) and following Gies and Gordon (1990), that
participants in the movement sometimes travel on a “pop education bandwagon” (p. 3).
Partnerships are also constructed as cure—they are a “common prescription for curing
contemporary educational ills” (p. 1-2). They are also dispensers of hope—“a popular and promising vehicle to revitalize education” (Osajima, 1989, p. 111).

PDS models are not the only partnership models, nor are school partnerships recent developments. The earliest partnership efforts largely centered around student transition from high school to college. The Committee of Ten, composed of university presidents, was charged with the task of influencing the high school curriculum in the last century. John Dewey was a tireless advocate for links between universities and schools. Partnership efforts were initiated in response to Sputnik, but these were largely short term collaborative initiatives to revise K-12 math and science curriculum (Su, 1991). However, the number of partnerships has increased dramatically over the past two decades. Heaviside and Farris (1989) found that school partnerships increased from 42,200 (17 percent of K-12 schools) in 1983 to 140,800 (40 percent) in 1988. More than half of these partnerships were between schools and businesses, whereas merely 7 percent of the partnerships were between schools and universities. Wilbur and Lambert (1995) found that the number of school-university partnerships increased from 525 in 1985 to 2,088 in 1995. The words of an influential scholar, Ernest Boyer (1985), were a harbinger: “Universities pretend they can have quality without working with the schools, which are, in fact, the foundation of everything universities do” (p. 11).

Four types of partnerships have been identified in the literature according to their orientation: staff-oriented, student oriented, task-oriented, and an “adopt-a-school” model (Su, 1991). For example, Wilbur and Lambert (1995) broke down their sample of school-university partnerships to find that 51 percent of the partnerships addressed k-12
student needs rather than faculty or college related issues. Efforts fell within the student-oriented (e.g. programs related to teaching academic content areas) or task-oriented classification (e.g. drug or drop-out prevention). 21 percent of this number specifically targeted the needs of underserved and at-risk students. The numbers of programs targeting an underserved population break down to 234 out of a sample of 2,088.

As the number of partnerships has increased, so has the incidence of variation in the model. Other models include that described by Erlandson et al. (1999) of an innovative Ed.D. program for school principals and district administrators planned collaboratively by a university and a near-by, large-city school district. Participants advance through the program in a cohort and specifically focus on building capacity to effect urban educational change in the district. Laguardia (1998) focused on partnerships to improve k-12 academic rigor for minority and disadvantaged youth as well as facilitate their university enrollment. He found little evidence of partnerships contributing to institutional change among the 21 programs meeting his requirement of having been sustained for at least five years. Finally, Harkavy & Puckett (1991) write of the University of Pennsylvania's diffuse, broad-based effort to counter the “learned helplessness” (p. 55) of the university community in respect to becoming engaged with the challenges facing its immediately surrounding neighborhoods. They advance a model of “academically based public service” to both fulfill the university’s responsibility for “civic consciousness” (p. 55) as well as to revitalize the tri-partite mission of teaching, research, and service. They argue that the university’s mission and moral purpose are inextricably linked to “learning in the nation’s service” (p. 74-75).
Definitions of “Partnership”

A review of the partnership literature reveals that there is no clarity in the meaning of the term “partnership” or of its synonyms. There is even great variation within the more clearly defined PDS model (Mogel, 1997), so much so that in the third report issued by the Holmes Group (1995), the authors quite clearly expressed their dismay over the “cheap copies” of PDSs that had emerged in the previous decade. Su (1991) devotes extensive discussion to the vague meanings of partnership as well as other words that are common in the literature, including: collaboration, coalition, cooperation, alliance, consortium, and network. The National Network of Educational Renewal, a prominent leader in the movement, offers the following definition of a partnership to effect educational change:

A planned effort to establish a formal, mutually beneficial, inter-institutional relationship characterized by sufficient commitment to the effective fulfillment of overlapping functions to warrant the inevitable loss of some present control and authority on the part of the institution currently claiming dominant interest. (in Su, 1991, p. 11)

Whereas “partnership” is the term frequently invoked, the above definition has not taken root, rather the term too often simply denotes the more traditional, hierarchical relationship between the university and the school, or what Gross (1988) calls a “patronizing posture” on the part of the university (in Su, 1991, p. 12).

Su (1991) delineates the variation among terms used to denote collaborative working relationships and notes their interchangeable usage. Indeed, it is common for scholars to point to this variation and not only identify the term they are using, but to also articulate a more specific definition (e.g., Moguel, 1997; Teitel, 1998; Vivian, 1986). Several pages could be devoted to this discussion. While the nuances of the set of terms

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invoked to describe partnerships are quite important, I find it unhelpful to become enmeshed in a never-ending process of trying to fix the definition of partnership terminology. Rather, it is more pertinent for my project to note that explicit attention has been devoted to trying to pin down the definition. Like ‘community,’ partnership is another example of a word with great commonsense currency in education, of which stakeholders may have quite differing, and even vague, definitions. Thus, a particular partnership should make an effort to articulate a very general definition—as definitions will vary; however, pinning down a fixed definition is not helpful within a partnership, nor across the field. I am more interested in whether claims of crisis allow the “patronizing posture” of the university to be maintained. Do they inspire a desire to fix [unrealistic] definitions of “partnership” and related concepts such as collaboration?

Vague Promises

There are examples of innovative partnerships. In addition, there is an abundance of literature eloquently speaking of the promise of school-university partnerships for revitalizing both teacher education and teaching and learning in K-12 schools. However, there are relatively few partnerships that come close to achieving what is promised by the rhetoric of hope and reform delivered in the laudatory treatments of school-university partnerships. Clark (1986) built on a previous study to re-examine a group of partnerships and found that not only was there little evidence of “partnership” in the sense of an arrangement of equal partners, but also that the “partnerships” lacked a sense of commitment and were not working on mutually beneficial long-term reform efforts. Goodlad (1993), perhaps the movement’s most influential leader, concluded that much of collaboration is “simplistic in conception and superficial in implementation” (p. iii).
Erlandson et al. (1999) note that "great rhetorical emphasis" is placed on partnerships between schools and colleges and education, but that the reality says otherwise (p. 555).

Great rhetorical emphasis is placed on partnerships for its promise of effecting institutional change. However, it is not possible to focus on the "institutional change" part of the previous assertion. Instead, it is necessary to consider the "rhetorical" nature of the movement in that much of the benefit, value, and promise of partnerships seem to be contained within images located mainly in the hearts, minds, and discussions of the various participants. Zeitlin and MacLeod (1995) echo a common assertion in the literature when they argue that school-university partnerships represent a great contrast to the traditional relationship between schools and universities in which schools largely served as convenient placements for student teachers and easy data-gathering sites for researchers. "In these new collaborative partnerships, teacher education, research and school improvement have an opportunity for much greater interaction, thus increasing significantly the potential for real reform" (p. 411). This statement reflects an extremely common assertion in the literature—the great promise in such a relationship.

The promise is not necessarily translated into reality. For example, Lieberman (1992) and Teitel (1998) found that it was not uncommon for participants to engage in a collaborative relationship as "show." Teitel (1998) studied a subset of 12 schools and universities out of a set of 20 partnerships initiated by the state over a period of five years. He found frustration on the part of the state department of education that despite laudatory goals and initial actions, many of the partnerships went no further than the usual practice of concentrating student teachers at particular schools and offering on-site courses. Harkavy and Puckett (1991) invoke a crisis theme in reference to the extent of
both the problems found in urban communities and the nature of the institutional barriers in the university to ‘attacking’ them in order to point out the dangers of “bold proclamations and minor tinkering.” They argue that these vigorous assertions “will simply be overwhelmed by the forces of inertia and status quo.” They go on to assert that “Bold proclamations will also mean another false start—and false promise—for urban communities in need.” However, in the very next breath they themselves issue a bold proclamation: “No other institution has the prestige, intellectual resources, and stated mission to lead the way” (p. 58) to resolve the urgent problems of urban communities.

“Pinning Down” the Promise

It is difficult to assess the effectiveness of school-university partnerships despite their widespread appeal. Moguel’s (1997) extensive review of the PDS literature from 1990-1997 found that evaluations of PDS efforts have been “scarce” (p. 21). This observation is telling in that he focused on only those PDS models that sought to achieve parity in partnership for the purpose of specifically effecting institutional change. However, while there are examples of models of how to conduct an evaluation, Goodlad’s (1994) observation still seems to hold true that there are two types of evaluations. On one hand there is “superficial...non-data based” evaluations likely offered because of limited attention to its import. At the other extreme are evaluations that are too introspective, and not contextualized or linked to subsequent action (p. 94-94). Thorkildsen and Stein (1996) also found little evidence of effective, empirically-based evaluation of school-university partnerships in their review of the literature.

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24 See Moguel (1997) pages 24 and 25 for examples of these evaluative models. His discussion on the existence of more models of how to do it than actual examples of evaluation updates a similar finding in Su’s (1991) extensive review of the partnership literature. It is quite interesting that there are many more
More attention is currently being paid to the lack of evaluation of partnerships. Borthwick et al. (2001) attempt to answer a call in the literature for more systematic study of outcomes by involving the diverse participants in the research process—making them “both the subjects and the interpreters of the research” (p. 19). However, they seem to be focusing on the process of the partnership rather than its outcomes. Selke (1996) is concerned with developing an evaluative tool to assess readiness to partner, yet this also remains at the level of process rather than outcomes. Laguardia (1998) found that while all of the 21 partnerships in his sample incorporated characteristics for success present in the literature, they were relatively not aware of the impact of the partnership efforts, nor had they collected sufficient data to assess partnership objectives (p. 179).

Another factor contributing to the lack of evaluative discussion is a tendency in the literature to describe the initial stages of a partnership only. For example, Cooper (1998) provides extensive discussion of a partnership model and its beginning stages and offers a set of recommendations. Evaluative plans have been built into the model, however, the article was written after only one semester of implementation. Erlandson et al. (1999) provide an evaluative discussion on the collaborative process, but they also write about a partnership in existence for only one year. They openly wrestle with the difficult question of evaluation and specifically link the effectiveness of their partnership to raising academic achievement levels among the students served by the school district. However, at the time of writing, it was a remote plan for the future. Knight et al. (1992) argue that it is imperative to evaluate partnerships despite their inherent difficulties, combined with the tenuous level of trust among participants. They incorporated a three-
phased evaluative plan into their partnership. The first phase concentrates on the collaborative process, and outcomes will not be considered until the third phase, which was described very vaguely. I do not wish to highlight these three samples as problematic, especially given that they were chosen because each openly discusses the question of how to evaluate an effective partnership; however, they represent a common pattern in that the level of discussion is often confined to the beginning stages of a partnership and the nature of collaboration. While not wishing to appear flippant as it is certainly not my intent, perhaps stakeholders are simply too tired from defining “partnership” and evaluating the difficulty of collaboration to go much further.

Telling a Too-Easy Story

In a professional development school, both school and university change the work and culture of the other, each derives important benefits from the other, and the long-term existence of new ways of training and educating teachers is guaranteed. (Moguel, 1997, p. 5-6)

Mogel expresses the ideal behind the professional development school model which is premised on partnership. It holds great promise for a hopeful future in which the outdated, out-of-touch pedagogy found in schools and universities will be replaced by co-constructed, collaborative, non-hierarchical methods for a rapidly changing society. It holds such great appeal that I dare question its validity with only extreme caution and care. It is also true that nearly every teacher, scholar, and practitioner who has written or presented on the topic readily admits to the inherent difficulties of the task, just as does every author cited in this chapter. That so much attention is focused on the difficult labor of collaboration is testament not only to its enormous promise, but also if we are to believe the above quote, because our success is surely “guaranteed.” Perhaps this great desire for the fulfillment of its promise keeps us from evaluating the effectiveness of our
efforts and from wrestling with the difficult questions, especially those related to issues of equity, justice, and difference, that must be “attacked” if our objectives of effecting institutional change are to be met in the name of those very principles. Partnership efforts are inhibited by focusing on the ideals of consensus, consistency, and coherence. Does the quixotic hope for these ideals enable our beliefs in a “tidy tale” about the promise of partnership (Lather, 2000a)? This is the central question of my investigation.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY-AS-PROJECT

This chapter delineates the methodology used to explore the difficult labor of building sustainable school-university partnerships. Within the context of this study I focus on "community," and its critiques outlined in chapter one, in order to consider the effects that unexamined, popular definitions bring to bear on the university’s partnership efforts. In thinking about the methodology I refer to the process of building community within partnership as a “community’s becoming” to reflect a perspective that considers community to be always in process, always becoming, as opposed to something that already exists in a particular space in time (Nancy, 1991; Phelan, 1994; Young, 1992). More specifically, the project considers the ways community, collaboration, and partnership—the terms seem to be used nearly interchangeably in higher education discourses on outreach and engagement—are constructed between the university and the schools in its surrounding neighborhoods through both text and practice.

There are many barriers to building partnership, thus I have focused on them as specific sites from which to learn (Derrida in Caputo, 1997a; Lather, 2000a). It is not an exception that this particular attempt to build community is fraught with difficulty. Constructing community is an inherently complex and difficult process, and efforts may be sabotaged, particularly in the field of education, by holding onto commonsense
definitions of community as an ideal, as a "pie-in-the-sky" goal. I hope to illustrate this argument by providing a case study of the difficult labor required to effect community within a school-university partnership, and that perhaps being "critical" may very well be more strategic. This dissertation examines the network of connections between higher education discourse and policy on university outreach and engagement and the institutional practices of the university which the policy seeks to influence. As such, the research project contains two different components. First, I analyze three higher education policy statements related to the mission of the university. Second, I combine this analysis with ethnographic study of the beginning stages of the efforts of a large, urban, research-intensive, land grant university to be a more engaged member of its larger community. In this chapter I describe the methodological approaches that I used: critical discourse analysis and ethnography. I conclude the chapter by highlighting the methodological steps of the ethnographic portion of the study.

I have the combined objectives of wishing to consider the work that higher education policy statements do "on the ground" in relation to the practices they inspire through a specific focus on the barriers to partnership. As such, I needed a method to facilitate this critical orientation in the juxtaposition of text and ethnographic data. Sherry Ortner (1997) describes content analysis of documents as performing "textual investigations" within ethnographic studies. However, I needed a methodology that would go further to place issues of power, contact, and a network of interrelationships prominently to the fore. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) provided such an approach in its focus on the relationships between instances of concrete language use and the wider socio-cultural structures within which language is embedded. In addition, practitioners
are concerned with social problems and motivated to apply interpretations and
explanations to resolving practical questions, rather than simply conducting an analysis of
language use for understanding (Titscher et al., 2000). In this case, the practical matter at
hand is the difficulty of constructing a partnership between the university and its
surrounding community, in general, and with its neighborhood schools, in particular.

Critical Discourse Analysis: Methodological Discussion

In this section I highlight central features of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a
method of inquiry that insists on recognizing the complexity within which language, or
"discourse," is produced. Most broadly, discourse analysis explores the "relationships
between concrete language use and the wider social and cultural structures" (Titscher,
Meyer, & Wodak, 2000, p. 149). More specifically, as a critical methodology CDA is a
tool to explore the ways that language functions to reproduce existing societal structures
(Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1993b, 2001). Within this section I first discuss variation
within Discourse Analysis to provide a context for its development as well as information
pertinent to understanding the "turn to language" in the social sciences. Then key
objectives of CDA and definitions of its guiding assumptions and concepts are provided.
Because of variation within CDA, I then outline the particular framework used to analyze
the policy statements. Specific reference to my own set of research questions is included.

CDA is interdisciplinary, or "multidisciplinary,"25 in nature. It focuses not only
on language features, but also the larger social structures within which language is
embedded, for example, to represent the world, to accomplish various tasks, and as an
essential tactic in the creation and maintenance of social relations. As such CDA is used

25 Van Dijk describes CDA as multidisciplinary.
to explore both the linguistic text as well as its broader socio-political, cultural, and historic context. CDA is part of a larger tradition of discourse analysis. Rosalind Gill (1993) identifies three traditions within discourse analysis. The first set is labeled critical linguistics, critical language studies, or CDA. This approach can be characterized by that which I have begun to describe thus far. Examples of this approach include Fairclough’s (1989, 1995) studies of discourse and power in such diverse contexts as media, advertising, and the ways that meaning and identities are discursively constructed in social interactions, schooling, advertisements, and political speeches. He explores, among other things, what he calls the “marketization” of public discourse as well as the processes of “conversationalization” within public discourse. His work will be discussed more extensively below. Other earlier examples influential in CDA’s development include the work of Fowler et al. (1979) and Kress and Hodge (1979) who have studied the uses of discourses within organizations. Van Dijk (1988, 1991, 1993a) and Wodak (1989, 1991) have used CDA to explore the discursive construction of immigration and nationalism.26 Van Dijk (2001) asserts that feminist scholarship presents the most theoretically and methodologically-developed examples of CDA (e.g., Kotthoff & Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 1997).

A second tradition, while also interdisciplinary in nature, locates its analysis more solidly within the text as opposed to the previous method. According to Gill this tradition of discourse analysis is interested in the functionality, or the desired action the text is

26 See van Dijk’s (2001) chapter on CDA in the *Handbook of discourse analysis* (eds. Schiffrin, Tannen, and Hamilton) for a summary of key concepts in a theoretical framework that guides CDA—or as he describes it work that “critically relates discourse, cognition and society” as sometimes this type of work is not explicitly labeled CDA. He also synthesizes the research conducted with a CDA framework of gender
meant to achieve, rather than a focus on the text in its larger societal context. It is exemplified by the work of Garkinkel (1967) and Goffman (1981). This tradition is influenced by Austin's (1962) Speech-act theory and its elaborations (e.g. Searle, 1969), ethnomethodology, and conversational analysis. Some elaboration of Austin’s work is helpful in considering not only this tradition of discourse analysis but also part of the process of leading to a perspective that views the world as discursively constructed.

Austin was among the first to point out that speech utterances have different purposes, and that often the desired intent of speech is not to convey information, but to perform various actions. In other words, an utterance could function similarly to that of an action. A classic example is the expression, “with this ring, I thee wed.” Austin called these types of utterances, “performatives,” as opposed to “constatives,” which convey information. “Stating is performing an act” (p. 139).

An increased call to consider the action and purposes of speech acts in its larger situational context influenced the development of conversational analysis and ethnomethodology. The work of anthropologists called attention to the role of culture in the construction of conversational rules and norms. Some discourse analysts working within this tradition, however, have been critical of the ideological nature of the more

inequality; racism, nationalism, and ethnocentrism; media studies; political discourse; and various discourse genres—i.e. medical talk, legal talk, school talk, etc.

27 If philosopher John Austin’s Speech Act Theory is not specifically mentioned as the first to make such a connection, it is the most prominently invoked. However, Wittgenstein made a similar point in his notes some ten years earlier, “Words are deeds” (Culture and value, 1984, p. 46). Wittgenstein also devoted attention to language and the multiplicity of intentions within language use. He compared language to a game to call attention to the fact that language is inextricably linked to activity, that it is a form of life.

critical varieties of discourse analysis. This critique is reflective of Slembrouck's (1998-2002) point that many practitioners of conversational analysis are highly reluctant to allow for any kind of “pre-analytical theorizing.” This point marks a second important distinction between conversational analysis and CDA.

Gill (1993) considers the work of post-structural theorists to compose the third tradition in that “discourse analysis” is sometimes used to describe the work of theorists such as Barthes, Derrida, Lacan, Foucault, and Laclau. She suggests that the term “post-structural” is most valuable as a way of thinking about a body of work that asks similar sets of questions about subjectivity, meaning, and epistemology, rather than possessing a similar set of answers or theories. In addition, she notes that in contrast to the first two traditions, this third tradition concerns itself with a historical view of discourse as opposed to the features of a specific text (p. 325). Practitioners of CDA may draw from the work of post-structural theorists, particularly the notion that the social world is constructed discursively; the non-fixity, or closure, of meaning (e.g., Derrida’s difference); the fragmented subject position (e.g., as advanced by Laclau and Mouffle, 1985); and Foucault’s (1980) theories on power and discourse.

While Gill synthesizes a discussion of different strands within the tradition of discourse analysis, Titscher et al. (2000) also note the variation of practices conducted under the umbrella of CDA itself. They provide a concise discussion of two principal varieties: the critical discourse analysis exemplified by Fairclough and the discourse-historical method practiced by Ruth Wodak. They argue that despite differences in

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29 See Titscher et al. (2000, pp. 163-167) for a brief summary of various critiques of CDA, in particular those of Schegloff and Widdowson. There is also a special issue of Discourse & Society (1990), 1(1) devoted to the debate between conversational analysis and CDA.
application, as a method the theoretical underpinnings of CDA, as distinct from discourse analysis, are influenced by Althusser’s theories of ideology, Bakhtin’s theories on genre, and the theoretical work of the Frankfort School which brings to the fore the role of culture in producing and maintaining power relations within society (p. 144-146).

A similar proposition is put forth by van Dijk (2001), “CDA is not so much a direction, school or specialization next to the many other ‘approaches’ in discourse studies. Rather, it aims to offer a different ‘mode’ or ‘perspective’ of theorizing, analysis and application throughout the whole field” (p. 352). A central guiding assumption, as van Dijk goes on to point out, and instructive for understanding the “perspective of theorizing” that he advances in respect to CDA, is that the critical discourse analyst rejects the possibility of science being value-free, or neutral. He explains that CDA is primarily interested in “the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit positions, and thus want to understand, expose and ultimately to resist social inequality” (p. 352). Recognizing a definition of power as being discursively constructed, he proposes the following three questions to guide CDA-inspired research (1998, np): 30

- How do (more) powerful groups control public discourse?

- How does such discourse control mind and action of (less) powerful groups, and what are the social consequences of such control, such as social inequality?

30 These three questions were part of an earlier draft (1998) of van Dijk’s chapter in the Handbook of discourse analysis. In the final chapter appearing in the 2001 publication, the questions are: “1) How do (more) powerful groups control public discourse? 2) How does such discourse control mind and action of (less) powerful groups, and what are the social consequences of such control, such as social inequality?” (p. 355). I use the three questions from his earlier version in order not to subsume the third question into the second. The earlier draft has been posted on the web and can be accessed at www.hum.uva.nl/~teun/cda.htm (Last accessed, January 15, 2002).
• How do dominated groups discursively challenge or resist such power?

In respect to my project, I could re-phrase these questions to include the following: How does the university\textsuperscript{31} control the discourse in respect to partnership efforts in the community? In other words, how does the university discursively control the shape, intensity, and forms that the partnership takes? How is the community, as well as its schools, constructed in the discourse of the policy statements? How are the university, and its mission to society, constructed in policy and in practice in tandem with the ways that its surrounding "community" is discursively constructed? How do the community, and its members, resist the ways they have been constructed in the discourse of the university, as well as resist the activities of the university? How does the community discursively challenge not only the actions of the university, but also the way the university should perceive their own actions and intentions? These questions also help to illustrate why I chose to combine ethnography with an analysis of policy statements. I can not explore these questions merely by looking at texts, I need also consider the texts in relation to the practices that they inspire.

CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that analyzes the complexity and messiness of social practice and the ways in which it is discursively constructed, particularly as it relates to social inequity. It is a "politically involved research" that seeks not only to understand and (partially) explain a particular social practice, but also to have an explicit

\textsuperscript{31} When I make general reference to the "university" and its actions, etc., by extension, I am referring to the members of the university community and their actions. While recognizing that the university is inhabited by a multiple cast of characters with differing intentions and agendas, I have settled on using "university" as opposed to "members of the academic, or university, community" to keep to the fore the institutional power that its members carry in respect to partnership activities in the community—or perhaps just as likely, the power that its members may believe themselves to carry.
effect on that practice (Titscher et al., 2000, p. 147). Fairclough (1995) describes the objectives of CDA as follows:

[CDA is used to] systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (p. 132-133).

Reflective of CDA’s connection to Althusser’s theories of ideology and the influence of the Frankfort School is the following statement on the work of critical discourse analysts:

Though in different terms, and from different points of view, most of us deal with power, dominance, hegemony, inequality, and the discursive processes of their enactment, concealment, legitimation, and reproduction. And many of us are interested in the subtle means by which text and talk manage the mind and manufacture consent, on the one hand, and articulate and sustain resistance and challenge, on the other (van Dijk, 1993a, p. 132).

These last two quotes from influential practitioners of CDA serve as a touchstone to briefly discuss the reasons I chose this methodology to explore the difficult labor of building an effective partnership between the university and its community schools.

I now link a discussion of the research leading to the dissertation back to the above quotes from Fairclough and van Dijk to highlight why CDA seemed most appropriate. First, I became interested in using a CDA-inspired approach because of the centrality accorded to issues of power and the more complex ways in which power is conceptualized. Power and language are inextricably linked. Power both shapes and is shaped by discourse. CDA looks at power “both in terms of asymmetries between participants in discourse events, and in terms of unequal capacity to control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 1). Indeed, according to Fairclough (1995) discursive practices are not just constructed in interaction with other
practices, but through struggle over power. This focus attracted me as I was concerned with the lack of attention paid to power and the privileged position that the university occupies within university outreach and engagement discourses, as well as the limited ways in which the community is able to shape the forms that the partnership assumes.

The second reason is its explicit link between the discursive construction of power and opacity—i.e. that which is hidden, or murky. I was concerned by the myriad absences present in university documents on outreach and engagement. However, Fairclough, in this particular quote, is not talking about opacity, or murkiness, in general; rather, he refers to unclear, unnoticed, causal relationships between the text (discursive practices) and its wider social and cultural practices, and that the occlusion of this relationship can perpetuate patterns of inequity or dominance. Third, this process does not move in a linear, single direction. The text both shapes and is shaped by the larger social practices in which it is embedded. Finally, the second quote (van Dijk, 1993a) deals more explicitly with the concept of hegemony and discursivity by stating that CDA's analytic focus is on the ways that a particular text on the one hand, both secures consent, thereby asserting its power over, while on the other hand, simultaneously brings forth resistance to that power. I can apply both these last points rather simply to my dissertation research by asking how the higher education policy statements (as texts) shape university outreach and engagement efforts in the community. And in turn, how does the community shape these efforts through its interactions with, including its resistance to, the university? These questions will be elaborated in later discussions.
Key Definitions

I have attempted to make a connection between the guiding assumptions of CDA and my own project as clearly as possible, and I have used some of the terms common to CDA-inspired work. At this point, I define key concepts used by Norman Fairclough to analyze text, power, and their discursive constructions and tie this discussion to my project. Much of the following is adapted by Fairclough’s (1995) efforts to lay out a “social theory of discourse” (p. 130) to delineate a methodological approach to analyzing texts that is informed by both language studies and the insights on discourse put forth by social theorists (e.g. Foucault, 1972; Fraser, 1989; Kristeva, 1980). While acknowledging the power of their contributions to theorizing the social nature of language and the ways it functions in society, he notes that these social theorists “have generally articulated such insights abstractly, without analysis of specific language texts” (131).32 Bridging this gap is Fairclough’s objective in the chapter from which much of my discussion is adapted. What follows is a brief elaboration of the guiding assumptions, and important terms, within his analytical framework: text, discourse, discursive event, discourse practice, order of discourse, genre, and interdiscursivity.

Text A common sense definition of text is an example of written language. A broader definition would allow a sample of spoken language to be described as text. However, an even broader conceptualization of text is necessary here. While acknowledging the danger of overextending the definition of the term, Fairclough (1995) maintains that “texts do not need to be linguistic at all; any cultural artifact—a picture, a building, a

32 See van Dijk’s chapter in the Handbook of discourse analysis for additional discussion on the need for more explicit, empirical analyses on specific instances of texts in various disciplines (e.g. media studies,

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piece of music—can be seen as a text” (p. 4). To support this argument, he points out that both spoken and written text are becoming increasingly multi-semiotic. Following Halliday’s (1978) theory on the multifunctionality of language, that a text is simultaneously ‘ideational,’ ‘interpersonal,’ and ‘textual,’ he argues that the:

Domains [of texts] are respectively the representation and signification of the world and experience, the constitution (establishment, reproduction, negotiation) of identities of participants and social and personal relationships between them, and the distribution of given versus new and foregrounded verses backgrounded information (in the widest sense) (p. 133).

A related concept is texture which refers to both the content, or information, present in the text as well as its form of presentation and organizational structure as these are important indicators of “sociocultural processes, relations, and change” (p. 4).

Discourse At its broadest level, the term refers very generally to spoken or written language. However, the word “discourse” is used instead of simply using “language” to convey the idea that the object of study, discourse, is approached in a “social-theoretically informed way,” and that language is considered to be a form of “social practice” (p. 131). It implies a shift in perspective about language, in that rather than considering it to be merely an instance of something spoken or written, discourse is conceived as being a form of action (e.g. following Austin, 1962) that is socially and historically situated. As such, it both shapes and is shaped by society. According to Fairclough this tension must remain at the fore of the analysis, indeed, the conscious focus on this tension is what sets CDA apart from analytic approaches informed by either structuralism or pragmatics. Building upon Halliday’s (1978) theory on the multifunctionality of language, Fairclough argues that language use is “always political science, cultural studies analyses, etc.). Like Fairclough, he argues for more explicit attention to
simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs” (p. 131). Finally, and important in understanding a key objective of CDA, language use, discourse, is constitutive in “both conventional, socially reproductive ways, and creative, socially transformative ways” (p. 131). The analysis of text is the first dimension of Fairclough’s three-dimensional framework of CDA.

Discursive event It is considerably easier to define “discursive event” now that we have a definition of discourse. The term simply refers to an example of language use that may be analyzed as text with a view toward language as defined as discourse above.

Discursive practices This term is sometimes used in place of discourse. The term refers to the ways “text producers and interpreters draw upon the socially available resources” within discourse production, consumption, and distribution. Analysis at the level of discursive practice is the second dimension of Fairclough’s (1995) analytical framework. It links the text to larger social, historical practices.

Order of discourse Fairclough adapted this concept from Foucault (1981). It refers to the “totality of discursive practices of an institution, and relations between them” (1995, p. 135). For example, the order of discourse within a school would include the different types of talk, i.e. discursive practices, found in the school room, the playground, the principal’s office, and the teachers’ lounge. The order of discourse includes an historical dimension. A discursive event “necessarily positions itself in relation to this historical legacy, selectively reproducing or transforming it” (p. 10-11). The discursive practice is the link between the text and the order of discourse as it is here that the producer (and consumer) of the text draws upon (and may in turn influence) the available resources.
within the order of discourse to construct (and interpret) the text. Orders of discourse, as well as the boundaries between them, are constantly shifting; yet, there are more or less obvious, accepted practices for the production, consumption, and distribution of texts and discursive practices. However, analyzing how orders of discourse are separate or separated, or how they might overlap, “may provide the key to conflicts and power struggles or social and cultural changes” (in Titschler et al., 2000, p. 149).

Genre  A genre represents a particular way of using language that draws upon socially agreed upon practices. For example, a job interview, a dissertation, a newspaper article, or a higher education policy statement generally conform to a particular style or language usage. Constructing a text within a particular genre includes attention to the features of the text (i.e. the “staging” of the text) as well as the ‘field’ of relevant social practices that influence the construction of the text—e.g. who are the participants (‘voice’), how is the relationship constructed amongst them (‘style’), and what can we learn from the texture of the text (‘mode’). Fairclough also uses the term discourse in the context of this discussion of genre instead of Halliday’s (1978) ‘field.’ As distinct from the earlier definition of discourse as a form of social practice, in this context it is a countable noun; it means a way “of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective” (p. 24). For example, higher education policy statements on outreach and engagement represent a particular genre constructed from a range of available features and social practices present in the discourses of higher education environments. However, constructing a text within a particular genre does not necessarily yield a predictable result. A critical discourse analyst would attend to the possible
ways that producers of text mix genres as an indication of changing social relations.\textsuperscript{34}  

\textit{Interdiscursivity} This refers to the ways that texts are produced drawing from diverse discourses and genres. The concept is borrowed from Bakhtin’s (1986) conceptualization of the term as well as Kristeva’s (1980) notion of \textit{intertextuality}. It foregrounds the notion that texts are heterogeneous in nature in that they are constructed from diverse genres and discourses. Following Kristeva, he argues that \textit{interdiscursivity} “highlights a historical view of texts as transforming the past—existing conventions, or prior texts—into the present” (p. 134). There is a connection between discourse, power, and hegemony. “The seemingly limitless possibilities of creativity in discursive practice suggested by the concept of interdiscursivity—an endless combination and recombination of genres and discourses—are in practice limited and constrained by the state of hegemonic relations and hegemonic struggle” (p. 134).

I conclude the discussion of key concepts within CDA by synthesizing it in a summary of Fairclough’s analytical framework. He approaches the study of discourse guided by the theory that within contemporary society, discourse is a dynamic, transformative force to both reproduce and affect cultural change. “Social structures.... are in dialectical relationship with social activities and that texts are a significant form of social activity” (Titschler \textit{et al.}, 2000, p. 152). This theoretical underpinning of CDA is operationalized by approaching the analysis of discourse through simultaneously

\textsuperscript{33} Discussion of genre has been adapted from Fairclough (1995), p. 13-15, who was building upon the work of Halliday, 1978. 

\textsuperscript{34} See Fairclough (1995), “Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: the universities”, as an example relevant to academia in general, and my project in particular. In this chapter, an earlier work re-published in this 1995 book, he analyzes the mixed genres and discursive practices found in university advertisements, position announcements, and CVs. He argues that these texts are both a reflection of and a contribution to the transformation of higher education discourses in Great Britain (pp. 130-166).  

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mapping “three separate forms of analysis onto one another: analysis of (spoken or written) language texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of discursive events as instances of social practice” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 2). Important within the methodological approach is to consider this three-dimensional framework of discursive event in relationship to the process of interdiscursivity. Finally, questions of conflict, power, and ideology must occupy a prominent position within analysis of each dimension, although its centrality is most important in the third dimension—that of discourse as a social practice.

**Bringing in Ethnography**

I use CDA to analyze different examples of text, yet each conforms to Fairclough’s definition of the term. In chapter four I analyze samples of written texts, three higher education policy statements 1) as concrete textual examples of socially constructed discourses, and 2) to consider their discursive relationship to the social and institutional practices that they are meant to inspire within the context of university outreach and engagement. In chapter five I use a similar analytical framework to look at “texts” more expansively—i.e. reading a conversation, a university town hall meeting, and an award banquet as texts.

Candlin (1995) stresses that CDA is a form of *praxis* that “constantly reengages theory and practice in a continuously self-informing process of inquiry” (p. x). He argues that ethnography is well-suited to support the theoretical underpinnings of CDA-inspired research and the accompanying desire on the part of practitioners for research findings to be applied to the resolution of social problems. Both Fairclough (1995) and van Dijk
(1999) point to the gap in the social sciences between social and cultural analysis and detailed analysis of text. According to van Dijk (2001):

There is still a gap between the more linguistically oriented studies of text and talk and the various approaches in the social. The first often ignore concepts and theories in sociology and political science on power abuse and inequality, whereas the second seldom engage in detailed discourse analysis. Integration of various approaches is therefore very important to arrive at a satisfactory form of multidisciplinary CDA. (p. 363)

Given CDA's foundation in linguistics, it is not surprising that much analysis is located in text (either written or transcribed conversations). However, as a critical methodology, it focuses on resistance to the normative effects of discourse and the possibility of creative action to change or transform these practices; and much of this resistance occurs in speech and social practice. Thus, critical analyses of text should ideally be contextualized within the everyday practices surrounding the text. Fowler (1996) urges critical linguists to be "professionally responsible" regarding the need to link analysis of text to social practice, "what are needed are exactly, full descriptions of context and its implications for beliefs and relationships" (p. 10).

I do not presume to assert that my study fills this gap, but it is the gap toward which it is oriented. My intent was to juxtapose a critical analysis of higher education policy statements with a reading of the social practices which they call forth because on the one hand, there is an increased frequency and tenor within higher education discourse regarding university outreach and engagement at the broader, more macro level. Whereas on the other hand, there are numerous barriers to such partnership relations between the university and its community. How can these barriers be explained given the

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35 The "discourse-historical method" used by Ruth Wodak and her contemporaries in Austria incorporates critical ethnography as a principal component of social and textual analysis. I have not drawn extensively
professed desires on the part of universities all over the U.S. to be 'effective and excellent' partners? Thus, a methodological approach was needed incorporating a vantage point that considers the relationship between the macro and micro. Critical Discourse Analysis, combined with ethnography, provides such an approach.

The Complexities of Ethnography

Because content and methodology are linked, I incorporated an exploration of the fundamental assumptions, or concepts, of the study in the research design. In this case, I wanted to consider the slipperiness of "community." What exactly does it mean? Hillery (1955) conducted a survey of the sociological literature on community, and found 94 different definitions of the term which shared only the loose meaning that "they all deal with people." Daniel Yon (1999) notes that although the idea of "community" figures prominently in multicultural education, it has not been adequately theorized in the field of education. Indeed, debate in other disciplines over the nature of "identity," "culture," and "community" have by and large not extended into education.

Reading and thinking about community was an important part of the methodology. Indeed, a central portion of my methodological argument is that the foundational assumptions of any research question, or action plan, need to be interrogated as part of the project (Spivak, 1993). Another quote from Spivak is helpful here; she posits that "the greatest gift of deconstruction [is] to question the authority of the investigating subject without paralyzing him, persistently transforming conditions of impossibility into possibility" (1987, p. 201). I apply this observation to thinking about the position of the researcher, the research project, and meanings of its foundation from her methodological discussions as much of her work is published in German.
assumptions. I refer to this process as an “ethnography of becoming” as a “tool to think with.”\textsuperscript{36} In sum, I attempt to translate some of the post-modern critiques of ethnography into practice and to suggest ways it can inform educational inquiry.

**Locating an Ethnography of Becoming within Post-modern Critiques**

Just what is required of ethnography today is by no means clear, and among its producers and consumers alike, restlessness is the norm. (Van Maanen, 1995, p 2)

Reading, analyzing, and writing about an ethnographic work is not the same thing as creating one, and few if any recipes for improved performance are likely to follow directly from textual analysis. (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 18)

“[those critiquing ethnography] suggest that we are in crisis because we have claimed an authority that does not exist, told truths that are only partial, and (mis)represented an Other that conceals the construction of the Other by an invisible anthropological self... Their solutions to these problems, however, do not include better ways of doing fieldwork, but different (better?) ways of writing ethnographies.” (Wolf, 1992, p 136)

Of (Post) Critical ethnography: Positioned within the incomplete rupture with philosophies of the subject and consciousness that undergird the continued dream of doing history's work, such an ethnography marks the limit of the saturated humanist logics of knowledge as cure within a philosophy of consciousness (Melville 1986). Here, caught in enabling aporias, we move toward ethnographic practices that are responsible to what is arising out of both becoming and passing away. (Lather, 2000a, p. 27-28)

Ethnography, a hybrid activity, thus appears as writing, as collecting, as modernist collage, as imperial power, as subversive critique. (Clifford, 1988, p. 13)

My desires to work toward an ethnography of becoming are informed by critiques of positivist science (e.g. Gough, 1998; Haraway, 1991, 1997; Harding, 1991; Pratt, 1992), deconstructive readings of community (Derrida in Caputo, 1997a ; Nancy, 1991; Phelan, 1994; Young, 1992), and the critiques of ethnography (e.g. Behar & Gordon 1995; Clifford, 1988, 1997; Lather, 2000; Marcus, 1994; Van Maanen, 1995; Visweswaran, 1994; Wolf, 1992). The extensive display of quotes above was included to

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\textsuperscript{36} This was a common expression used by folklorist, Amy Shuman in course discussions.

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situate my own desires within an emerging chorus of voices wondering how to extend the critique to practice.

**Ethnography: A Brief Historical Perspective**

Atkinson and Hammerseley (1994) point out that the origins of ethnography are unclear. However, the beginnings of its more modern forms seem to be attributed, at least in part, to such 'Father Figures' as Boas, Malinowski, and Radcliffe-Brown37 of the 1920's and 1930's.38 James Clifford (1988) argues that the norms of ethnographic practice were likely constructed in ways that contrasted the work of ethnographers from accounts of earlier travelers, missionaries, and administrators. He describes the process as follows: first came the authorizing image of the fieldworker as an objective, empirically minded observer—"trained in the latest analytic techniques and modes of scientific explanation" (p. 30) who followed established norms of the field; second, an instrumental view of language—neither fluency in the native language, nor extended time in the field were required; third, increased emphasis was accorded to the power of observation—on the part of the ethnographer, (partially) given to concern over mediated accounts given by "native informants;" fourth, theoretical constructs could assist the ethnographer in gaining understanding, which thus, reduced the need to understand/observe "everything;" fifth, studying parts, or themes, within a culture was sufficient; and finally, since only "parts" of a culture were studied, "an ethnographic present" could be constructed which would have been unnecessarily complicated by

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37 Where women anthropologists, such as Margaret Mead, figure in this history is briefly taken up by Behar (1995) in *Women writing culture*. James Clifford (1988) does feature Mead in his discussion of the development of "new" ethnography. Also see Graciela Hernandez's (1995) discussion on Zora Neal Hurston and experimental ethnography and Sally Cole's (1995) on Ruth Landes in the same volume.
long-term historical methods (p. 30-32). At this juncture it is useful to keep in mind Erickson's (1986) reminder that at the foundation of the natural sciences is the assumption that there is a "uniformity of nature" and this assumption was (has been) traditionally applied to the social sciences. The dispassionate, neutral ethnographer--through careful, ordered, and meticulous observation and writing --could uncover the "nature" of exotic cultures. Reconceptualizing this history will be taken up below in a discussion of an "ethnography of becoming."

**Deconstructing Ethnography**

Ideas about empirical evidence, objectivity, reason, truth, coherence, validity, measurement and fact no longer provide great comfort or direction. If such concepts are relative, not absolute, they are always contestable in whatever form they appear--although this is not to say that such concepts are thereby rendered irrelevant or unthinkable. (Van Maanen, 1995, 15)

Within this quote are several important critiques of knowledge/evidence offered by post-structuralism: that grand, explanatory "meta-narratives" hold diminished power to explain the world for us (Lyotard, 1997); that knowledge and power are discursive (Foucault, 1977); and that limits are not paralyzing (Lather, 2000a). Clifford (1988) muses, "If ethnography produces cultural interpretations through intense research experiences, how is unruly experience transformed into an authoritative account?...In analyzing this complex transformation one must bear in mind the fact that ethnography is, from beginning to end, enmeshed in writing" (p 25). Vigorous debate of the process, as well as product, of ethnography has been encouraged by increased recognition of issues related to the ethnographer's authority to represent the Other in straightforward scientific accounts (e.g., Fine, 1994; Smith, 1999; Villenas, 2000). In addition, growing

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38 Also see Atkinson and Hammersley (1994) for a discussion on ethnography's development within...
contentious political, cultural, and epistemological debate about the nature of truth, validity, objectivity, and science also helped to open the door to critiques of ethnography.

Patti Lather (1991) delineates three shifts in social inquiry practices pointing to the influence of deconstructive methods: emphasis on interpretation and description over general theorizing; emphasis on the “textual staging of knowledge;” and a focus on power relations within the social network of the research (p. 90). However, Deborah Britzman (2000) notes that within mainstream educational ethnography, most of the attention is still directed at the “ethno” and not the “graphy” (p. 27). Britzman asks the following insightful questions of educational ethnography in post-foundational times: “Are there ways to think the unthought of ethnographic narratives? That is, is there an ethnographic unconscious that marks its constitutive limits? Is there a knowledge that ethnography cannot tolerate knowing?” (p. 30).

**Important Constructs: Contact Zone, Travel, and Translation**

One way I have tried to operationalize post-modern critiques of ethnography is to incorporate the following concepts into my research practices: contact zone, travel, and translation. Mary Pratt’s (1992) notion of the Contact Zone, and the translational and trans-cultural practices found within them, are useful here. Pratt defines the Contact Zone as “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (p. 6). Her use of contact “aims to foreground the interactive, improvisational dimensions of colonial encounters so easily ignored or suppressed by diffusionist accounts of...
conquest and domination” (p. 6). Her project was to consider how texts produced by travelers, early scientists, and other explorers of the ‘periphery’ beyond Europe produced the “rest of the world” (p. 5) at key moments in Europe’s imperial moment.

While Pratt discusses colonial contexts much more dramatic than the one to which I refer, “Contact Zone” is helpful in thinking about the actual physical site of the community that the University has targeted for engagement. The concept allows a particular lens enabling different things to be seen and different questions to be asked as it foregrounds contact— that social life, community, identity, culture, etc. are formed in relation and interaction, and that correspondingly, contact and interaction occur in the context of unequal distribution of power. The geographical space surrounding the university, and the schools within it, can be thought of as “liminal” spaces: “In-between” spaces where ethnography, identity, community, and the discursive relationship between ‘academic knowledge’ and the ‘knowledge-on-the-ground’ in schools can be explored. The Contact Zone marks a messy site where messy texts can be constructed (Marcus, 1994).

Thinking of the university area as a Contact Zone links the project to a prominent critique of ethnography: “It seemed as if ethnography emerged more or less naturally from a simple stay in the field… If anything, ethnography looked like a rather pleasant, peaceful, and instructive form of travel writing” (Van Maanen, 1995, p. 1). Are school ethnographers, or other practitioners of educational inquiry, merely ‘tourists’ in schools who travel in and out of schools with little understanding of the historical context of the school community or its relationship with other communities—including the academic one of the university? Is attention paid to the more powerful role of the ethnographer
within educational research in terms of who has the authority to interpret and narrate? In *Routes* James Clifford (1997) argues for ‘contact approaches’ to ethnography that “presuppose not sociocultural wholes subsequently brought into relationship, but rather systems already constituted relationally, entering new relations through historical processes of displacements” (p. 7). Such an approach “clears the way for consideration of disputed histories, interruptions, interference, interaction…” (p. 25). Finally, the term also maintains the traces of remembrance of ethnography’s historical role in colonial projects—a legacy which ethnographers would do well to remember.

Translational issues are important in Contact Zones; indeed, translation is at the heart of issues of representation. Marcus and Fischer (1986) assert that the crisis of representation and the emergence of experimental forms of ethnography stem from a growing concern over the possibility of adequately describing, or translating as I would add, social reality post-WWII.

Culture as the object of ethnography is predicated on the notion that the difference of others can be fully consumed, assimilated to theory and description by cracking codes of structure, through better translation, and so on. The postmodern idea of radical or surplus difference counters the liberal concept with the idea that difference can never be fully consumed, conquered, or experienced, and thus any interpretive framework must remain partly unresolved in a more serious sense. (Marcus, 1994: 566)

Both *culture*, as the object of ethnography, and *translation*, as a process of ethnography, are being rethought in the post-modern moment.

**Developing an Ethnography of Becoming**

To conclude this general methodological discussion of ethnography, I outline some thoughts about an ethnography of becoming. I do not assert that this is a new methodology. Instead, I attempt to incorporate the critiques of ethnography into practice
to inform educational research. First, there is no “ethnographic present” (Clifford, 1988). An event takes place in a moment in time that is the result of complex intersection of individual and collective histories that are shaped by a network of interactions and power relations. Second, I hope to extend the discursive struggle over how to think, write, and speak about “identity,” “culture,” and “community” into education (Yon, 1999). In addition, I want to contribute to efforts to direct more attention to the “graphy” part of ethnography in education (Britzman, 2000). Just one reason for this is to apply learnings from such a project back to “ethno” part. As the very term implies, an ethnography of becoming is still in process. At this point I present an emergent view of the process in outline form to highlight the partial nature of my understanding of such an ethnography, as well as to suggest that its components are not yet cohesively integrated/related with each other. An ethnography of becoming:

- Considers both the object and the method of study to be in process of becoming and that the two influence each other’s development.
- Views culture, community, and identity as flowing and interconnected, while at the same time often contradictory and fragmented. Views power operating within this network as both subtle and obvious, productive, and that it disciplines rather than overtly controls (Foucault, 1980).
- Considers culture, community, and identity to be performed and to be shaped through performance. Thus, ethnographers need consider the self-inscription processes undertaken in such performances.
- Works both within and against “salvage ethnography” (Marcus, 1986) or what Stewart (1996) calls a “a discipline of correctives” looking for “cures” and
“solutions” (p. 24). Education is arguably a redemptive project itself. While it may be dangerous for practitioners of education ethnography to question its roots as a redemptive project, it is important to do so.

- Explores what it means to translate, as well as the tension between understanding translation and doing it at the same time.
- Incorporates a historical/genealogical view. Considering a community’s becoming does not begin in the present historical moment only.
- Recognizes the inherent “in-between-ness” of something as it becomes.

**Research Design: Multi-sited Ethnography**

**Fieldwork**

The ethnography portion of the study was multi-sited at an urban high school, the university, and at other sites in the community (e.g., Marcus, 1998; Ortner, 1997). I began my fieldwork at an urban high school, Guildford-Park High School, one of the university’s 13 designated partner schools in late October, 2000. I spent a minimum of two full days a week at the school through the end of the academic year in June 2001; however, I often spent three, four, or even five days a week at the school. At the school I was loosely described as a “programming intern” to much of the school faculty due to my close working relationship with the school’s programming coordinator, Susan. In this capacity I worked on a myriad of special initiatives begun by the school to raise the poor student achievement levels. However, to the insiders who knew more about the nature of the research project, the principal characterized my position as a “critical friend.” He explained this role in our first meeting to mean that Susan and I were to build a strong
working relationship in which we would feel comfortable enough to be honest, and
critical, with one another. I was to provide her feedback on the school’s effort, and she
was to provide me feedback on how the university could best partner with the school to
achieve those objectives identified as most crucial by the school. In sum, according to
the principal we were “to keep each other honest.”

I assisted with tasks such as gathering data to facilitate the work of school
committees working on Building Improvement Plans (BIP); completing the numerous,
tedious tasks to prepare for three administrations of the state proficiency exam;
developing an after-school tutoring and enrichment program; calling parents to inform
them of proficiency preparation options; and preparing documents for meetings,
presentations, and distribution. In addition, I began a pilot program to place
“instructional assistants” (university graduate students) with teachers and took a group of
students to visit a campus science lab. I visited classrooms to talk about the after-school
programs and called down students to talk about summer institute options at college
campuses around the state. I wandered all over the school, talking to anyone who would
talk to me. I attended staff meetings and committee meetings to assess the progress of
the BIP plans. In the Spring, I observed several classes a week during a six week period,
even briefly working as an ESL assistant in one. I participated in many conversations
with the school’s administration. I was trying to learn as much as I could about the
school and about the processes of building a sustainable university-school partnership. In
addition to doing dissertation research, I was to work toward the concrete objective of
laying a foundation for partnership links. In sum, I was truly a “participant observer.”

39 Pseudonyms are used for the school, community, and school student and staff.

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This academic year, 2001-2002, I have maintained a presence at the school—to continue to serve as a liaison as best I can between the school and the university and to gather data for another unrelated research project that involved the school.

The second ethnographic site was the university campus. On campus I worked on research projects related to the university’s school partnership initiatives for two years, from the fall of 1999 to Spring 2001. During that time I participated in numerous on-campus research meetings and conversations, and attended mini-conferences and town hall meetings related to outreach and engagement. I listened to presentations of faculty members engaged in community-based research and service both from this university and others, as well as to top university administrators speak on the university’s plans for community engagement in general and with the schools in particular. I monitored the presentation of information on the university school-partnership initiative in the local newspaper, school newspaper, and on university web sites. By this time I had spent four years as a doctoral student and considered myself to be reasonably acculturated into the “academic community.”

The third ethnographic site was in the community itself. I attended two sets of monthly meetings related to education in the university’s neighborhood schools. The first set was hosted by a committee of community members, university faculty and staff, and school-based educators. While I reviewed the committee’s minutes since its earliest meetings in 1997, I did not begin to attend until the Fall of 2000. By this time, attendance had shrunk to include primarily university staff members, supplemented by two or three school-based educators, and two or three community members. The second set of meetings was focused specifically on Guildford-Park High School and the schools
in its feeder pattern. Two of these schools intersect with the 13 university partner schools. However, attention was largely focused on the high school. Only two representatives from the university attended these meetings—myself and a faculty member who was a co-project investigator on the same research team. My role at both sets of meetings was primarily that of an observer and recorder.

During the year of fieldwork, I twice varied my presence at each of these two sites in order to juxtapose an immersion at each one. For example, in January, after an initial coding of my fieldnotes for emergent themes, I withdrew from the school, spending only one day there while spending four and one half days on the university campus. The following week I reversed this pattern. During the year I read through my extensive fieldnotes every two months in order to identify emergent themes that I would then use to focus the next segment of fieldwork. Throughout the year I engaged in an iterative cycle of reading recently collected data, identifying and sharpening emerging themes, recording questions and observations to pursue, and gathering more data, etc.

**Interviews**

I formally interviewed 18 people from across the school and the university. Interviewees included school teachers and administrators, graduate students, and university faculty and administrators. All interviewees from the university had some connection to the university’s school-partnership initiative. First drafts of the interview schedules were drawn up based on the project’s original research questions. However, they included 20 very broad questions. Concerned that interviewees would feel compelled to rush through the questions, or that they were so vague as to cause a "shut
I refined the interview schedule after re-examining my notes from an initial coding of fieldnote at the end of January. I was influenced by two related emergent themes: that university faculty and graduate students do not have a realistic sense of the demands that their research exact on schools and that the research questions/projects are perceived as nebulous and needlessly abstract. Based on my original research questions and my first two months in the field, I cut nearly half of my questions and organized them around three themes. I constructed questions that sought to encourage narrative accounts of academic labor and how these relate to the processes of partnership broadly around the following themes.

- **Representation/Understanding of the nature of academic labor within both schools and universities**

I chose this as an organizing framework because issues along this strand were appearing prominently. There seemed to be frustration about a lack of popular understanding, or under-appreciation, for their role/problems/efforts in the discourse of teachers. In addition, there was strong mistrust of the “work” of university faculty. Correspondingly, there also seemed to be a limited understanding of the nature of university work. My hypothesis was that these misunderstandings prominently figured as barriers to partnership efforts between universities and schools.

- **Disconnected between COEs and Schools**

This has always been a focus of my study given the level of mistrust expressed by high school teachers in previous research projects. I sought to explore specific interactions between school-based and university-based educators. I constructed open-ended

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40 Interviewees were asked a complementary, yet different set of questions depending on whether s/he was a member of the school or the university community.
questions because I wanted to allow for the possibility that information about other barriers beyond mistrust or misunderstanding might surface. In addition, I wanted to make space for the possibility of interviewees to describe success in partnership efforts. Finally, I also wanted to see if differences in terms of characterizing partnerships negatively or positively would arise in the talk of the faculty in contrast to that of the school-based educators.

- The Discourses of Community and Collaboration

A great portion of my project is informed by a desire to get at commonsense ‘foundational themes’ in schooling and teacher education—in particular, “community and collaboration.” Not only did I wish to question the meaning of these constructs, but I also wished to explore the possible dangers of allowing uninterrogated themes to operate under the surface, below the radar level of critical examination. In addition, by identifying these commonsense themes and conversations as “discourses” I hoped to get at an understanding of the ‘work that they do,’ including the ways that talk about community and collaboration circulate and the ways they are enacted and taken up by participants and the effects that are produced in their names.

Analysis

My analysis of the data is mixed in terms of its influence from a priori theorizing and grounded theory. I am clearly influenced by critical theories in education as well as post-structural critiques of education and social science research. These influenced the questions that I asked, the way I think about “community”, and the interpretations I made of the data. However, I tried as best I could to remain open to other ways of seeing in the field. I often checked my interpretations with my “critical friend” throughout the year.

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As might be expected, it was not uncommon for her to prod me "down to earth" or to laughingly say, "you're thinking like a university person." I also continually read through my data in order to incorporate what I was learning into subsequent fieldwork. My code book and the interview schedule came as much from my a priori questions as from the data that came from the field.

After withdrawing completely from the field, I transcribed all my interviews and put the transcripts and the fieldnotes into a qualitative research analysis software program, Nud*ist 4. To develop my codebook, in the summer of 2001 I read through a representative sample of fieldnotes and interview transcripts, taking notes about prominent themes. I then went back to read through the notes I had made based on my readings of the fieldnotes in January, March, and May, 2001. From these I devised a code book with eight themes: community; power; school-university connections (broadly speaking); partnership; mission of education; idealistic concepts in education; school context/culture; and university context/culture. The eight themes were broken down into sub-themes. I then coded all documents and input this information into Nud*ist.

Writing the Dissertation

This dissertation is a very different document than I had first imagined. It was no easy task to determine which paths to follow from the mountain of data collected during a year of intensive fieldwork. In many respects, it would have been easier to organize the data and analysis around the three themes outlined above informing the interview schedule or the eight themes that I used to code the data. In fact, this organizational schema is what I had envisioned, and it would have been an appropriate choice because both sets of themes were strongly influenced by data collected in the field rather than...
coming mainly from a-priori questions and theories. However, the dissertation is constructed around themes that appear the strongest when all the data are taken together—this includes the higher education policy statements, the fieldnotes, the interview transcripts, the theoretical treatments of community, and even the partnership literature which I approached as though it were data.

The quest for coherency in the policy statements when read against the school-partnership literature led to a focus on the ways that the messier questions of partnership and community may operate, or not, within a grid of power relations between the university and the community. A theoretical definition of 'community,' backed up by experiences in the field, that considers it as always in process and enacted through performance and interaction led to a juxtaposition of two community events to effect different ways of "seeing" (Wolcott, 1999) the disconnects between schools and universities. I offer a close reading of particular moments in time—both enacted in performance and inscribed in text, with a desire to move past an educational space mired in the discourses of hope and reform on one hand and the dreary discourse of crisis on the other. It is my hope that a case-study of this particular university, a prominent member of both the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Institutions and the Holmes Group, will provide insights that can be applied to other university-school partnership models. Such desires for transferability raise the issue of validity in qualitative research.

The Matter of Validity

Questions of validity within any research project are many. In this case the variables for assessing validity include, but are not limited to the following. The
dissertation is a multi-sited, ethnographic case study of one university's efforts. It is openly critical with an interest to contribute to the design of university research and engagement practices sensitive to difference and dissensus within community (Phelan, 1994; Readings, 1996; Young, 1992). It rejects the possibility of the university community serving as "neutral facilitators" in the quest for knowledge and improved social conditions. While it has an openly-ideological goal of interrupting the university's more privileged stance, it recognizes that the data were gathered, interpreted, and written by a researcher seeking access into the university community. The project is "profoundly skeptical of appearances and 'common sense'" (Lather, 1986a, p. 269). It is premised on a combination of a-priori and grounded theorizing. Finally, it was written by a researcher who has lost much of her idealistic hope of the impact of critical, complex work on educational practices. Determining the validity and trustworthiness of this project must incorporate this confessional list, and this makes it quite difficult to determine validity by traditional standards.

At the very least perhaps the delineation of this list has partially satisfied the conditions for "reflexive" validity. In her earlier work to establish criteria for trustworthiness of data and validity in "openly ideological research," Lather (1986b) writes, "Our best shot at present is to construct research designs that push us toward becoming vigorously self-aware" (p. 66). There has been much reflexivity, writing, and analysis of my methodological strategies, emerging interpretations, and limitations; however, much of this work remains in my research journal as I have consciously avoided the potential trap of endless self-analysis and reflexivity. I do not wish this dissertation to convert into a narrative of the "tell-all story of a beginning researcher's
journey,” or an example of “vanity ethnography” (Van Maanen, 1988). Traces of researcher reflexivity are evident in the ways the dissertation has been crafted, but it is likely that they are detectable principally to myself.

There are surely more questions revolving around “validity” than researcher reflexivity. My confessional list sketches an outline of the epistemological and ontological dilemmas that make determining the validity of a research project contentious. It is quite difficult to determine validity, despite the breezy assurance of the program committee of the 2002 Annual Meeting of AERA that educational researchers are collectively asserting the “value and validity” of our work. Lyotard (1984) asks, “where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?” (pp. xxiv-xxv) I doubt that it is possible to objectively assess how well the “truth” has been grasped when as Butler (1995) points out, power and validity are inextricably linked. Indeed, this is a special concern in this dissertation in that it incorporates a link between power and the practices of the university, and it challenges the position asserted in the Kellogg Documents (1999-2001) of the university as “neutral facilitators” in the resolution of the myriad epidemics of society’s ills.

This project began with critical, praxis-oriented objectives in terms of my possessing the [idealistic] desire to produce research that held the potential to inform the development of more critically-aware practice. In addition, my methodological concerns exceeded the concern of “what’s the best method to learn about X?” to include, within the dissertation’s objectives, a focus on what post-modern critiques of ethnography might look like in practice and what the value, or credibility, of such an approach might offer the field of education. Thus, I orient a brief discussion of validity around Lather’s
First, were data and theory triangulated? This was a central methodological strategy. Text and data from fieldwork were read together through the uses of CDA and ethnographic research strategies. The study was designed as multi-sited to specifically consider both the linkages and the disconnects among the sites, as well as those emerging across the findings and interpretations from the data. The "counterpatterns as well as convergences" in the data (Lather, 1986b, p. 67) were, in turn, read through a prism informed by both practitioner-based literature in education as well as a cross-section of theoretical and empirical work from a variety of disciplines. Finally, a priori questions and theoretical "hunches" were constantly checked through the data emerging from the ground, as well as in conversations with school-based educators and university faculty and graduate students.

This last point relates links to both construct validity and face validity. Lather (1986a, 1986b) extends construct validity past its history rooted in theory building (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955) to argue that praxis-oriented research "requires a ceaseless confrontation with the experiences of people in their daily lives in order to stymie the tendency to theoretical imposition which is inherent in theoretically guided empirical work" (p. 67). After almost three years of work related to university-school-community partnerships there has been so much blurring of "Head work, Field work, Text work" (McWilliams, Lather, & Morgan, 1997) that strategies to address construct and face

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41 The discussion here of four components of assessing validity within "openly ideological" work—which implicitly carries the objective of influencing critical practice, is largely drawn from two articles published by Patti Lather in 1986.

42 This is the title of a "A Textshop in New Feminist Research" written by Erica McWilliams, Patti Lather, and Wendy Morgan, with Kate McCoy, Wanda Pillow, and Elizabeth St. Pierre. Inspired by the metaphor of carnival as "a disruptive space in the social world," it is composed of video and book texts and explores the implications of post-structural theorizing of stability and its relationship to subjectivity, identity, categories of knowing, and issues of positionality and representation in research.
validity are nearly inseparably linked. The significant time spent in the schools supplemented to head work from texts, just as the head work from a variety of texts supplemented that of the field and thus, addressed conditions for construct validity. At times this network of text work and field work mapped nicely upon each other, whereas at other times, they were jarring in their differences.

Attempts to secure the conditions of face validity suggested by Kidder (1982), "Research with face validity provides a 'click of recognition' and a 'yes, of course' instead of 'yes, but experience'" (p. 56, in Lather, 1986a, p. 271) are a possible way to satisfy the conditions of construct validity as well. However, I doubt that it is possible to 'capture' that which Kidder describes given the complexity of issues in urban schools and the chasm between the perspectives in the university and in the schools. In addition, I found it rather difficult to map the experiences of the everyday worlds of schools onto the theoretical head work that I was doing. There is a definite separation in the field of education between those interested in practice and those interested in theory. I found it difficult to raise (critical and post-structural) theoretically-informed discussions with many administrators and teachers. Or in other cases, I found a climate not to be described as hostile to critical perspectives on education, rather it is more accurate to point out that a climate of urgency, a "tyranny of the urgent everyday,"43 impeded the possibility of school-based educators to have the emotional energy or time to reflect on

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43 This descriptor was adapted from conversations with Peter Demerath who recounted the address of an invited speaker at a beginning of the year meeting of faculty at a nearby school district. The speaker referred to the pressing, everyday demands of schools as the "Tyranny of the Every Day." I added "Urgent" to this descriptor based on my field work experiences in order to depict an image that more closely reflects what I saw and the extent of the impact of the "everyday" on the work of schools and their potential to effect any of the reforms called for by the school reform literature.
the kinds of questions that interested me, or even the larger, more meta questions
informing the matter at hand.

This quest for construct and face validity raises a relevant question for those
working within education: How can the discourses of practice and those circulating
around theoretical critiques of practice become more intelligible to each other? This is
not a hopeless question to discuss, but it is a difficult one. The difficult work of fostering
these kinds of conversations impacts the possibility of creating more critically-aware
practices, thereby effecting catalytic validity. Whether or not I am able to do this is a
career-long question and only begins, rather than ends, with this dissertation. I can not
claim that I have satisfied these four benchmarks of validity within praxis-oriented work,
but I have attempted to do so. Finally, the points of difficulty in this process that have
been mapped out in this very condensed discussion of validity bring up the recent
critiques of validity informed by post-structural extensions of validity in contemporary
research (e.g., Britzman, 1995; Lather, 1993, 1997; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000; Scheurich,
1996).
CHAPTER 4

WILLING COMMUNITY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
OF POLICY STATEMENTS ON THE FUTURE OF
STATE AND LAND-GRANT INSTITUTIONS

This chapter examines the network of connections between higher education policy and the institutional practices which the policy seeks to influence. An analysis of three policy statements recently prepared by the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities is presented. In chapter five this analysis is juxtaposed with ethnographic data collected from the beginning stages of a large, Midwestern research university’s efforts to be a more engaged member of its larger community. Given an interest in considering the policy statements with the work they do “on the ground,” and an interest in exploring the barriers to partnership, a critical discourse analytic method (CDA) is used to read the policy statements and ethnographic data together. CDA is helpful in this case because it concerns itself with the relationships between instances of concrete language use and the wider socio-cultural structures within which language is embedded.

This chapter is composed of two sections. The first section contains an analysis of three policy documents for both what is said and left unsaid regarding the difficult labor of building a stronger community partnership amidst difference, dissensus, and disconnections. The second section links the previous analysis of the policy
statements to higher education discourses on outreach and engagement in that contextual information about Midwestern University’s (MU) partnership effort is provided. The first part discusses a series of speeches delivered by the president regarding the university’s efforts to partner with constituents beyond its boundaries. The second part provides background information about Guilford-Park High School and its surrounding community. The objective is to put a critical reading of the policy documents in dialogue with ethnographic data. This section considers the implications of critical discourse analysis for conceptualizing and building communities within difference (Tierney, 1993). The dual objectives of the discussions within this chapter are to subject an idealized concept in education, “community,” to a close analysis within efforts on the part of the university to be more engaged in its surrounding community and to explore ways to link textual analysis and ethnography.

Willing Community

In this section I outline an analysis of three of the six policy statements released by the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities. “Willing Community” makes reference to at least two different meanings. The first is an assertion that the documents are “willing” community, in the sense of trying to ‘call forth,’ to create, a community—both on campus and between the university and its many surrounding communities. The second meaning refers to questions of whether the ‘community,’ in it multiple forms of existence, is “willing” to participate and the implications of the answers to this question for the partnership processes. This double sense of “willing community” informs my analysis of the texts.
The policy statements were released in a series by a committee charged with a specific task of examining the future of higher education and the mission of the land-grant university at the threshold of a "Different World." Representatives were drawn from many of the most respected institutions created through the two Morrill Acts in the 1800's. In addition, representatives from historically black colleges and Native American colleges, designated as land-grant institutions in 1994, also sat on the committee. However, the emphasis in the statements is more applicable to larger, research-intensive, land-grant universities. The committee met and the statements were written and released over a period of approximately four years. The documents are treated together, yet where relevant I make reference to an individual policy statement. The first five in the series are entitled Returning to our roots. The sixth Report is entitled Renewing the covenant. The three documents, and their subtitles, analyzed here are:

The Third Report: "The Engaged Institution" (EI)
The Fifth Report: "Toward a Coherent Campus Culture" (CCC)
The Sixth Report: "Learning, Discovery, and Engagement in a New Age and Different World" (LDE)

The Sixth Report is summative in nature, but the focus of the Third Report, outreach and engagement, is prominently featured as a source of promise that higher education can uniquely provide in a "new age and different world." Relevant to the work of colleges and schools of education is that the revitalization of the "original land grant mission" is prominently linked to the [future] promise of university partnerships to "revitalize K-12 education" (LDE, p. 13). In the fifth Report, the gaze is turned to the matter of forming a

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44 The Commission also provides a qualification that many of its observations are intended for application not only to land-grant institutions but to public research universities in general.
"coherent campus culture." While three documents are analyzed, two themes—outreach and engagement and creating a coherent campus culture, receive the most attention.

I use Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to guide the organization of the discussion in this chapter.

- Discussion of the analysis of the policy statements (text)
- Consideration of the production of the policy statements (discourse practice)
- Discussion of implications for links between text and practice (discursive events as social practice)

The relationships among each dimension are dynamic and do not occur in a linear fashion. There is surely overlap, and the discussion in this chapter goes back and forth between the first two dimensions of Fairclough's framework. More attention is devoted to the last dimension in the discussion of the ethnographic data in Chapter Five.

Analyzing the Text

The purposes of the texts are considered as well as how prominent themes are conveyed through both what is said and left unsaid. First, I consider the rhetorical strategies that the authors deploy to achieve their objectives. For what purposes has the text been crafted? What is the tone? What metaphors have been deployed to accomplish the texts' rhetorical strategies? I also outline four principal points the authors wish to make known. Second, the type of boundary work being performed in the texts is considered. This is an important question given the two different strategies of the policy statements; on the one hand, attention is focused on the re-construction of a "coherent campus culture" within campus boundaries, whereas on the other hand, the vantage point has been shifted to consider the university's role as an "engaged institution" in its larger...
local, national, and global communities. I argue that these two intended agendas must be considered in relationship to one another. Finally, I consider the absences present in the text. What has been left out? What might be the purposes of these absences? What effects might their absence have on university-school partnerships?

This section focuses on the strategies used by the authors to persuade the reading audience that they have correctly identified the most crucial challenges facing land-grant institutions, and as such, the value and power of their recommendations for the renewal of “the covenant between our institutions and the public they serve” (LDE, 9). They also wish to persuade readers that theirs is the most efficient way to redress the university’s challenges. In analyzing the texts’ rhetorical strategies, I focused primarily on the executive summaries of each statement as all key points of the entire report are presented in the same wording in both the preface and the full-body of the text. The one-page preface of each text is also included in the analysis. Quotations from the body of the text are occasionally used to support the discussion. I consider how the audience of the documents is constructed, the strategies used to present the text, and those themes which are most forcefully conveyed.

Rhetorical Strategies

The first point to consider is the audience. Whom do the authors wish to influence with their words? Although identifying the intended audience is important in any critical discourse analysis, it is especially pertinent here because the authors of the policy statements not only refer to them as “open letters,” as well as “reports,” but also because the preface of each is visually displayed as if it were a letter. The names, titles, and reproduced signatures of four executive committee members are positioned at the
bottom of the page as though this were an official correspondence. This stylistic mode of presentation is found in another series of reports belonging to the same genre: three reports issued by the Holmes Group, a committee of College of Education deans, on the state of teacher preparation, and its promise for the future (1986, 1990, 1995).

The three Holmes reports participate in a similar discourse of educational crisis that we can see in the Kellogg Commission Reports; the Holmes Groups were responding to reports such as *A nation at risk* (1983) declaring a state of crisis in the nation's schools and by extension, a crisis for the nation. The Holmes Group was answering not only these calls-to-crisis, but also to the relative absence of representatives of higher education in the identification and resolution of the crisis. Thus, they wrote with an intention to reassert the relevance of teacher education and colleges and schools of education in responding to the changing educational needs of the nation. The Holmes Group and the Kellogg Commission were convened for similar purposes and each addressed a similar audience in the form of a "letter" to the intended readers.

*An open letter to readers.*

A "letter" presumes a certain familiarity with the reader and is constructed with the intent of reaching an identified person(s). It contains information which the writer thinks to be important and pertinent to be shared. To a certain degree the writer will presume that the reader(s) shares a knowledge of the content and context. A document that is simultaneously referred to as both "report" and "letter" may function at both the public and the private level. This point can be shifted slightly by suggesting that the report/letter dual reference allows the documents to orient its rhetoric to the entire public and the much smaller population within university borders. The intended audience of
these three reports is primarily membership of the academic community, in which the authors include themselves. However, it is unclear whether the letters are primarily addressed to administrators or the entire university—or at least the non-student segments of the university. In addition, elements of the texts indicate a desire for the general public and legislators to be, at the very least, if not actual readers of the texts, aware of the discourses being constructed within them. This negotiation will be taken up again later.

This lack of clarity as to the addressees of the letters is aided by the frequent use of the pronoun “we” in the text, but with different referents. The first possible usage of “we” is to signify the authors of the texts:

We issue this final letter with some sense of urgency and concern. Our message is not private pleading from a special interest group, but rather the public expression of our conviction that if this nation is to succeed in a new century, the covenant between our institutions and the public they serve must be renewed and again made binding. (LDE, 9)

A second usage refers generally to the membership of the entire university or to the university as an institution:

One challenge we face is growing public frustration with what is seen to be our unresponsiveness. El, 9

The tension between on the one hand a multi-versity that fragments knowledge as it expands it and on the other the comprehensive mission of public and land-grant institutions has profoundly influenced our goals and governance. CCC, 10

Ours is a rich heritage of service to the nation. El, 9

[What] does the term “public university” mean today? The irreducible idea is that we exist to advance the common good. As a new millennium dawns, the fundamental challenge with which we struggle is how to reshape our historic agreement with the American people so that it fits the times that are emerging instead of the times that have passed. LDE, 9

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A third usage of the collective pronoun and the possessive adjective "our" is to refer to senior university administrators—the university sub-population inhabiting the Kellogg Commission.

Our faculty will understand that we have stood by them, encouraging new ways of interacting in order to push back the boundaries of what we know and how we apprehend it. CCC, 15

It’s difficult to get a grip on this institution, understand its points of leverage, and find a way through the academic maze. Even when we, as leaders of these institutions, understand clearly what we want to accomplish, we are sometimes not entirely clear on how to proceed. (EI, 20)

One of the possible effects of this ambiguous usage, that "we" and "our" have different referents, is to legitimize the authors’ words as expressing the normative view within universities on questions of culture, identity, and heritage within the institution. Consider the following excerpt from the Fifth Report devoted to the topic of renewing a "coherent campus culture:"

From the very beginning, our institutions have inhabited two worlds, lived with a foot in two ages. One foot was firmly planted in the best academic traditions of the past, the other more uncertainly planted in our own future, and the nation’s. The stresses of dealing with two worlds have affected the very culture of our institutions. By culture we mean the characteristic ways of thinking, behaving, and organizing ourselves that give shape and integrity to our institutions. We mean the unified inheritance of customs, values, and mores that shape our vision of the future as scholars and as institutions—the intellectual heritage that informs how we work and makes us part of a global community of learners. CCC, 9

If institutions seriously take up and work through the eight-part agenda defined here, our hope is that we will be able to reintegrate our institutions by creating new kinds of learning communities. CCC, 15

In each of the two excerpts "we" has two different referents: the authors of the text and the university as a dynamic and historically valuable institution. By self-identifying alternatively throughout the policy statements as general members of the university community as well as administrators who set the agenda for that community, the authors
are able to normalize a plan, an “eight-part agenda” which all of “us” in the university should support. Questions about the specifics of how to create “new kinds of learning communities” based on “our” “unified heritage” will be returned to below.

The strategic uses of an impassioned tone.

Rather than constructing a series of ‘reasonable’ arguments to secure the acceptance of their vision of higher education in a “New Age,” the style of the text seems to be to persuade though the use of a more passionate discourse than commonly found in academic discourses or policy statements. In fact, in the preface of the Fifth Report, the authors explicitly state, “This Commission’s only lever is the power of persuasion. We have neither the inclination nor the authority to impose change.” First, an impassioned rhetoric of persuasion, rather than argumentation or decree, could be a more effective strategy for a number of reasons. One is simply that the Commission has no authority to impress its vision into the hearts, minds, and practices present in the university, just as its members acknowledge. Second, a stronger rhetoric of authority could exacerbate tensions between faculty and administration, especially given that the Commission is pressing for a greater commitment on the part of the faculty to an institutional mission of service and outreach to the community on the one hand, while on the other advancing what could be a controversial conceptualization of the university community as a “coherent culture.” Third, a prominent subtext is the priority given to the role of the administration in revitalizing higher education. A strong, argumentative style would bring this emphasis on administrative power more visibly to the surface and in a more confrontational style. In addition, referring to the reports as “letters” is a less threatening
form of textual intervention and illustrates that the Commission may be taking deliberate steps not to be arrogant or imposing and therefore not inhibiting academic freedom.

A final reason for adopting a more emotional, plaintive tone than expected in an academic report is that it is a more effective persuasive technique given the purpose of the texts: to present a particular vision for the future, a mission; to persuade members of the university community to change the way it does business; and finally, to argue that effective administration is absolutely essential to guaranteeing the success of the Committee’s vision regarding the renewal of the land-grant commitment to the larger community. A passionate style creates a stronger sense of urgency as to the importance of these issues, and indeed, may prove more effective for creating a philosophical ‘buy-in’ of the Commission’s vision than if it were presented in a more dispassionate, logically argued expository style. In addition, the use of third-person plural “we” throughout the text effects a dialogue among community members. Importantly, it allows the authors to accomplish another strategy of depicting the university as dedicated to fulfilling the pressing need to respond to the changing forces of society. This more plaintive tone is in contrast to “perceptions” that “we” are “aloof,” “arrogant,” and “out of touch” (EI, 20).

The tone facilitates the assertion that university faculty and administrators inhabit the ‘real world’ rather than an ‘Ivory Tower.’ It fills another important lack—that of passion and urgency within the discourse of administration, a discourse which is absolutely essential to the administrators’ vision of the university’s mission and promise to a “New Age.” To convey this urgency, the authors construct a text employing words and metaphors that connote a simmering, brewing instability at the fault lines of society.45

45 All emphasis is mine in the following excerpts.
Our society and our institutions live in a world under reconstruction, staring daily into a cauldron of social, economic, cultural, technological, and institutional change. (CCC, 19)

...the changes we have already lived through are only harbingers of further upheavals to come. How, we must ask, with the many forces clamoring at the gates of the academy... (CCC, 20)

[Defining the university] will mean sorting our way through the welter of separate cultures. (CCC, 34)

Who says we need to do more? And what exactly is it that we need to do better? The answers to these questions lie in the many forces, internal and external, bearing down on us. (EI, 19)

At the end of World War II, America accounted for 50 percent of global GNP, and pretty much dominated the world’s science and technology. As the century draws to a close, we account for 25 percent of global GNP and our share of global R&D continues to decline. Should this decline in share continue, our ability to engage productively with our communities, states, and the nation and the world, will doubtless become an issue. (EI, 21)

The legitimacy of the public university’s claim as an instrument of progress in a democratic society hangs in the balance on the question of access—and not only on access, but quality and purpose. (LDE, 18)

While the intended readers of the Commission’s letters are university faculty and administrators, the text operates as though the general public were peering over the shoulders of their university neighbors. The texts repeatedly remind readers of the powerful impact of land-grant institutions on the vibrancy and success of the nation, more urgently than needed for an audience composed solely of the university community. The authors also repeatedly invoke the need to attend to public criticism of universities, although interestingly, quite often the descriptions of public critiques, while acknowledged as pertinent and based on valid concerns, are qualified as “perceptions” and “beliefs.” In addition, the responsibility of the public to support, as well as understand, the role and import of the university is strongly expressed. This lack of understanding on the part of the general public is held out as a barrier; members of the
university should do a better job in making the public aware not only of these confusing practices (e.g., tenure) but also aware of the contributions the university is poised to make. These strategies are perhaps not least of all employed as a mechanism to secure support for increased public funding.

**Four Principal Objectives of the Text**

So far I have touched on the rhetorical style of the text as well as the mode of address. As with all texts, their purpose is to persuade readers to accept a particular point of view and the mode of address is somewhat ambiguous allowing the authors to simultaneously claim membership in the intended community of readers as well as assert leadership roles in influencing the trajectory and the organizational structure of a revitalized land-grant institution. Both of these objectives are supported through invoking a tenor of impassioned urgency. At this point I briefly outline the following four principal points that the authors hope to persuade their readers to accept.

- Re-assert the relevance to society, and in the process, to revitalize the identity of the land-grant university
- Transmit a Call-to-Community to establish a “coherent campus culture” in a fragmented space
- Articulate the general public’s responsibility in the bargain that the university holds with society
- Outline an action plan for implementing the necessary changes that a renewed mission will require

An overlapping point in all of these objectives is to make clear the vitally essential role that effective administration will play.
Re-asserting the university’s identity through its relevance to society.

Perhaps the most overarching of the Committee’s objectives is to instill a sense of urgency to assert a renewed version of the “traditional” land-grant mission. Invoking “tradition” is an important strategy to fix the university’s contemporary mission, and the authors frequently appeal to the great tradition of service provided to the nation by the university. Readers are frequently reminded that the university’s heritage is tied to Justin Morrill’s democratizing vision of expanding access to higher learning, a legislative act signed by the Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln. Thus, at the very core of its institutional being, the land-grant university is tied to two senses of “service” to the nation state. Service is constructed relatively intangibly in terms of expanding access to higher education and producing an educated citizenry for the democracy as well as more concretely to the bottom-line, measurable production of basic research and knowledge that has contributed to the great material wealth and technological prowess of the nation. The authors assert that the university’s relevance to society, through service, is an essential ingredient of its identity.

The university’s identity can be re-established through the re-articulation of its relevance to society. The authors describe the identity of the “post-modern university” (CCC, p. 10) metaphorically as “mine-shafts” being dug ever deeper—that it is, often times, incoherently situated in an increasingly fragmented space. The land-grant university’s relevance to society is asserted through two complementary strategies. The first is to frequently remind the readers of the rich contributions it has made in the past, and the second is to continually assert that it is uniquely well-positioned to apply its
knowledge and expertise to respond to the forces “reshaping the world” in a “new era” (LDE, 9), indeed, this ability has always been a defining part of its identity.

Fixing the identity of the university is crucial to renewing its contract with the public; and the authors remind the readers that land-grant institutions are, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, the “public’s universities” (CCC, p. 11). The university’s ability to continue responding to the needs of society depends upon fixing its definition: “once again, what the university stands for, what it professes” (CCC, p. 11). In the statements relevancy and identity are inextricably linked. Expanding access to ‘useful’ knowledge is a key component of the historical identity of the land-grant university. Yet as society changes and becomes ever more complex, “we are overwhelmed by the surge of powerful new technologies—many the fruit of our own labs—that may erase the boundaries between the university and the nation, and indeed the world” (LDE, 9). Thus, to adapt to a changing society, land-grant universities, particularly large research-intensive ones, must re-center their identity.

Identity and relevancy are linked in the third report in which the case is made for redefining outreach and engagement by first celebrating the land-grant university’s great contributions to the nation. The authors next highlight the institution’s current confusing identity, its “mysterious sense of itself” (20). They present an outline of the changing societal forces that will exert pressure on the university and follow with a discussion of the resulting effects of this ‘state-of-possessing-a-confusing-identity’ on the ways the

46 Note that the process of defining the institution that the authors put forth is not what the university IS, but rather, what it represents and what it vows/says/does. This is pertinent to the authors’ proposal to adjust/shift the university’s traditional tri-partite mission from teaching, research, and service to learning, discovery, and engagement. According to the authors, the university’s definition depends upon its identity and what it does. It would be interesting to consider in greater detail how this way of coming up with a
general public perceives the university. The public's confusion threatens an adequate supply of funding. The challenges presented by a "mysterious" identity must be resolved before the university can extend its reach outward to "engage" with the community, and effective leadership is the key to resolving this dilemma. "If there is a way out of this conundrum, it may lie in a greater sensitivity to the organizational complexities and potentialities of large research universities" (CCC, 27).

**Fixing a coherent campus identity.**

The second objective, a call-to community to establish a "coherent culture," is nearly inseparably linked to the first objective. The link between relevancy and identity, and not just any kind of identity, but a unified, coherent one, can be seen in the devotion of an entire report to moving "Toward a Coherent Campus Culture." The authors argue that "large public universities must be rebalanced and reintegrated if they are to fulfill their public responsibilities in a new century" (CCC, 17). Thus, fixing relevancy and identity are connected. The commission calls upon its members to fix the university's identity by digging tunnels among the "mine-shafts" so as to re-center the university around a core, common set of institutional values and practices. These two processes are occurring simultaneously—on the one hand it is essential, according to the Commission, for the university to re-center itself, while on the other hand, the university community is forcefully encouraged not only to extend itself out past its boundaries into the community, but to qualitatively change the way it perceives and carries out this mission. Centering and 'fixing' itself inwardly is a key component of expanding outwardly.
What we have had difficulty understanding is that we have come to represent so many different things, to so many people, it is sometimes hard to explain who we are, what we stand for, and where our institutional center of gravity is to be found. (CCC, 10)

[Recognizing the value of administrative leadership] is made all the more difficult because today's university community no longer has a single “culture” but several. (CCC, 10)

Governance is ultimately a system of shared responsibilities and can, when effective, connect the fragmented pieces of the university into a coherent whole. (CCC, 12)

As our institutions stand on the threshold of a new century, issues of institutional coherence—of purpose, mission, and culture—present themselves with a new urgency. (CCC, 19)

Our universities thus daily manifest a deepening clash of cultures, in which central issues of aim and mission are not fully obscured, but require more effort to discern. (CCC, 21)

As we can see, the discourse of administration is fundamental to accomplishing the overwhelmingly important task of creating a more coherent campus culture.

The Fifth Report introduces its focus on fixing institutional coherence, facilitated by administrative leadership, through a comparison on its title page between the academy and the tragic images of ages-old cultural battles, war, genocide, and other atrocities. “If the 20th century represented the period in which knowledge was fractionalized and balkanized, the 21st century can become the era in which information coheres, in which knowledge itself is made more whole and integrated” (CCC, 2). The imagery is strong and supportive of the overall urgent tone of all three “letters.” In addition, the opening statement, restated in the subsequent text, taps into a nationalist discourse—that concerned with the proliferation of fragmentation amongst cultures within the nation (e.g., D'Souza, 1995; Schlesinger, 1993). This linkage is effective because a key component of the overall argument is the enormously great value of the university to the
nation state. A threat to the nation is fragmentation and dissensus, a threat to the university’s capacity to contribute to the health of the nation is fragmentation and dissensus. The two contexts reinforce each other.

The authors are concerned with the dangers of fragmentation, including that caused by faculty “brought to power” through “the flow of federal, corporate and other private-sector research grants” rather than because of “their place in a clearly defined structure of institutional mission and goals” (CCC, 24). These improperly powerful faculty members, of a “non-conformist culture,” advance particular “agendas” (CCC, 32). Also at fault are the non-leaders who simply engage in “hand-wrangling and well-intentioned calls for institutional unity” rather than taking action to affect it (CCC, 38).

To combat fragmentation the Commission largely devotes its attention to administrative leadership in developing a cohesive campus culture.

The answer to effecting a cohesive structure is to fix the university’s identity by creating coherent organizational structures and a unified mission. Yet there is a tension in the manner in which the commission recommends that it be done and of which the authors do not seem to be aware. The following is representative of this tension:

Our undertaking must be to connect the many manifestations of the university’s diversity into a culture that mediates and integrates that diversity and one that is consonant with the aims and mission of American public higher education. (CCC, 11)

It would seem that to grow a “coherent campus culture,” a public research university constantly “mediates” and “integrates” the diversity of its cultures as well as its being positioned in “two ages:” the “best academic traditions of the past” and the promise of the university’s future as well as the nation’s (CCC, 9). How can a coherent culture be formed when the mediation and integration along these two different
continuums is always constant? How can a constant process result in a fixed identity?

Importantly, what kind of mediation is likely when the “bewildering” (CCC, 32) cultural diversity is largely presented as a great challenge? What kind of mediation is likely between the university and its outside partners, particularly in poor rural and urban areas, when their contributions are scantily acknowledged? What kind of mediation among the university communities is likely when the projects of “non-conformists” are referred to as “agendas” and they themselves are characterized variously as “political activists, bohemians, artistic dilettantes, and aggressive intellectuals” (CCC, 22)?

What kind of “integration” among the disciplines is likely when those who subscribe to Bill Readings’ (1995) call for a thriving “community in dissensus” are described as “rowdy literary scholars intent on “deconstructing” everything in sight,” who are forcing “Historians and philosophers, accustomed for decades to quiet contemplation of their own fields” (CCC, 41) to share institutional space with them?

The public’s responsibility.

The third objective of the three reports is an effort to resolve the tension between the “public” and the “university” when thinking of land-grant universities, or what Abraham Lincoln called the “Public’s Universities.” What is the public’s responsibility in the compact between the university and society? An objective is to make it crystal clear to the public that their well-being, safety, and material comfort has in no small part been due to the achievements of large, research-intensive [land-grant] universities. In addition, it is possible to capitalize on “millennial discourses” in circulation to persuasively argue that universities are uniquely positioned to rise to the challenges of a

47 It is interesting to note that this exact quote appears twice within 10 pages of this Report.
new, still unknown age. However, to accomplish its promise the public must step in and secure a constant source of funding for higher education; thus, the public is urged to support a variety of state and federal legislative measures and changes in the tax structure that will provide the “Information Age Equivalent” of funding as that guaranteed by the original Land-Grant Acts in the 1800’s (CCC, 11-12).

The Commission addresses the audience in the form of an “open letter,” and while the members of the university community appear to be the primary addressees, other elements of the text speak directly to the public. Thus, another textual strategy may be to assure the public that their concerns are being acknowledged and receiving attention. The authors recognize that while some concerns may be rooted in “reality,” inaccurate public understanding of the university is also at fault. Thus, all members of the academy need to do a better job to make the university culture clearer outwardly—just as these texts attempt. A renewed focus on university administration, once again, is needed to attend to the concerns of the public and to make the role, mission, and contribution of the university more intelligible. Resolving the tension between teaching, research, and service is linked to securing greater support on the part of the public for the university. This link is crucial as state support for higher education has been gradually diminishing.

The authors refer to balancing the tri-partite mission of the university as “organizational excellence.” A focus on organizational excellence is offered to encourage a definition of individual intellectual accomplishment that is combined with a contribution to the institutional mission; faculty are encouraged to be both entrepreneurs and contributors to the institutional mission of the community in which s/he is embedded.

If there is a way out of this conundrum, it may lie in greater sensitivity to the organizational complexities and potentialities of large research universities....
We need new and fresh approaches capable of rebalancing our multiple purposes and of reintegrating the increasingly atomized academy while respecting the core functions and values that lie at the heart of its mission. (CCC, 27)

An action plan.

The first three objectives lead to the last, the proposal of an action plan. The action plan forges stronger links between land-grant universities and the public, promotes a model of faculty loyalty to both individual and institutional objectives, and advances an argument for more secure sources of funding. The four objectives, in their entirety, address public critiques that even public universities have become privatized, turning education into a commodity. To both answer these concerns and adapt to the changing needs of a new century, the authors suggest that the university community shift its conceptualization of the tri-partite mission of the university from teaching, research, and service to learning, discovery, and engagement. Each one of these reconfigured components of the traditional land-grant mission connotes a more dynamic relationship between the university and the multiple publics that it serves.

Coherence, Intelligibility, and “Difficult” Questions

The Commission gives a slight nod to society’s most pressing problems as being difficult and contentious. However, can the university community set about the work of revitalizing the university’s mission through learning, discovery, and engagement when its leaders seek a coherent set of values without attending sufficiently to the messy, political, divisive aspects of these questions? Will the institution be so set on devising coherent organizational structures that these highly difficult questions simply evade their barely-attempted grasp? In addition, by relying so heavily on invoking storied histories...
of the university’s rich historical traditions as a ‘unified’ culture, it may become easier for university leadership to dismiss a diversity of cultures, projects, and ways of thinking about scholarship as merely a ‘problem’ in need of being ‘fixed’ or managed.

I have posed a difficult set of questions, yet I acknowledge the fact that a certain amount of attention must be paid to the organizational and institutional questions that concern the Commission. As a former student administrative assistant in a college office, I can provide numerous testimonies to the following point: “To the non-academic, the university is a near-inscrutable entity governed by its own mysterious sense of itself” (E1, 20). In the schools I found it quite common that community members would like to take advantage of the proposed school-community partnership initiative, however, they often find the university nearly impossible to negotiate. Who exactly is in charge of outreach and engagement efforts? Why are different, yet complementary initiatives found in different colleges? Are they related? If I were a community member, I might wonder where and how exactly I could provide the input that the university purports to desire. Where would I turn for help with a public policy proposal, to find student volunteers for an after-school program, or assistance with a math curriculum unit, etc.? However, my concern is that administrative matters will be the only ones that receive serious consideration in the university’s resettlement of learning, discovery, and engagement.

The Commission’s attention to building a “coherent campus culture” is largely devoted to the organizational structure of the university, and by extension, the necessary role of administration in building and maintaining these structures. In particular, the reports focus on building a commitment to the institutional mission of the university.

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That this is also a critique coming from various members of the academic community is not
(advanced by the Commission) on the part of faculty, and correspondingly, to creating more flexible interdisciplinary structures. The Commission attempts to persuade its readers of the import of the following four interrelated propositions: 1) the application of knowledge/research to practical problems, and that its definition of university "engagement" relies on an interdisciplinary perspective because problems rarely fall within a single discipline; 2) stronger support of the university's institutional mission is needed by the faculty and as such, this will require a dual commitment to both the university's mission and a particular discipline and one's disciplinary peers; 3) the university reward system must be re-configured to adapt to these shifts in practices; and 4) this move toward interdisciplinary work (see #1) will "make sense" to the public and legislature, a crucial consideration given the university’s need for more funding. In addition, the move toward "intelligibility" will make more sense to potential public and private partners. While these are pertinent concerns, I ask again, where are the "difficult questions" here? These sorts of questions are absent from the Reports' interventions.

Fixing Identity and Coherence through the Discourse of Excellence

This portion of the discussion closes by linking the reports to two analytical points raised by Bill Readings' (1995) reading of the "post-historical" university: the shifting ties between the university and the nation and the work of a discourse of administration. First, Readings argued that the university has by and large lost its direct connection to the nation state—in no small part because the unit of the nation state has diminished in import as the transnational flows of people, ideas, and capital become stronger. In fact, the authors of the policy statements briefly acknowledge that the
discoveries of the university “may erase the boundaries between the university and the
nation, and indeed the world” (LDE, 9). They also raise the point that research is
increasingly “privatized” (LDE, 9). However, they consider these forces to be tensions
that must be negotiated, rather than destructive. In addition, the nation state is much too
important a connection for the authors not to use as forcefully as they can. Universities
are far too reliant on state and federal funding for that important connection to be
diminished. University-community (or university-school) partnerships are increasingly
viable ways to demonstrate this commitment on the part of the university—and an
important way to secure, in particular, funding for disciplines that largely do not benefit
from substantial, corporate grants to fund research and graduate student support. While
Readings draws a separation between the university-for-the-good-of-the-nation vs. the
corporate university too tightly, his analysis of the connection between the university and
the nation provides important insight as to why this connection continues to predominate
in higher education policy statements and reports. The university in service of the nation
is an “intelligible” argument to the public.

In addition to providing a persuasive argument for more secure funding sources,
the frequent invocation of the nation state allows the discourse of administration to
function more easily in the Commission’s Reports. This too can be connected to
Readings’ analysis and his naming of the “Discourse of Excellence.” He argues that this
administrative discourse is highly functional within the university because it facilitates
the incorporation of ideological diversity. As a language purely of administration, it has
no inherent content of its own, it is what Readings calls “deferentialized.” Thus, the
exact nature of the practices being undertaken can operate under the surface of words
such as “excellent,” “efficient,” and “effective.” This is the source of its flexibility; it is harder to raise ideological objections to practices cloaked behind words to which very few could object. According to Readings as this discourse gains strength on campuses, it allows a focus on administration, thereby enabling efforts to homogenize the culture of academia. A clear reliance on a discourse of administration can be seen in these Reports. However, in these “open letters,” there seems to be more content than that which Readings describes: they discuss the history, mission, and values of the institution—there appears to be some “meat on the bone,” a favorite critique expressed in the high school studied in this project. Importantly, the reports rely on a sense of crisis and passion to construct an argument for the development of a strong institutional sense of self.

The concerns the authors raise are important ones, however, the sense of urgency, combined with strong links to the nation, is so strong that anyone who disagrees with the greater emphasis on “organizational excellence” and the missionary practices constructed by the excellent administrators would have to do so very delicately. This rhetorical strategy, when read in combination with Readings’ analysis of the “Discourse of Excellence,” should encourage members of the academic community to pay attention to the ways in which its community is being shaped. My concern is two-fold. First, the community that the administrators desire is one which values homogeneity, and excludes difference and diversity. In addition, although the three reports talk of the talk of attending to “difficult” questions, they walk no further than the gate leading to the path. Messy, complicated, potentially divisive questions are not attended to sufficiently, and this absence is facilitated by a more passionately constructed discourse of administration.
Boundary Work

While not explicitly using the term “boundary work,” this chapter has explored “boundaries” when discussing the need to consider the simultaneous attempts within the university to draw a coherent campus community while pushing outward as a more engaged member of the larger community. At this point I revisit this discussion to consider how the juxtaposition of constructing two sets of borders—in the texts, may function as boundary-setting mechanisms—in practice. The only explicit boundary setting work the text does is to push for a “definition of community.” However, in this case, the definition refers to establishing a specific site/community within which to target university engagement. Other types of boundary work can be considered by looking at the following quote regarding university service to the community:

Inherited concepts emphasize a one-way process in which the university transfers its expertise to key constituents. (EI, 9)

If we take apart this statement, we can see multiple types of boundary work going on. The first is related to time. The new land-grant institution is moving beyond the constraints of time and tradition. Definitions of outreach and service were “inherited” from a different time. As the texts repeatedly assert, the university finds itself embedded in significantly different times and definitions of the university’s mission to society must change. A second instance is related to pushing against spatial notions of boundaries. This is expressed by the “one-way process” of the university’s contribution to society. It requires a qualitative shift to conceptualize, as well as to practice, a level of engagement with the community in which the transfer of knowledge, expertise, and action is a) not uni-directional, but rather a dynamic back and forth flow and b) implies mutual respect and valuation. The third instance of boundary work in the above quote is more subtle and
refers to pushing against boundaries of practice; and it is perhaps not a guiding force in
the thoughts of the texts' authors. Through reference to "key constituents" the authors
could possibly be referencing a different set of players. The "traditional" group of "key
constituents," namely corporate, military, and government interests is being expanded to
include underserved segments of society who have not benefited as greatly from the
successes of the nation's universities, and by and large, have not been accorded the same
representation in setting the agenda of the university's engagement. However, whether or
not group constituting the group of "key constituents" is being expanded to include
underserved populations is unclear.

Absences in the Text

Part of our "unlearning" project is to articulate that ideological formation—by
measuring silences, if necessary, into the object of investigation. (Spivak, 1988
p. 296)

There are three prominent absences in these reports on the future of state and
land-grant institutions; all are facilitated by the passionate quality of the text regarding
the mission of the university to be even more committed to solving society's most
complex problems. Ironically, all three absences in the texts are quite passionately
present in conversations within college campuses at this time. The first is the possibility
of the university community, in all its rich diversity, coalescing into a "coherent culture."
The need for this task is asserted in the texts, but not explicitly dealt with beyond an
argument for the construction of an organizational structure to facilitate it, nor is this call
for campus coherence presented as a contentious matter of debate. The second is the
feasibility of the university serving as a "neutral facilitator" as it applies itself to the
questions, problems, and dilemmas present in contemporary society. The authors point

out that many of society’s greatest problems are inherently controversial. However, the university must serve in the capacity as facilitator and holder of “academic neutrality” \textit{(EI, 45)}. The question of whether or not knowledge can ever be “neutral” is a matter of rancorous, divisive debate in spite of the documents’ confident assertion. However, any discussion of this point of contention is absent. We can perhaps presume that the authors take a dim view of this question from, for example, its characterization of literary theorists as “rowdy.” A third absence is explicit exploration of “community.” The authors urge readers to foster a coherent campus “community.” They refer frequently to the university’s role in building “learning communities.” They also encourage universities to define “community” in terms of where to target its engagement efforts. However, commonsense definitions of community are relied on as a desirable ideal, without attention given to its hidden meanings or the difficult processes by which community is formed. My project in this section of the chapter is not to take up explicit discussion of these three absences. Rather, I am suggesting that it is dangerous to ignore, or to conveniently underemphasize, them by subsuming these contentious debates within a discourse of administration.

\textbf{Applied Kellogg Commission: Midwestern University’s Emerging Community Partnership}

This section focuses on the third dimension of Fairclough’s CDA framework, linking discourse to social practice, by exploring possible connections between the Kellogg Documents and the “on the ground” context of Midwestern University’s efforts to build multiple partnerships with its larger communities. First, the connections are explored through a brief analysis of the partnership discourse constructed in the speech of
university administrators on the (future) relevancy of Midwestern University, a land-grant university, to its community in a “vexing ‘New Age.’” The discussion of the university’s efforts to re-new its identity and commitment to service in the community is drawn largely from a series of speeches presented by the university president around the state from August, 1999 to March, 2000. It is supplemented by data from a Town Hall Meeting held on campus in January, 2001 and meetings called by a university-sponsored education committee held at one of the 13 partner schools from 2000-2001. The analysis of university partnership discourse is followed by a presentation of pertinent information about Guilford-Park High School and its surrounding community. Both discussions are meant to link the analysis of the policy documents to that of the ethnographic data discussed in chapter five to support an overarching objective of linking higher education discourse to university practices.

Publicly Renewing the University’s Relevancy

“Excellence leads to excellence.” This was the pronouncement of the Dean of Undergraduates after detailing an initiative that feeds the six-part plan to “focus the University’s efforts to build one of the best research and teaching universities in the country.” The specific context was a discussion of a plan targeting specific departments that have been “identified as potential sources of excellence” to be recipients of additional funding. The place was a Town Hall Meeting, attended by more than 100 members of the university community—mostly undergraduates, regarding the newly-approved University Academic Plan held on January 30, 2001. The “selective investment” plan included what one audience member termed, “research-based programs,” and those maintaining high undergraduate enrollment such as chemistry,
history, and psychology. The practice of selective funding, incidentally, has even reached the notice of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2001), which compared the public spectacle of the award process to the Publishers Clearinghouse Sweepstake.

The president linked academic excellence to the university's ability to continue as a "catalyst" for solving the "vexing problems facing our society" in a speech to a professional association at a conference on "Partnerships for the Future," (speech, 9/14/99). The university's mission, as constructed in a series of public speeches, is largely contained within a model of service emphasizing the university's contribution to the state's capacity for success in a "competitive, knowledge-based, innovation-driven, global economy." The university's power to fulfill this service mission turns on its breaking into the academic ranks of the nation's top 10 public universities. However, in the same breath, the president links the university's potential to achieve this goal of academic excellence to its efforts "to better serve the needs of [the state's] communities." Service leads to excellence, excellence leads to service in that constructing an excellent public university depends on its interactions with the community "in bringing our considerable human, intellectual, and other resources to bear upon [the state's] challenges, and in partnership with others, to make a real difference in the community" (speech, 9/14/99).

Despite the university's tangible contributions and the recent evidence of increased academic excellence, its long-term potential to maintain its historic legacy of service to the state is in question. Indeed, in the texts the economic health of the state in a changing global system is intrinsically linked to the university's ability to become a preeminent, top-tier public university. The town-hall meeting, largely called to discuss
undergraduate-related initiatives, began with an extensive treatment of the ways that the state is lagging behind its neighbors in the New Economy. The strength of the state/community depends on the strength of the academic institution which requires more funding, higher tuition rates, and plans for a more coherent curriculum. Linking the fate of the institution to that of the state allows the president to make a case to secure public support to guarantee the requisite funding for the university to achieve its objectives.

A common rhetorical strategy in the texts is to remind the audience of the university’s link to the Land-Grant Acts of the 1800’s that had the dual purpose of serving the nation through developing economic resources and democratizing access to higher education. “The land-grant concept was a brilliant idea and deserves more credit for the success of our nation in the 20th century than most people realize” (speech, 11/17/99). The university’s ties to its nation run deep. In a speech to civic leaders in March, 2000 the president outlined the current challenges facing the large, land-grant university, or as he termed it, “The Morrill Dilemma” of the contemporary institution that has long supported the national project. The subtitle of the speech links the university’s mission to a vital, robust economy: “Can a Land-Grant University Help Forge a Knowledge-Based Economy?” The text first establishes Midwestern University’s traditional identity through its success in fulfilling its land-grant mission by reminding the audience of the legacy to the great nation of the Morrill Land Grant Acts and informing us of the current high-rankings the state maintains in various sectors of the economy. However, we are immediately told, “we can see some troubling signs on the horizon....For there is another kind of economy out there, one that’s unlike anything
most of us have ever known.” A discourse of crisis is an effective strategy to mobilize support for the university.

This ominous economic prophesy is followed by substantial discussion of the shifting requirements of a New Economy, the deteriorating levels of education of the state’s citizens, and finally, that its rankings in measures that may underpin the New Economy are abysmal. The crux of the president’s public argument is that the university contributed to the state’s earlier—but soon-to-be-outdated successes, and that contrary to critiques that it occupies an ivory tower isolated from the rest of society, MU can be a “catalyst” in the push toward revitalizing the state, its people, and its economic infrastructure for “global competitiveness.” The question of how to do this is referred to as the university’s “Morrill Dilemma.” This turn of phrase is effective in that informing its double sense is an urgent appeal to the general public, the legislature, and business community to step up to the plate to partner with the university to fulfill its promises. Indeed, the state’s economic well-being hinges on these partnerships between various sectors of society and the university and “each must bring something to the table” (speech, 3/9/200).

Unlike the romantic visions that invoke a past of the university as site of a disinterested pursuit of knowledge, the assertion is that the university’s identity has always been linked to the production of measurable ways to improve the nation’s economic health and the well-being of its citizens. The emerging areas of wealth in the country, e.g. Silicon Valley, Rt. 128, and the North Carolina Research Triangle, are all linked to nearby research institutions. To join these ranks the president outlines two recently undertaken competitive practices: the hiring of the newly desired faculty
prototype—the entrepreneurial intellectual and the establishment of a research park that facilitates alignments between university researchers and outside partners, start-up businesses, and "university spin-off enterprises." Next, members of a metropolitan business association are informed of measures undertaken in other states around the country to pave the way for their universities to lead a push forward in the New Economy. "It's a mad dash.... [and] We need bold action."

Like the Kellogg Commission documents, the speeches provide the president the opportunity to assert the university's identity through its relevance to society "on the verge of a new millennium" and to declare the importance of the public wrestling with the question, "what is the role of the land-grant universities today?" According to the president, "the defining characteristic of the university has been its vigilant responsiveness to the needs of the state and the nation it serves" (speech, 11/17/99). We can extend consideration of the president's identity-building work to observe that the manner in which the university positions itself in relation to the community is a key determining factor in the success of its partnerships. Will the university continue its "paternalistic posture"?

The university community seems to recognize that it can not adopt this posture with the more affluent members of society. However, it is important to understand, within the context of educational research, what posture the university is assuming in its efforts to apply "expertise" to chronic issues of neglect and inequity in urban and rural areas? In addition, in the Kellogg discussions the authors render the traditional, or "inherited," models of outreach and engagement problematic, referring to it as a "one-way process in which the university transfers its expertise to key constituents" (EI, p. 9).
The partnerships, and "key constituents," in these public expressions of relevance by MU's president largely relate to potential ways that the university can partner with business, scientific, and technology communities to produce tangible economic gains for the state's economy. School-university partnerships are mentioned, yet they receive precious little attention. For example, in one speech a principle objective is to detail three partnership objectives. However, the final one, "increased commitment to the...quality of k-12 education" receives only two sentences of attention because "time does not permit" the president to address this commitment to the community (9/16/99).

In another speech at a church, however, the president gives priority to the application of the university's resources and expertise to "the need to reinvigorate portions of urban America, and in the process, improve the lives of many citizens the new economy has left behind" (speech, 11/17/99). A revitalization plan, one that is about "becoming a good neighbor," is detailed, as is an effort "mobilize and coordinate our resources" to "the improvement of our K-12 education system, a subject at the very pinnacle of public interest and concern." The university's future is tied to the quality of the K-12 system, as is the future of America's prosperity. "Our success and theirs are closely intertwined." However, when the speeches are considered in their entirety with the university's efforts in the schools, the definition of "key constituent" does not seem to be expanding, nor might there be a significant interruption of the university's paternalistic posture of excellent expertise in its outreach, service—or in its more likely position, its research in urban schools.

The speeches allow the president to tackle several challenges identified by the Kellogg Commission. The first is making the contributions of the university, both
realized and potential, clear to the public. A passionate discourse of urgency facilitates an objective of re-asserting the university’s identity through complex definitions of service and contribution to society. That the public has a great deal of responsibility to ensuring the university’s future success is also made clear. Finally, the need for organizational changes, called forth in the Kellogg Reports, is asserted. The president acknowledged the difficulty of attending to society’s problems in that they do not fit into the neat disciplinary categories determining the practices of the university, “we see that they don’t fall neatly into academic boundaries. In fact, they often run up against silos, bunkers, and moats built decades ago to repel invaders.” The president confides,

It soon becomes apparent that our greatest potential strength also requires us to do things differently… In essence, we need to configure existing resources in a more effective manner. As part of this transformation, we must also do a better job of disseminating our research to public officials and other interested parties (speech, 9/14/99).

The university’s ability to convert barriers into possibilities depends on its being more efficient and communicating its research and expertise more intelligibly to the public.

What do these efforts at making intelligible the university’s actions, intents, and motivations look like? How is the university posturing itself in relation to citizens who have been “left behind” as the policy statements and the president identify such relationships as an important part of the university’s relevancy to society? How prepared is the university to participate in outreach efforts in the community when such efforts are largely subsumed into discourses of crisis and the New Economy? Have the identified potential barriers been converted into new opportunities? These questions will be considered in the next chapter. However, the discussion now turns to information about one of the university’s “partner” schools and its larger community. Within the following
historical treatment of the community’s development there are numerous points of
evidence illustrating ways that the community is “contained” by outsiders, including
members of the university. Ethnographic data relating to this last point from both the
university and the high school follows in the next chapter.

To Contain or to Transform a Reputation Through Partnership?

The Kellogg policy statements and the president’s public expressions of
Midwestern University’s commitment to public service offer evidence of two nested
higher education discourses. The first is the assertion of the overwhelming need to fix
the university’s identity as a “coherent campus culture” within its boundaries; while the
second discourse asserts the importance of outreach and engagement with communities
outside its borders in this identity-fixing process. There are hints of mistrust, suspicion,
and disengagement at the boundaries of these related discourses, and even more
concretely, at the boundaries between the MU campus and the “University
Neighborhoods” that the university has identified as a target area for its partnership
efforts.

There are boundaries of suspicion within this artificially constructed community.
For example, a prominent district administrator waved her hand dismissively when the
topic of the university’s educational initiative came up. “That’s interesting. It wants to
partner with the schools, right as it is becoming more and more an elitist institution that
will be out of reach for most of these kids.” In this comment she was referring to
university’s becoming more selective and concentrating on attracting top students, a
focus which some see as a betrayal of the land grant mission. Two others in the
community raised this same point about the sincerity of the university’s efforts to partner
with the schools to raise academic achievement in neighborhood schools when many of their students may later be denied admission. For many this boundary of suspicion is entrenched, with a history. One community leader retorted, "The University hasn’t done a damm thing for this community." Another jokingly told me that what the university DOES do is take its athletes. The history of the university’s past relationships with its surrounding communities and the extent to which it has largely adopted a patronizing posture that is so critiqued in the literature need to be attended to if sustainable, collaborative, and mutually beneficial ties between the university and its “partner schools” are to be developed. If not, then the promise of partnership will simply continue to remain largely a rhetorical one.
Coda: Weaving Together a Partnership Discussion

This coda is a postscript to chapter four and the questions posed regarding the effects of the university's assuming a patronizing posture in its engagement in disadvantaged urban communities. The coda, consisting of a narrative drawn from each site, serves multiple strategic purposes. First, it bridges the contextual information about the university's outreach and engagement activities and the Guilford-Park community with the ethnographic data in chapter five. Second, it bridges the policy analysis with that of the ethnographic data. This juxtaposition represents my efforts to work within the third dimension of Fairclough's critical discourse analytical framework. Third, I hope that the quotes, taken directly from interview transcripts, add vividness to the otherwise dry academic discourse of the dissertation text thus far. Finally, these "data texts," standing alone without analysis or discussion—apart from this introduction, interrupt my authorial position as the interpreter and narrator of the data. They were constructed from the spoken words of educators deeply invested in their work, and were included to foreground the issue that within the genre of academic discourse the practices being (abstractly) treated have concrete, tangible effects on everyday lived realities. In addition, the weaving together of a single narrative, from a multitude of voices, functions as a reminder of the non-innocence of the ethnographic author in that even when the "voices" of "Others" have been included, they have been constructed, crafted, and drawn together in complicated ways. The narratives are followed by contextual information about Guilford-Park High School and its surrounding community. The narratives and the contextual information set the stage for the ethnographic data discussed in chapter five.
School conversations about past relationships with Midwestern University, its College of Education, and the prospects of partnership.

"I think if it's going to be successful and be taken seriously, then in this case, Guilford-Park has to be the priority and if not, we don't need people coming in, doing this to get ahead in their field, either they're committed to the project and making a change, or they're not needed. Because if the sole purpose that they're really doing this is to get ahead in the field then chances are it's not going to succeed. I got another phone call from someone from the university asking for some information. You know, in all my years in the schools I've never had as much contact with MU as I've had this year. I don't know why, a change in philosophy maybe? Do they want to be more engaged? But quite frankly it's a pain. They don't have a clue what's going on here and what kind of demands they're making. But my biggest concern is how is this information going to be used? What's going to happen to it? And it's not possible to know who's calling, is it a class project, or is it a major research study? You can't tell from a phone call. It's like you're playing a ball game with two different sets of rules, or you're in such totally diverse environments that we just don't relate to each other at all. This is my gut feeling, it's probably that educators, whether they be professors or teachings in the k-12 setting, are territorial and so it's very hard to have someone come in who is supposed to be a "scholar" or an "academic" and work with you, and I think it's very hard for a person who's, you know, from a college setting, or university setting to go in and not be the authority, not be the expert. I just jumped into my first teaching job. It was just completely different from what I heard in the College of Education, it's almost like I could have taken everything I heard from the College of Education and thrown it out. It just didn't help me. And then I went back to get my master's. I found I was still hearing the same thing, so they still don't have a clue as to what's going on. As teachers we need to have an understanding of society and what's really going on, I mean what's really going on in urban America. We need to know what the kids are confronted with on a daily basis. We know that kids are absent for a variety of reasons, some of which are things that those of us who have had some good fortune could never anticipate. We're dealing with some serious issues here-- The kind that blow you away. The kind that are hard to prepare for. I think I see Colleges of Ed continuing to be very traditional, to be still...I think...they're continuing to work in isolation, not connecting in a real sense. From an ideal sense, from a symbolic measurement, I think there are things being put in place, but—meaning these outreach programs, but it's not about getting kids there."
Speaker II

University conversations about the culture of the university and its relationship to partnership practices.

“Both are massive, cumbersome, slow moving bureaucracies. And to get the two bureaucracies of the university and the school communities moving down the same track in a complementary or supportive, mutually supportive, way strikes me to be one of the largest issues that we have to confront because those cultures really shape what each is able to do. And those are not always compatible kinds of things. I think the culture of the university is much more individualistic, much more driven by “what’s in it for me?” And I think the school has a much broader civic sort of goal. At their best, both of them are about preparing people for life in a democracy. But I think we’ve lost track of that goal, in both public education and higher education, but I think the school is more there than higher ed. I don’t know that we know for sure why we want people to be educated in education. I’m not so clear, so sure, that in higher education we’re even clear that we’re really in the education business. We’re in the generation of knowledge business, and that’s a very different kind of thing than the education business. We’re not normally in it for the long haul. We’re in it for a very short haul. We have a grant-funded mentality around here. You get a grant for three years, or five years, and it’s considered a really long project. I did not understand in the beginning how important the sustainability thing was for the community, and it’s not just about the institution, that the community needs to have a sustained presence by real people, that there are individuals that they can count on. We have seen ourselves as above that, or, I don’t know, or as that’s not possible for us. And the places, the people who have made the most difference, are the people who have said, that little girl, that little boy are important to me and I’m going to have an ongoing relationship with that person. That’s a huge challenge; I mean, that just gets you right where you live. And that’s very hard to do because of the difference of what we’re used to in this culture. Too many people just come in and get the data that they need, move on, and the school gets nothing except for maybe a bad rap. It’s a constant struggle, almost invariably two steps back for every step forward, just because of the inertia of the institution in other directions. And there’s a history of mistrust and ill feeling, most of which is well founded in the community, that you’re always trying to overcome. Are our interests in line, really, with the neighborhood schools, in terms of the fact that they have issues which make it a very fertile ground for research? So are we really interested in fixing those issues or are we really interested in conducting research, getting tenure, writing articles, and doing presentations? See, I don’t think that the university sees it as a true partnership, and it’s not like the schools do either. They don’t have time to sit down and formulate a plan to partner with us, and they don’t have the inclination—it’s not that they don’t want to, it’s more, ‘I’ve got a thousand other things to do.’ And we’re removed from that setting; they’re in it all day. And so, ‘how can someone who’s not even in this setting come in and tell me how to do this better and I’m here every day all day?’ I wish we’d had a tape running of the student support meeting. I’d like to play it to faculty members so they could hear the realities these kids are dealing with. Some faculty members are just so divorced from the
schools—especially urban schools. And I know the demands of faculty life. It's important to publish! But it's not only about publishing. The very survival of the schools is at stake. And that means something. It means something about democracy! There is a hopelessness of lives [at the school].... I worry about teacher ed. At least here, the teacher educators, maybe they're just too conservative, but I worry about how they can prepare teachers to deal with urban schools. I've been working for eight years on this [establishing partnership programs] and there have been so few results. And this effects all of our efforts and our relationships with the schools. There's mistrust now. We say we're going to do something, but often there are no results. We have to come in and get a sense of needs, what the school needs. Too often we come in there and take. We're siphoning from the environment and what are we giving back?"

School and Community Context

Guilford-Park High School has a rich, storied history as the “focal point” in its local community (Butler et al.) and the larger metropolitan area. It “was the place to be in the city,” an academic and athletic powerhouse, in the 1950's - 70's according to one current staff member. At the time of the study six teachers and one assistant principal were GPHS graduates. For a number of reasons ranging from broad social and economic forces to school district policies, the school has come to grips with declining levels of student achievement and enrollment as it faces many of the problems endemic to urban communities today. In the fall of 2001 enrollment hovered around 700 in a beautiful, imposing building with a maximum capacity of 1,500. A task force of school staff and concerned community leaders began meeting in 1999 to support the school’s revitalization efforts. Revitalizing the school was linked to a larger project to renew the entire Guilford community. In addition, the school district implemented a comprehensive model of school reform in the high school and its feeder schools. One staff member active in the task force described the current moment as one filled with “a renewed spirit,” one possessing “vision.” He characterized both the school and its community as
having been neglected; suggesting that it was allowed to deteriorate due to lack of value placed upon its residents—but this sentiment is changing.

This community has been without a voice, and so now all of a sudden, the students are beginning to have a voice again, the community is beginning to have a voice again.

Guilford's history as a community is tied to the economic growth and development of its larger, surrounding metropolitan area. Its origin was a large tract of land awarded to prominent doctor in 1800 for his service to the country during the American Revolutionary War. Railroad tracks were laid through the community in the mid-1800's making the nearby growing capital city more accessible. The population of both the capital and Guilford expanded as railways brought new industries along its boundaries, and the community was primarily populated by workers employed by the latter. The advent of streetcars in the final decade of the 1800's facilitated travel and allowed downtown workers to reside in Guilford. Portions of the Guilford area were incorporated in 1908, and the community's area expanded in 1911 with the purchase of an adjoining tract of land. This purchase was significant in that the newly-purchased area eventually became a more cohesive site for community businesses, public buildings, and public space facilitating the development of a community identity (Lang, in Butler et al., 2000). Guilford was incorporated by the capital city in 1920, and the population which had been steadily increasing, expanded even more rapidly as this meant the extension of city services and the construction of desirable community amenities such as parks. A city-constructed park was even home to a minor league baseball team. The location and easy transportation, including a trolley terminus, attracted downtown employees to the
area. Popular public community centers enabled a space for community interaction and a communal sense of identity to develop (Butler et al., 2000).

Butler et al.'s (2000) historical survey of the community led to the discovery of little published material on the history of the community past 1940, thus, they turned to collecting the oral histories of three long-time residents for information on more recent community developments. The three narratives collected depict images of a strong, cohesive community that gradually gave way to diversity and the influx of "less prosperous residents" who did not hold community membership, both of which contributed to the community's decline. The three men interviewed theorized that the automobile and changing shopping patterns were significant factors. Guilford's main thoroughfare was once home to prosperous storefronts and served as a community gathering spot as vibrant then as other middle-class, largely white, areas of the city still are. Competition from a new mall and shopping district eroded the business center's economic health beginning in the mid-1950's. Neighborhoods of small houses were not constructed with automobiles in mind, and other places were more desirable to live than the older neighborhoods of Guilford. There was "an exchange of people" as residents moved out to the suburbs and an "influx of new faces" streamed in. A changing population and declining economic health "caused responsible and caring residents to leave Guilford and abdicate to people who do not care about the history or sense of [the ] community" (Butler et al., 2000). The oral histories of the long term residents point to the strength of commonsense definitions of community tied to homogeneity and the cohesiveness that this may engender.
Talk about the identity of the "new faces" is delicate and vague. One resident asserts that Guilford was a cohesive, homogenous place until approximately 15 years ago when the preponderance of rental properties in the southern portion of the community led to an artificial split between sections populated mainly by home-owners and that of renters whose dwellings are not maintained. The reader can presume that earlier residents were white, whereas much of those who moved in and who "do not care" are African-American or members of other minority groups. In the entire text recounting the historical development, the three narratives, and the brief discussion of findings, race or ethnicity is mentioned only twice—in the oral history of one resident. The text, either recorded verbatim from the teller or paraphrased by the authors, links the community's downfall to a heterogeneous population. It recounts a description of the community as having been "homogenous in the respect that it was white, middle class with a mix of blue and some white collar workers" and that "the increase in rentals and a change in demographics along racial and income lines has split the neighborhood" further contributing to economic decline.

The authors of the report, university students engaged in an inquiry project—learning about the research process as they progress, offer a short discussion of the findings that highlights the need for the creation of community spaces for residents to meet and for the renewal of community spirit and pride. There is no discussion of race, class, or economic tensions, nor the broader social structures and public policy which have contributed to the community's history. Recognizing and wrestling with these will impact any efforts to re-develop community feeling along the lines of the relatively

49 All quotes from this paragraph came from three oral histories collected from long-time, presumably 149
superficial recommendations of the findings. In addition, it is telling to consider that the strength of the community is linked to cohesive, stable, homogenous identities in the eyes of the long term residents. This is likely a strong perception held by many in revitalization efforts. It is one thing to subvert the influence of defining community through the possession of cohesive, homogeneous identities theoretically; it is another thing to consider how exactly to do this in every day lived experiences.

More explicit information about the “influx of new faces” is provided by a historical account offered from a community-based, re-development task force. Their account asserts that the Guilford “maintained its fine reputation until the 1950’s” when the community’s shopping district began to suffer. Residents from other parts of the city, including “one of the city's worst slums” were displaced by highway construction and urban renewal projects and re-settled in Guilford. Crime and the incidence of failed businesses increased. The task force asserts that the city’s public policy decisions, “whether intentional or unintentional,” exacerbated the decline of the Guilford community in the 1960’s and 70’s, by concentrating poverty in the community. According to its authors, the new residents did not feel the same sense of community as earlier residents and their displacement and re-settlement in this community encouraged an attitude of “Why should I care about this neighborhood if I am only going to be here for a short time?".

The high school grew along with its surrounding community. Its doors were opened in 1928, in the first of its three incarnations, as Park Junior High School. In 1942 the building, which had been expanded, began the academic year as Guilford-Park

white, middle-class residents of the Guilford community.

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Junior-Senior High School; its first senior class graduated in 1945. The building's name had also been expanded in recognition of its surrounding community—a naming pattern that is somewhat unique in the district. In the early 1960's the school became exclusively a high school; and the building was extensively renovated in the mid 1970's. It maintains the look and feel of an almost stereotypical American high school—a large brick building with sandstone accents, filled with classrooms of high ceilings, smoothly painted white walls, large blackboards, and polished wood floors. As of Fall, 2002, the enrollment was 704 students—of which nearly 33% are either special needs or ESL students. The soccer team, the city champion, is entirely composed of the "influx of [really] new faces"—recent immigrants from a war-torn East African country. The school has the largest incidence of teen-age pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases in the city. Substance abuse problems are common among students and their family members. In addition to pressing social needs, the school struggles with academic and testing demands that do not touch most suburban schools—or even many of the district's other high schools. As a significant percentage of the school population has not passed the 9th Grade Proficiency Exam, first administered in the 8th Grade, the teachers and counselors must accommodate the multiple demands of delivering the high school curriculum while making the significant preparations for two test administrations, each lasting two-weeks, and a third offering in late Spring just for seniors who have yet to pass.

Many of the schools feeding into the high school have been designated as being in "academic emergency." One school board member asserts that limited resources is not at the heart of the emergency, instead, the crisis comes from "neglect... They got this way because the administration and teachers union cooperated, 'by putting the least qualified
Goodburn, 2001, p. 8). In 1999 Guilford-Park High School was threatened with possible closure; yet even though many parents had long begun to send their children to other high schools, the Guilford community rallied to support its neglected school.

Guilford-Park High School was almost closed by the district in 1999. After intense community pressure, the superintendent of schools agreed to keep it open on the condition that “something different had to happen.” A new administrative staff was brought in and the entire school staff was reconstituted. Many teachers remained, but many new teachers were hired for the building.

In a call meant to stir the hearts and minds of community members, one leader invoked the school’s glory days by drawing an analogy between the high school’s Fight Song and the necessary battle to keep the schoolhouse doors open. Although he acknowledged that the community itself has contributed to the school’s decline by sending students to other high schools, he was incredulous that the school board could dare to close a school in the center of a community that has struggled to survive... In a community that has withstood the knockout blow of disinvestment... In a community that has brought under control the plague of crime and poverty... In a community that is in the middle of one of this nation’s greatest community revitalization projects (Townes, 1999).

A small restaurant, the Guilford Café, was recently opened as part of a sleek, newly-constructed office and social services complex at the southern entrance to the community.

When diners enter, they immediately see a huge lithograph of Guilford-Park High School. Alongside are blown-up photos of some ritual events of the community’s youth at the high school: the prom, high school graduation, and a basketball team in huddle
during a big game. Resilience, combined with a sense of pride that the community has brought itself back from the brink—as the above quote illustrates, are important qualities in this community. Their existence should be considered in tandem with the tendency of many outsiders to rely on a “narrative of community decline” to describe Guilford as a way to frame, or contain, their outreach efforts.

Townes (1999) suggests that previous threats to close the school had contributed to the understandable desire of parents to send their children to other high schools where no such threat existed. In addition, he argues that the district, with an eye toward closing the school, had drawn its boundary lines “like jigsaw puzzles that divide the community in such a way that community identity and unity are not obtainable nor compatible with the historical Guilford community.” The district’s proposal to re-locate an alternative high school in the building, furthermore, was a strategy to disinvest any remaining attachment to the school on the part of the community, thereby making it easier to close the school at some point in the future. The ability to send children to schools other than the neighborhood one is facilitated by the school district’s school-choice enrollment pattern. At present parents may enter their child’s name in a lottery to attend either alternative schools or other conventional schools through two different school-choice programs. Thus, it is not uncommon that students living within Guilford-Park boundaries to attend other high schools. Unlike suburban schools or urban districts that employ a neighborhood schools enrollment pattern, the high school can not depend on building a somewhat stable school community that comes from the expectation that its students will be drawn from its nearby neighborhoods.
The effects of the school-choice programs are compounded by high rates of student mobility during the school year. For example, during a two-month period in the beginning of the 2001 academic school year, 218 students enrolled in Guilford-Park High School and 219 students left the school. Counselors were constantly enrolling or withdrawing students. This same pattern was in evidence the year following my fieldwork. At the beginning of the school year in 2002, the high school staffed an enrollment committee in the cafeteria for the first several weeks of school to handle the expected influx of students who would enroll after the start of the new year. The charges against the school district made by those such as Townes and the school board member need attention not only to determine their validity, but also because the perception that they are true presents a significant barrier to any alliances forged to revitalize the school or community.

Juxtaposing the discussion and the oral histories provided by the [outsider] university students against that of Townes provides an interesting contrast. The first discussion only hints at racial and class issues in that discussion is very vague. It presents the community's decline in terms of a somewhat 'natural' progression of the economic and transportation system. Whereas Townes, while recognizing the community's own complicity, suggests a calculated, deliberate strategy on the part of outsiders to close the school as only the latest example of public policy that has proved detrimental to the community at large. The principal suggestion offered by the university student researchers, the resurgence of community social events to renew a sense of community identity, is not a sufficient strategy to redress the myriad issues Guilford and Guilford-Park High School face. Difficult questions about community and its
relationship to difference, dissension, and equity must be asked and wrestled with such as those put forth by Townes (1999).
CHAPTER 5

THEORIZING THE “DISCONNECTS” IN PARTNERSHIP: PERFORMANCES OF COMMUNITY, CULTURAL DIFFERENCE, AND SCHOOL RENEWAL

We are expanding our civic vocabulary to speak of “community” between the university and its surrounding neighborhoods. (community organizer, January 2001)

Neither power nor community can be understood except in light of the other. (Nisbet 1962, pg. vii)

Nearly a year of fieldwork yielded so many disconnects between the university and the school that when all the data was collected, I found it difficult to choose which of the many paths to follow. For instance, some prominent points of disconnection can be grouped around issues of mistrust of the university such as an initial refusal to allow university research on-site, a principal who told me “my kids will not be pimped for university research,” and the superintendent of schools stating that “university research may get in the way” of the work of schools. Some disconnects illustrate epistemological tensions. For example, at each site I found a context in which the importance of considering the emotional part of teaching and learning is acknowledged, yet this recognition is also simultaneously stifled from impacting the work of schools. There was also a pronounced theory/practice split. Incidences of the latter included frequent comments that university faculty were out of touch and the repeated privileging of
"real experience" over engagement with theory and research. Other examples of disconnects spoke to conditions stemming from either mistrust or simply disengagement. A case in point includes the attendance patterns at community education meetings; few university representatives attended community meetings at the high school and few community members or school-based educators attended those sponsored by the university. In addition, not a single teacher at the high school returned a survey on ways the "university could be of use" despite its administration in a manner that addressed the local history of inequitable power relations and mistrust between teachers and researchers.

Much of the ethnographic findings of the dissertation echoed those of my pilot projects. Thus, the overarching question that spurred the dissertation should be repeated here. *What are university and school-based educators to make of the conditions in which so many barriers to partnership exist—all within an environment that is strongly pushing the formation of university-community partnerships?* The literature review in chapter two focused on both the rosy promise of partnerships and the difficulty of building and sustaining them; particular attention was paid to the argument that partnership is hindered by cultural differences between schools and universities. The analysis in this chapter builds on this body of literature by arguing that barriers may accumulate all the more by not attending sufficiently to the hidden dangers of that which *precedes* and influences partnership efforts: the unquestioned and conflicting desires for "community" within education. I maintain that not critically examining the nebulous, seemingly benevolent qualities and definitions of "community," nor the quest for community at each site, influences the possibility of partnership between universities and schools.

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The Potential Dangers of “Community” within School-University Partnerships

This chapter presents ethnographic data supporting the argument that attention to the difficult work of building community must be an essential ingredient to building sustainable collaborative links between schools and universities. How community membership is determined at each site influences the relationships across the sites. The discussion is organized around two narratives; each re-presents an event that functioned as a ritual within community-building, or as I frame it, a community’s-becoming. The first narrative builds on the analysis of the higher education policy statements in its description of a university-sponsored “Gala” which aspired to celebrate partnership, bridge the chasm between the university and its 13 partner schools, and build an institutional sense of community in relation to its partnership mission. The second narrative is a description of the springtime award assembly at Guilford-Park High School. It is presented as an example of a community in the process of renewing itself as opposed to one that accepts identification as a community-in-decline ready to be the recipient of the university’s expertise. Each event illuminates clear points of disconnection between the emerging school community and the more traditional forces found within colleges of education that influence the university’s partnership efforts as well as the ways that it prepares teachers. Data from the ethnographic fieldwork and interviews are added to supplement the analysis of the performances. Thus, the narratives are not, in and of themselves, the exclusive focus of the analysis; rather each presents pertinent data and is a springboard from which to explore the community-building labor being undertaken at each site. Such community-building efforts, in turn, have repercussions on the
development of partnership between the sites. Methodological implications of studying performance as a cultural text within educational ethnography are also considered.

The performance narratives record just two events of many in which I observed or participated during a year of in-depth fieldwork, yet as examples of the “technologies” of community-building (Phelan, 1994) they provide a snapshot of the culture and the communities inhabiting each site. The performances are examples of everyday events, occurrences, activities, and interactions that when combined, contribute to the construction and sustenance of community. The narratives allow a consideration of the disconnects between schools and universities and the ways that unexamined definitions of community within and across the sites may get in the way of recognizing and attending to partnership barriers. For example, the presence of “difference” within community may be acknowledged; however, it is not necessarily interrogated beyond a superficial, checklist discussion during the process of constructing school-university-community partnerships. Other nuances of prevailing definitions of community, potentially dangerous in the opaque work they perform, have been raised in the literature review and the critical discourse analysis of the policy statements; they include: How might commonsense understandings of “community” predicated on an idea of unity, coherence, 

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50 As discussed in chapter two, no firm definition of “partnership” exists, nor is there a clear sense of its specific forms. In addition, it is quite difficult to effect a partnership rooted in egalitarianism given the complex power relations within the school-university partnership nexus. These conditions partially inform my focus on “community” within partnership as the relative health of the community(ies) at each site, the efforts undertaken to sustain it, and the processes of building “communal” ties are key components of partnership. In addition, the term “community” was often invoked by participants in the partnership initiatives to describe their efforts. There is a rich body of work offering critiques of “community” which has informed my analysis of partnership barriers. I use “partnership” to signify collaborative ties between the two sites—ties that are identified as such by members of each site and that may have a range of objectives from collaborative efforts to develop and implement curriculum, collaborative inquiry projects, and the exchange of talents, e.g., teacher-led workshops or university students as tutors or mentors, etc. I also consider “partnerships” between schools and universities to provide more ideal conditions within
and intelligibility—and the power relations that they imply, obstruct effective university-school partnerships? How do unexamined definitions of “community” present barriers to the larger issue of how teachers are prepared for urban classrooms? These questions frame my analysis of the following two narratives—an analysis that has the objective of suggesting different ways to think about the disconnects between schools and universities, especially as they impact the partnership process.

**An Institutional Performance of Community: “Celebrating the Public Schools”**

In late January, 2001 the university sponsored an award banquet to honor its newly-begun educational partnership initiative with 13 schools in its surrounding neighborhoods. The “Celebration of the Public Schools which Serve the University Neighborhoods,” the event’s official title, was planned and organized by the University Neighborhoods Education Association (UNEA), a committee composed of community members, educators, and university representatives working to bring university resources to bear to support the educational goals of the schools in the neighborhoods surrounding the university. The stated goals of the “Gala,” as the event later became known, were to “welcome the new dean of the College of Education, to build community, and to celebrate the accomplishments of the UNEA schools.” Invitation letters had been mailed to each of the 13 Neighborhood schools, and the public school district administrator who was the liaison to the committee and the university had conveyed the importance of attending this event to the principals of the schools identified by the university as “partners.”

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which to prepare teachers (see e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1994; Goodlad, 1993). Thus, in this project I include implications for teacher education within my discussion of partnerships.

51 Emphasis is mine.

52 Thus, in just the introductory paragraph of the performance narrative there emerges a problem in the application of my definition of “partnership” to describe the university’s efforts. The university has
Performance Narrative #1: The Partnership "Gala" as "Required Opportunity"

The Celebration was scheduled from 4:30 to 6 pm at a small, recently built conference center just off campus. Guests were greeted at an official welcoming table and provided name tags and a packet of information about the university's educational initiatives in the neighborhoods. High School greeters ushered guests, the preponderance of whom were from the university, into the auditorium just before 5 pm. The lights were dim and the mood pleasant; a young high school-student pianist played soothing tones as pictures of the neighborhood schools were projected upon a large screen at the front of the room. A banquet table of hot appetizers stood off to the side.

Mr. Douglas, sporting the requisite red carnation provided for the 13 principals, shot me a look as he sat down and asked the school's programming coordinator, Susan, and me, "How long do you think this "required opportunity" is going to last?" We laughed at his glib tone, but also at the kernel of truth in the oxymoronic sentiment of the remark. Mr. Douglas looked around the room shaking his head, "yesterday was busy. But today was even more hectic. I mean you could FEEL it." Susan nodded. Today was the second day of the new semester. As the moment of the evening's presentations approached, I calculated that by now both Susan and Mr. Douglas were beginning the 10th hour of their work day. Susan had a 40 minute drive home waiting for her, while Mr. Douglas was due to return to the school to supervise a varsity basketball game. Mr. Douglas leaned over and asked a woman wearing a red carnation, "was yesterday's meeting on your calendar? Because it sure wasn't on mine." Her eyes widened as she shook her head, "mine either. Her secretary called me and told me I better get down there, so I called you." "Yeah, thanks for that by the way." They compared notes on the craziness of the start of a new semester and Mr. Douglas joked once more about the "required opportunity," the second summoning of the schools to "partner" with the university in as many days.

The evening's event, which later came to be known as a "Gala," was a "required opportunity" dictated from the local school district's newly appointed Director of Accountability. The three of us, all occupying various places of being 'in the know,' or so we had thought, had anticipated the Gala to be a small event in which a few speakers would make remarks, a couple of awards would be given, but time for connecting, reconnecting, talking, and learning about concrete partnership opportunities would be included. Apparently, we weren't in the know enough because the event did indeed turn into a "gala"—a "gala" of sorts with little time for what we had anticipated.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a gala is "a festive celebration; especially: a public entertainment marking a special occasion." Stakeholders populating the sea of tables included school principals; university dignitaries such as the President, the Dean of the College of Education and the Director of the university's P-16 Initiative; university faculty and grad students engaged in

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identified the "partner" schools—just as it alone has demarcated a geographical space to label as the "University neighborhoods." This point will be picked up in the later discussion.
outreach, service, or research in the community; community representatives; and several different representatives from the local school district, including a school board member and the vice-president of the local teachers union. However, in spite of the gathering’s title, it turned out to be a celebration not of a particular occasion or success—as the term connotes, but of the university’s expertise, peppered with a healthy dose of acknowledgement of past problems in the university’s attempts to be an effective partner. It was a Gala to celebrate the very much still-in-process development of a university-community partnership.

The program began just a few minutes past the scheduled time. The president of the University District Education Committee, a teacher in one of the 13 partner schools, expressively delivered a speech that set the stage for all subsequent remarks. As she discussed the historical relationship between the university and its surrounding neighborhoods, photos taken of the university, the community, and nearby schools were cast upon a giant screen behind her. She invoked the metaphor of the double-faced god, Janus, to posit that the University finds itself embarking on a new relationship with its surrounding community in which sustenance can be drawn from the rich traditions of their mutual influence on each other. Their relationship would do well to follow the inspiration of the god of January, who looks with one face toward the past and another toward the future. As she highlighted the history of the UNEA committee, she emphasized the newness of the term, “community,” stating that the committee’s parlance had included words such as “partnership,” “using talents” and “commonsense,” but that now “we” are “expanding our civic vocabulary” to speak of “community” between the university and its surrounding neighborhoods. After introducing the new Bridge Builder Award, the president’s last order of business was to “welcome new leadership.” Five of the thirteen schools had a new principal this year. She asked them, and the dean to stand up to be welcomed. Then the remaining principals were asked to stand. Mr. Douglas looked around and smiled, but he did not stand.

The director of the university’s P-16 educational initiative was the next speaker, and he was the first to refer to the night’s event as a “gala.” He also imparted historical information about the trajectory of university’s engagement in its current form. It may seem odd that four years constitutes a “history,” yet in a milieu in which sustained engagement beyond the university’s border is an enormous feat, four years is indeed historic. And its current form is indeed noteworthy in that the university’s commitment to P-12 education, on both a state and local level, is one of five academic goals outlined by the university in its new Five Year Academic Plan. He told the crowd:

The Academic Plan, recently approved, reaffirms the university’s traditional mission as a Land Grant Institution. The “Learning Bridge” began in UNEA four years ago but lacked sustained resources and commitment... The schools have benefited from the research, work, and resources from the university. Midwestern University, after all, is a Research I institution, it can bring its expertise to solve community problems. (P-16 Director)
He then outlined specific examples of partnering in the neighborhood schools. “However, the university is too large. There is a gulf between service learning and volunteering.” Heads were nodding in agreement, and “we want to fight the come and go tendencies of MU projects in the past.” A noticeable chorus of “UH-HUHS” quietly erupted throughout the room upon that last remark. 53

“Gala,” was picked up by the next speaker on the program, the Superintendent of the public school system. “Yes, that’s a good word. It’s a gala to celebrate and honor partnership. We are grateful that MU has decided to work with us.” I thought this an interesting comment to make in light of a reported comment she had made for a different audience about university research “getting in the way” of the work of schools. The president of MU, whose very appearance at the “Gala,” was a surprise, also invoked the term. He offered celebration for the new dean whose nomination, he informed us, answered his insistence on hiring a candidate with “a vision for the college of education to make it nationally recognized for its expertise in urban education and urban partnerships.” Although he too used the new vocabulary-du-jour, he concluded his presentation by pointing out that he hoped that “next year we will not just be celebrating people, but also celebrating successes.”

While there was much celebration of the university’s current commitment to partnership as well as the lessons it had learned from past mistakes, one speaker, and only one speaker, took up a different theme. The vice-president of the City Teachers Association stated that her purpose at the night’s Gala was to remind the group of the hard work of the teachers in the success of the neighborhood schools and the central role that teachers should occupy in the processes of partnership. This was the only speaker to point out the important role of the every day efforts of teachers in the partner schools. This point did not escape the notice of two other graduate students who later asked me whether I had noticed this. The newly appointed Dean of the College of Education spoke next. As she remembered her earlier days of teaching in the university neighborhood schools she too highlighted the difficult nature of university faculty working in the schools, “This is important work. It’s hard work. It is hard for faculty and the university to roll up their sleeves and go to work in the schools with their colleagues.”

Special awards were given to three members of the community with ties to its schools. One was the dean who subsumed her “thank you” comments into a general speech about the work of the university. The remaining two award winners have longer ties to the university neighborhoods than the dean, and there was an interesting contrast in their acceptance speeches. One honoree, a white woman who had grown up very close to the university, a former school board member and city councilwoman, highlighted ways the university had touched her daily life, “I could hear the campus bells in the summer when the windows were

53 The director’s assertion about the benefits the schools have derived from the university—and the response from the audience, should be held in tension with the second narrative and the subsequent discussion to consider alternative perceptions of the university and its contributions to the schools. It is also instructive to compare the director’s words to the material in chapter four: Townsend’s charge that the community has been deliberately neglected and the data conversations presented in the coda at the end of chapter four.
open.” She concluded her remarks by thanking the university members “for your expertise and volunteering in the schools.” In contrast, the other speaker, an African-American man accepting the award for a family member unable to attend, narrated a story of individual achievement—that the honoree had been a walk-on to the football team because he had not been recruited by the university despite his being a neighborhood kid. His own persistence had enabled him to make a mark on the university. In addition, in a second contrast, he spoke of the importance of considering how kids learn from each other on the streets and in the playgrounds, as opposed to from the work of the schools, and by extension, the work of the university in the schools.

The speakers, eloquent though they were, continued and continued, on and on. Or so it seemed since everyone at my table had been engaged in some kind of “school work” since well before 7 am that morning. It was 6 pm, and two more speakers remained, both from the university. As the first of the two got up, I saw Mr. Douglas shoot a quick look to Susan, whose facial expression changed in recognition. “He’s going to keep it short” was what I imagined they were thinking. No such luck as each presented their prepared remarks. The director of the university’s partnership office regaled the audience with a celebratory reading of remarks prepared by audience members about things to celebrate in the schools. Funny, most of the things to be celebrated all revolved around initiatives related to the university, e.g., tutoring, mentoring, and other such programs. He was a cheerleader, and while this is precisely what many educators who toil long and hard may need, it can sound forced when the university has not provided much in the way of tangible assistance. In addition, there was most definitely not a celebration of the actual achievements or efforts of the schools themselves. The program ended at 6:20.

I hesitated to look at my tablemates. “Two days in a row. Now I have to go back to school for the basketball game. I came in early today to get things done, but everyone wants me. It was really hard to get away. It’s good, but.....” “Do you think this is good?” I pointedly asked. “Well, I guess it depends. Yesterday could have been good, but I felt it was redundant because I had heard it before. And it was the first day of the semester. And this, this was just a celebration,” he said dismissively. “Is there any value in celebrating?” He thought for a moment. “Sure, but I could have sent a representative.” Nodding to the other principal at the table, “I was talking to her and she said she had a hard time pulling herself away too. The next two weeks are going to be crucial. They are going to set the tone for the rest of the year.” Not having time to “celebrate,” and preferring to have sent a representative to mark the university’s intended, and still-to-come successes at partnering with its 13 neighboring schools, he bundled up for the cold drive back to the high school basketball game and waved good-bye.54

54 Another “Gala,” held in January, 2002, was quite a smaller affair than this one. As the president stated in 2001, the crowd came to celebrate some actual successes as opposed to the mere promise of successes-to-come. The program began with a quick report of programs that had been initiated during the year. Attendance was much smaller. The dean of the college did not speak; in fact, she arrived after the start of the program. The president was very low-key and highlighted state budget difficulties. The P-16 director
Renewing Community

May, 2001 marked nearly the end of Guilford Park's second year since reconstitution, and a great need to build some semblance of a school community still existed. This community-building effort can be seen in the Award Assembly held at the high school to honor the students and a retiring teacher. My initial analytic question of the following narrative is if we consider the Award Assembly to be an example of a performance of community renewal, what might we learn about the cultures of the school and the prospects of building a school-university partnership? Henry Wolcott (1999) asserts that ethnography has the potential of functioning as a mirror; it provides another "way of seeing" (p. 4). The Award Assembly, a commonplace event in nearly every U.S. school, is a fertile site to explore many of the most pressing issues facing this high school. Such questions are important within school-university partnerships because many partnerships are framed by objectives to improve student academic achievement and to apply these insights to improve the professional preparation of teachers.

The extent to which university-based educators attend to contemporary challenges of schools influences the success and sustainability of partnership. Because there are pages of scholarly and popular accounts detailing problems endemic to under-performing schools, my challenge is to find new ways to think and act as similar questions about school reform have been asked since the 1600's (Cizek, 1999). Conceptualizing the assembly as a performance of community-renewal may illustrate valuable information about the school's culture by allowing the researcher and the reader to make the familiar pointedly emphasized programmatic links which already fit within the university's "infrastructure." Tellingly, there were no representatives from Guilford-Park High School present in the audience. Unlike the previous year, this year's program ended nearly 30 minutes early.

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a little less “normal,” and a little more “strange,” perhaps making it easier to see some of
the common forces escaping the radar screens of many educators (Demerath, in press).

Performance Narrative #2: Renewing Community

A common springtime event for many American schools is the year-end Award Assembly, and Guilford-Park High School provided no exception to this ritual. On a beautiful day at the end of May, 2001 an event was planned to serve multiple purposes. It was a celebration of the high school itself and the end of the long academic year, another opportunity to recognize students, and importantly, a chance to honor and commemorate a beloved teacher’s decades of service to the school and community. The energy level on any “assembly day” is always different. Class periods are shortened. Students arriving late seem to take their time getting to class, perhaps never arriving at all. Some students take advantage of the relaxed atmosphere to sneak off-campus in small groups to enjoy a lengthy lunch hour. The halls are abuzz with heightened, yet reserved activity as students working in the office or out on hall passes, walk just a little more slowly in the area near the office, deliberately walking slowly past the auditorium with necks craned—trying to catch a glimpse of what might be happening. The entire school community seems to be on notice, waiting for something different to happen.

On this morning the watchers and the waiters had plenty to observe as a group of well-dressed, official-looking visitors began arriving at 9:30. The mood of the guests was spirited as they greeted each other and exchanged comments about the refreshed appearance of the school, especially the recently painted white walls and the colorful bulletin displays of student and school achievement, all brightly lit by the newly hung florescent lights. As the hour approached the fifteen or so visitors were escorted down to the front of the auditorium by the official school “Greeters” just as the students were called down from their classes. However, it didn’t take long for students to assemble given that fewer than half of the student body seemed to be in attendance. More than a few groups of students had snuck out to begin an early lunch period in the ten minutes before the call from the office, compounding the effects of the usual high absentee rate which was perhaps even higher on this beautiful day.

The principal, an African-American male in his mid to late 30’s, began the program by proclaiming, “Now is my favorite time of year—GRADUATION!” He won over the attention and sentiments of many of the students by assuming the posture of a proud Dad as he enthusiastically recounted that this year graduation time was extra special because he had attended his daughter’s graduation from preschool the previous week. Students “ahhed” and clapped in acknowledgement of their principal who often shared information from his personal life. Mr. Douglas then proceeded to the business of announcing which students had won the incentive prizes for two contests revolving around participation in tutoring for the 9th Grade Proficiency Test—a high stakes exam that is first administered in 8th Grade. Students who had completed a minimum of 10 hours of tutoring, over a two month
period, and who passed at least one section of the multi-sectioned exam would be eligible for a drawing of five school jackets. Another jacket was to go to a senior who had passed all sections of the high-stakes exam. Prior to the recent administration of the exam for the third time that year, there were nearly 30 seniors still needing to pass at least one section of the 9th Grade Proficiency Test.

As it turned out a drawing was not necessary for the first contest because only five students, of the approximately 200 still needing to pass the test, had completed ten hours of tutoring to be eligible, despite the ample availability of tutoring during lunch and after school. Counselors had even agreed to accept hours accrued from tutoring by other resources in the community. Three ESL students were among the five winners. There was more suspense for the second contest as twenty seniors were eligible. All six winners were happy to have won, but the two female ESL students, in Islamic dress, were more visibly shy about appearing in front of their peers onstage. The principal concluded his portion of the program by enthusiastically announcing that one of the school’s graduating seniors has just been awarded—within five minutes of the start of the assembly, a full, four-year scholarship at any university in the state. Peers whopped and clapped wildly, but the young man was not in the audience.

Center stage was turned over Mrs. Searls, who had organized the assembly. The serious, European-American teacher began her presentation by acknowledging the expression of thanks offered by the principal, informing the students “it’s not easy being a teacher today. Teachers do a lot of things beyond the 7:30-3 day that go unrecognized.” The remark largely passed over the heads of the students in the audience. It reminded me of a recent remark I had overheard one teacher wail as I walked by a small huddle of teachers: “How much more can they expect us to do?” Mrs. Searls then explained to the audience that one set of students would be acknowledged for academic achievement and another set consisted of one student nominated by each department for displaying the most improvement or a special achievement in that area.

The honor roll students were recognized in an abbreviated form as all had received medals at a banquet the week before. That evening ceremony, incidentally, had been a surprise to many of the school staff. The counselor, who was to have been the moderator, was not even informed of the date. I met up with another staff member the day after the ceremony who was incensed over not having been informed. There had been no public announcements of the event in which three levels of awards, symbolized by a different medal, had been distributed. Bronze medals were awarded to students who maintained at least a 3.0 GPA for one year, a silver medal for two years, and a gold medal for those able to sustain the average for three or more. Students had been asked to wear their medals today, but only about half were in evidence. At today’s assembly the teacher did not announce each name individually, rather, one, two, three, the medal’s alchemy was announced and students were hastily asked to “stand and face your peers.” The standing was generally hurriedly done by students—some proudly, others quickly standing up without ever becoming fully erect. For the most part, peers clapped politely.
However, the hurried nature of the recognition and the fact that names were not announced provided opportunity for clowning and power struggles. Several of the infamous, “hall walkers,” named for their fondness of hanging out in the halls rather than attending class, stood up dramatically as honorees in each category, providing ample amusement for witnesses. Perhaps the style of recognition was made in order to save time for the honoring of the retiring teacher, but some unintended effects were that the entire process of honoring of students was rushed, some students were embarrassed to stand up at the same time that class clowns were rising in order to mock. Teacher-student power struggles resulted when different boys mockingly imitated teachers asking them to be quiet, engaging in an elaborate system of hissing “shushing” noises and grimacing at the teacher sentinels.

Mrs. Searls moved on to the next category of student awards. In contrast to the unnamed honor roll students, seven students were recognized for improvement in a particular department. The criteria for being nominated included improvements in “behavior and attitude.” One by one winning students were called up on stage to stand in front of a digitized photo projected onto a large screen as Mrs. Searls read what nominating teachers had written about the student. Three of the seven students were girls. Two of the three were near the end of their pregnancy terms, ready to deliver within weeks.

The final order of business was ultimately the most-well received. It was a surprise honoring of retiring teacher and coach Mr. Callaster. Mr. Douglas resumed his role of host of the Assembly from Mrs. Searls. Music was piped into the auditorium and a Power Point presentation burst upon the large screen. Mr. Callaster was identified as a long term member of the community and a man deserving of honor and respect. Projected upon the screen to the students’ delight and perhaps to Mr. Callaster’s embarrassment were pictures of his childhood, his early years as a teacher at Guilford-Park, and pictures of him in huddle with the glorious athletic teams that he coached. There were even wedding pictures of he and his wife, also on staff at the school. Kids laughed, “ohhed” and “ahhed,” and looked back and forth between Mr. and Mrs. Callaster. Photos depicted Mr. C. both in the academic classroom and as athletic coach.

The group of well-dressed visitors was composed of his family members, friends, and former colleagues. After a well-deserved round of applause of the pictorial representation of a beloved teacher’s professional and family life, Mr. Douglass introduced the first speaker here to honor a “family man” and “one of America’s true teaching heroes.” The first speaker was an older, white, long-time administrator in the district. He had been the one who had first hired Mr. Callister, a “true family man,” as he called him, in the school district. Students listened politely and clapped at the appropriate moments in recognition of the laudatory remarks about Mr. C.

The next two speakers, African-American gentlemen, lit the apathetic crowd’s enthusiasm. Both men were long-time friends of Mr. Callister, having grown up in the same neighborhoods, attended the same teacher education program at a historically black university, and taught in the same district. Each referred to the beloved teacher as a “family man.” Each made repeated reference to Mr. C. being a
“self-made man,” a man who “achieved success even though he didn’t come from money.”

The second speaker engaged in a call-response performance with the audience. He began a choral engagement in reference to the part time jobs they held together as college students to pay their expenses because:

“he had to work for everything!”
Students in chorus: Oh, yeah!

“He worked odd jobs!”
Students added a clap to their performative repertoire: Oh, yeah!

“He took measurements for an architect.”
Students: “Oh, yeah!,” resounding clap.

“He worked hard!”
Students: “Oh, yeah!,” resounding clap.

“He achieved his goals!”
Students: “Oh, yeah!,” resounding clap.

The speaker provided enthusiastic testament to Mr. C’s success as a family man and a “teaching hero” despite his humble beginnings; and his own accomplishments were tied to those of the school community. As he highlighted Mr. C’s career as an athletic coach, he shared with his youthful audience that it was not only Mr. C, but also the Guilford-Park High School students who had been long-time winners. As proof of this assertion he recalled the start of desegregation in 1979, “the day before de-seg we had 75 on the team, the next morning after de-seg, we had three.” There was a dramatic pause before the climatic pronouncement:

“The team ended up WINNING district with only 27 or 28 team members.” The students cheered. The implication of the football team’s unexpected championship was that outside forces had taken away the school’s resources and its legacy, yet Guilford’s high school was nevertheless able to triumph.

The third speaker, honoring Mr. C as a long-time, respected Guilford-Park teacher, picked up on this theme and preached to his congregation of students and peers as though it were a Sunday morning, “Guilford-Park’s not supposed to be here, BUT WE’RE HERE. WE’RE HERE. You’ve come a long way, You’ve come a long way, but we still have a way to go. Let’s keep the Big GP moving!” The audience erupted in cheers and applause.

Discussion: What If We Gave a Program and Nobody Came?

In chapter four the analysis of the university’s partnership initiative closed with questions regarding the manner in which the university is making its intents to serve the community intelligible to the public, whether it is expanding its definition of “key constituents,” and the ways it postures itself in its relationship with its surrounding

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community. These questions should be taken up in relation to the “Gala,” in particular, as one of its primary objectives was to make its efforts intelligible to the community, and perhaps even to its own membership. However, consider the following observation offered by a Guilford community member, a youth services counselor employed by a social service center with strong ties in the community, after I explained my objectives for working in the high school:

I’m a graduate of MU and way back then I was telling them that they needed to come out into the community and they wouldn’t pay any attention to me. Now that MU’s coming out into the community, they aren’t getting anyone to come around. What’s up with that? I’d like to know what that is. (November 28, 2001)

His depiction of the university’s impact on the community provides such a stark contrast to the near display of pageantry showcasing the university’s partnership efforts during the “Gala.” It also foreshadows the possible answers to the questions raised above.

Different Definitions of Community at the University and in the Schools

During the “Gala” the objectives of “celebrating the public schools” and “building community” between the university and the schools seemed to wane in the face of a celebration of the university’s expertise on the one hand, and the promotion of an institutional sense of community within the university on the other. This raises an important question of whether “community,” with its common sense definition relying on the strength of personal connections, can be effected within an institution. An appropriate question for further consideration is whether the university, indeed, is building an institutional sense of community, or whether it is deploying a sense of community for instrumental purposes.
The need for thinking about community within an institutional framework immediately points to a disconnect between the school and the university in terms of how “community” is experienced and defined at each site. During the Award Assembly at the school multiple technologies of community-building can be seen, ranging from tying the recognition of honor students to that of a community-based “teaching-hero,” sharing that which is personal with the collective, to putting forth a self-affixed description of the community as strong and resilient. Within the performance of community-renewal in evidence at the assembly, we can see imprints of the following definition of community found “in the streets:”

The sense of community is who you know, who you are responsible to, who you’re connected with, who know you and who your parents are and who are your parents’ parents, what church you go to, those kinds of things, whereas those aren’t necessarily on the radar screen of the university. (university faculty member, March, 2001)

Definitions of community within an institution are different as expressed at the end of the above statement. A graduate student with significant experience working in urban schools laughed when I asked her about the sense of community at the university during an interview:

I think it’s definitely a research community. [It’s] not always a good community. There are a lot of politics here that make it a community that as a student you never really know where you belong. I don’t think it’s a community that always positive. [It’s] one of those communities that has a neighborhood watch [laugh]. And so... not because people are doing bad things, but you just kind of have to watch your step...(February, 2001).

During the “Gala” the principle technology of community-building was the simple recognition of the university’s expertise and its professed desires to be a better partner with the schools in its surrounding neighborhoods. There was little sense of the
network of relations and responsibility to others as expressed in the “street” definition of community. It is almost an oxymoron to contend that an “institutional community” can be built when commonsense definitions rely upon a network of personal connections among like-minded members. This potential dilemma points to an important disconnect between the kind of communities being built at the university and the high school, as well as the communal relationship of partnership between the two sites.

**Power and Boundary-Setting within University-School Partnerships**

We are expanding our civic vocabulary to speak of community between the university and its surrounding neighborhoods. (community organizer, January 2001)

It’s just like Christopher Columbus, the university is coming in and discovering a community that was already there. The community is there, its living condition is often determined by the university. And now the university comes around identifying a community that’s already there. (GPHS administrator, November, 2001)

The first quote eloquently calls forth desires for community between the university and its surrounding neighborhoods, and the “Gala” can be considered a concrete step forward to institutionalize, organize, and raise the visibility of partnership efforts. The danger, however, is that it may prove to be only a symbolic step ahead. The second quote succinctly asserts the link between power and the identification of community. If the quotes are taken together and applied to this context, they point to the need to consider the effects of power relations between the university and its surrounding neighborhoods in the development of sustainable school-university partnerships.

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55 The reference to Christopher Columbus should be considered in respect to post-colonial critiques of the European explorer—a foreign, more powerful entity came to “discover” “a new world” with objectives to gain additional wealth and power for the outsiders through the exploitation of resources in the “new world.”

56 At this point I return to using the label “school-university” partnership. In the title of this section I inverted the order. Because this section discusses power within partnership, the inversion was a deliberate attempt to interrupt the prevailing practice in higher education discourse to label collaborative ties as...
focus on boundary-setting because the ability to put a name on partnership efforts and lay its foundation, combined with the ability to identify the targeted community/schools as "partner" is an effect of power. It is interesting to point out that this step—clearly identifying a community space—is the sole point of attention paid to the complex question of "defining" community within the Kellogg Documents. However, fixing the boundaries of a "community" is not as simple as deceptively implied by the ease of its discussion in the policy statements.

Setting boundaries has been the principal action taken in this partnership effort as well. Such a move may provide the illusion that a "community" exists as a target for partnership. Critiques of commonsense definitions of community are helpful in considering the links between power, boundary-setting, and partnership. For example, popularly defined constructs of community are often tied to a bounded geographical space. One possible effect of this unexamined definition is that a "community" can be conceptualized as being derived as a simple result of its location, and as such, it can be easily identified and established. Simply declaring a community to exist does not attend to the amount of diversity within a community (communities) that already exists in the geographical space newly-identified as the "University Neighborhoods." Nor does it attend to the inherently difficult process of actually building and sustaining communal ties and affiliations within partnership. Finally, such a step does not indicate whether or

"school-university" partnerships. This practice is common in the literature and its popular usage is meant to displace the presumed hierarchical status that accords the university the more dominant position. While I heartily support this rhetorical move, it is often just that—a rhetorical move with little impact on practice. I inverted this order in this section's title because I find that MU has not stepped down from its position of power—in spite of making some efforts to involve more community voices than it has made in the past. I use the term "school-university" partnership under erasure throughout this dissertation. I use it because it is accepted practice and my refusal to do so could lead to a conclusion very different than the one that I
not the community inhabiting the newly-named "University Neighborhoods" is interested in partnering with the university in the first place. Multiple incidents of boundary-setting, influenced by relations of power, can be seen across the performances and in the history of the university's relationship with its surrounding neighborhoods.

The first narrative displays a notable example that the university is setting the boundaries of the partnership relationship. It is Mr. Douglas' repeated reference to the "Gala," and the meeting called to discuss university efforts the previous day, as "required opportunities." The university had set the agenda for the two days, twice calling the principals out of their buildings at one of the busiest points of the school year. In addition, although the "Gala" was advertised as celebrating the schools in the neighborhood, it resulted in the celebration of the university's own partnership plans. Other examples, larger in scope, have already been mentioned—that the university had designated its own set of 13 "partner" schools and that it had identified a target area as the "University Neighborhoods." The latter name was part of the working committee contributing to the foundation for the P-16 project. This designation eventually was dropped given the discomfort of some community members who resisted being subsumed into a university-designated space. For example, at a faculty-principal meeting held the day before the "Gala," the district administrator, introducing the day's agenda, corrected her original designation of "University Neighborhoods," stating that it is no longer identified in this way. The same comment surfaced at a UNEA meeting that preceded the "Gala" when the president of the committee reported that a proposal to erect signs

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intend. I use it because I support the rationale behind its adoption, but I am wary of how it is being used and of the effect—or lack thereof, that it has on practice.
marking the entrance of the “University Neighborhoods” had been tabled because of an emerging sentiment that the community did not wish to be identified in such a manner.

A still more prominent example of too-little attention paid to boundary-setting comes from the beginning of the university’s partnership movement. A non-profit organization was established by the university to spearhead a number of initiatives broadly related to revitalizing the housing, education, and economic infrastructure of the neighborhoods surrounding the university. When the first steering committee was organized in the late 1990’s by the university task force, it included not a single member from the surrounding neighborhoods. The inclusion of residents of the neighborhoods in the advisory committee to the university-community partnership project simply had not occurred to the university faculty and administrators. This oversight was later highlighted by the director of the task force as one of the most crucial learning experiences of the beginning stages. Thus, it was, indeed, recognized as an error, however, it is still telling to point out the existence of the conditions that lead to such an oversight ever happening.

The partnership has already gotten off to a shaky start as the university has willed its own partnership with 13 schools rather than the identification of the ‘community’ (for the university to join) and the partner schools arising from a collaborative process. There are inherent power imbalances within this “partnership” as illustrated by this occurrence. Defining the boundaries of a “community”—the University Neighborhoods, for example, doesn’t automatically make it so. It does not guarantee that a set of schools is interested in “partnering.” Importantly, nor does it presume an egalitarian relationship between the university and the schools—as the definition of partnership implies.
Effects of boundary-setting on partnership.

An exploration of the concrete effects of the complex power relations between schools and universities needs to be incorporated into the partnership process, and they may be hidden by a focus primarily limited to identifying boundaries. For example, the university is still a nearly impermeable site for outsiders. It controls the mechanisms of professionalization. Ignoring that power differential within a school-university partnership does not make it not so. On the other hand, the school is not without its own positions of power within the relationship. University faculty and graduate students can not apply, nor develop through research, their expertise without the schools’ permission and cooperation. Neither can the university place its students for internships. Indeed, the university can not redeem itself through its community engagement—as the policy statements and the president’s speeches passionately articulate, without the community’s participation. Indication of this realization, and an unwillingness to unquestioningly grant access and cooperation, came from a member of the high school staff who told me, “everyone needs to get something. We’ll provide the site if the university will also provide something that we need. If not, we don’t have time.”

Another concrete example of the effects of the rush to set boundaries, and that only one half of the “partnership” determined them, is that the 13 partner schools identified by the university intersect, or interfere, or ignore that the local school district has identified its own set of 12 schools to receive intensive emphasis. This grouping of similarly numbered schools is also reasonably near the university, and in fact, Guilford-Park High School, and another nearby middle school, “belongs” to both sets. If there were more overlap among the schools, the partnership relationship would potentially be
facilitated by the fact that the university and the school system would both be targeting efforts at a mutually-identified group of schools.

Relying on a simple definition of community as that which is determined by its location in a particular geographical space does not grant permission to ignore the multiple effects of setting boundaries and the relationships that they may engender.

Rather than seriously attempting to negotiate the difficult process of partnership, one college of education faculty member made the following analogy about the relationship of the university with the school district administration:

two kids are playing on a playground, they’re both the same age, they both have the same interests and want to play, but the reason they can’t get any game organized because one wants to be the captain and wants the other person to be a team member. So you’ve got two people who are both trying to be the captain and who’s going to be the team?

A similar sentiment is echoed by an elementary school principal’s response to a presentation by university faculty members:

We need to develop a more honest and open relationship with the university so that schools can trust the university. ... We come to the table together but in many ways we are so similar so as to cause problems. We’re large bureaucracies with limited funds and our own set of expectations.

He then related an example about a laborious, labyrinthine process of contacting a university administrator to get interns—only to be referred to different department chairs and a maze of complexity to work out timing and details. “It becomes nearly impossible. So how can we come together with flexible schedules, flexible time, with resources that are flexible... it’s hard to imagine that this can happen.” A clearly defined focus on simply demarcating boundaries of community engagement, as advocated in the Kellogg
policy statements, does not attend to the complexity of power relations and the missed connections that have already resulted.

**Can the university fulfill its promise through partnership?**

Is the university able to contribute tangible assistance beyond conducting research? This is an important concern given the great demands placed upon schools and the burdens which university research may cause. In a follow-up meeting November, 2001, I spoke with two administrators from the high school about yet another recent partnership meeting sponsored by the university. Representatives from another prominent university had been invited to speak. Both administrators expressed surprise and near dismay that the conversation was still precisely just that—a conversation:

> They're going to lose their credibility if they don't start doing something. They are two of the most important institutions around, and they can't do any better than this? They can't tie concrete actions to student outcomes? And talk about unsupported arguments. They're still using the human resource model—feel good themes, everyone leaves the table feeling good, but nothing really happened.

The same administrator went on to exclaim:

> They're prostituting "hope" in the community! They've written it down somewhere for all to see and the community is expecting it.

The second administrator expressed surprise that the conversations seem to have shifted from providing tangible, academic assistance in the schools to a model focusing on after-school enrichment programs. This reminded me of the earlier comments of these administrators in reference to the Gala—that the talk and the expressed goals were "vague and nebulous." The celebrative display of partnership at the Gala seemed to put forth a great amount of promise, just as do the promising claims of the higher education policy documents, the rhetoric of the president, and the educational literature. Yet
tangible results have been slow in coming. The multiple disconnects between schools and universities may provide a partial explanation of these conditions.

**School-University Disconnects and Their Implications for Partnership**

The discussion thus far has presented two narratives that demonstrate clear points of disconnection between the university and the school in respect to their capacity for building and sustaining partnership. In addition, I have argued that the university has largely devoted its attention to efforts that position its members as experts ready to assist a “community in decline.” This posture seems to dominate the university’s efforts despite its attempts to “fight the come and go tendencies” of past relationships. In this portion of the discussion I focus more closely on the disconnects between the two sites and the ways that they intersect with partnership practices and objectives. I then move to discussing ways that members of the school and its larger community resist the university’s efforts to contain them within a deficit narrative. Critiques of community often serve as a useful device to think the disconnects differently.

**Disconnect: “Saving a troubled school system…. where do we start?”**

A teacher asked this question during a staff meeting regarding the high school’s Building Improvement Plan. During my fieldwork one of the principal goals repeatedly expressed by the GPHS staff was to “improve the academic climate” of the high school. The principal, in outlining recent renewal initiatives at a community education meeting, theorized, “It’s about changing a culture, changing the culture of the zip code.” There are several tensions within efforts to mold the desired “academic culture” of the school. For example, a general level of disengagement from schooling is evident on the part of many students. One indication is the poor attendance of the assembly to honor the
achievements of their peers. In addition, fewer than half of the students awarded academic honor medals wore them as requested. They may have felt discomfort in displaying them for the possible risk of being subjected to teasing, which in fact, did result. Alternatively, perhaps honorees did not even attend this ceremony.

The level of disengagement is also evident in the poor participation rate of students in the various tutoring programs, despite its ready availability and phone calls home to parents. Approximately 200 high school students had yet to pass all sections of the state proficiency exam. Attendance rate on test days hovered around 43% for “traditional” kids and 15% for ESL students, leading one staff member to wonder, “maybe it’s just not in their world.” Finally, the ample lampooning during the awards portion of the assembly by a substantial portion of the audience also points to the lack of seriousness or credibility that students attach to academic achievement. When the varied student reaction to the honor assembly is combined with the general disengagement from the tutoring program and the poor attendance for the exams, required for graduation, all appear to point to the development of an oppositional identity amongst students to the academic culture that the school staff sought to effect.

The Award Assembly narrative illustrates several barriers to the goal of fostering an academic climate at the high school despite the enthusiastic response accorded to the powerful testimonies of the African-American guest speakers. For example, there is high student absenteeism. While the official daily attendance rate was 81% during the 2000-2001 year there were generally more than 200 out of 700 absent from school every day.

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57 GPHS has a substantial number of special needs and ESL students. Their numbers make up nearly 33% of the school body. Students not in either of these special programs are often referred to in everyday contexts as “traditional.”

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In addition, students often arrived to school as late as mid-way through the second block of the four-block day. Many students skipped the Award Assembly, easily leaving the school grounds to enjoy an extended lunch period. Reducing the incidence of student absence and tardy-to-school was one of three school goals identified by GPHS staff.

At first blush, attendance issues seem rather cut and dry. Yet these high rates are indicators of challenges students face. Importantly, they also illuminate philosophical points of contention in the design and implementation of reform efforts. For example, at a series of community meetings the topic often revolved around the extent to which punitive measures should be relied upon. This can be summed up by the following statement by a district administrator who urged the group not to simply apply punitive measures instead of understanding and addressing the “root cause” of attendance problems: “Sometimes it’s as simple as the kid doesn’t have an alarm clock. Sometimes it’s a lot more complicated than that.” As the question that framed this section asks, where do educators start to address the needs of students and teachers in urban schools? Should educators punish, reward, understand, be tough, attack the root issues, treat the symptoms, or survive? There are no quick and easy answers and all are more complicated than the matter of identifying boundaries for community engagement, and all require action more substantial than calling meetings. In addition, determining ways that the university will collaborate with schools to think about and address these questions will not be served by developing a “coherent campus culture” that avoids complicated, messy questions within its own boundaries as discussed in chapter four.

Disconnect: The presumption of stability within community.
One of the most enduring definitions of community is that it exists in stable conditions in a specific geographical space. As discussed in chapter four, the principal concern within the higher education policy statements was the importance of defining a concrete, clearly defined space to target university engagement. The extent to which the identified, clearly demarcated community space is stable does not enter into the discussion. Yet the Award Assembly narrative points to the existence of many points of instability within this community space, and this is indicative of conditions in which the boundaries of a school, and by extension, its surrounding community are quite porous and unstable for a multitude of reasons. For example, student mobility rates from year to year, and within the school year, are high. There are high rates of absenteeism and late arrivals to school. High turn-over among students occurs on any given day and teachers must spend significant time re-orienting students who have missed class. For example, I spent one Spring afternoon with an art teacher. Near the end of the class period as students were working, he opened up his gradebook to show me a page filled with “A’s.” Unfortunately, these A’s represented “absent,” and he demonstrated how that day’s group of students was almost an entirely different composition as that of the day before when he had delivered the same lecture. Two days on the same lesson. The population of the “school community” seemed to be constantly shifting.

The high student absent rates also point to conditions of instability in the lives of students outside of school, as do the other social problems pointed to within the narrative. The high stakes testing demands provide another source of instability as teachers must integrate test preparation into a crowded high school curriculum. All these forces converge to create unstable classroom environments for teachers and students. Thus, a
disconnect exists between the widespread calls for educators to create “learning communities” in the classroom (e.g., Holmes Group, 1995) and the actual context of the classrooms in this school. When working toward partnership, stakeholders can not afford to begin from a point that assumes the existence of constancy within the classroom or the school community. Teacher educators who emphasize creating “learning communities” in the classroom need to take into account the numerous barriers to this process and incorporate ways to prepare teachers to expect and cope with unstable conditions.

Preaching the gospel of community in university classrooms conceals the numerous barriers related to conditions of instability sure to be found in the “real world.”

**Disconnect: Pressing social problems.**

The Award Assembly narrative also illustrates some of the numerous social problems facing students. Two of the three girls honored were to have a baby within weeks of accepting their awards. The school had the unfortunate notoriety within the district of possessing the highest pregnancy rate and incidence of sexually transmitted diseases; there were 35 pregnancies during the school year. There were 12 additional parenting girls enrolled. Earlier in the school year, great emotional toil had been inflicted on a group of girls who were subjected to rumors of having allegedly gotten an

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58 Coda: Despite substantial barriers inside and outside the schoolhouse doors, the staff has made great strides to improve the academic climate. Advanced Placement Courses were started in Fall, 2001 for the first time in several years. A nearby liberal arts college partnered with the school to offer an English course for college credit. However, efforts to improve the school’s academic culture were hindered by the high number of students still needing to pass the 9th Grade Proficiency Tests. Nearly the entire school was consumed by proficiency preparation activities in the weeks leading up to the Fall and Spring exam administrations. Students who have passed the exam must endure the weekly practice sessions administered during regularly-scheduled class periods.

59 On a positive note, in April, 2002 I learned that the following year there had been only 11 pregnancies reported thus far in the 2001-2002 school year. However, the staff member elatedly informed me that only two of those 11 should “count” when assessing the school’s progress as the other nine students were either 9th graders who had not participated in the school’s social support programming or had newly transferred to the school.

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STD from one of the star athletes. Speakers came twice during the year to lecture the entire student body on the possible dangers of sexual practices. One Spring day there were three fights, all among girls, during the lunch hour. On this day a staff member, who has particularly close relationships with students, fumed at the inability of administration to cope with the seriousness of the social and emotional problems with which many students are faced. While there is no evidence in the narrative, many students and their families suffer from substance abuse problems. Improving the academic culture, thus, depends on far more than the more traditional foci revolving around questions of curriculum development and delivery. Consideration of these forces is often missing in both partnership initiatives and teacher education programs.

**Disconnect: Diversity in community.**

The performance readily points to the shifting demographics of the Guilford community. Three of the five students awarded a school jacket for participating in tutoring were ESL students. Most the school’s English-language-learners have come to the city as refugees from a war-torn country in Eastern Africa. Some have seen fighting first-hand, some spent much of their lives in refugee camps in a third country, and many have not attended school for long periods of time prior to their arrival in the US. According to one community leader who serves as an ESL consultant for the state department of education, students under 16 did not have access to any kind of public education in their country (Zehr, 2001). Thus, high school teachers find themselves in the nearly unimaginable situation in which they must teach the material to classes containing both students who have progressed through the school system and students who may not have learned to read and write in their native language. In addition, the
substantial ESL population contributes to the school’s poor academic reputation because ESL students must also pass the state proficiency exam. Their scores are included in the benchmark scores by which the district evaluates the school.

GPHS is re-building its school community, and this is a positive force; yet there is tension among its many diverse members for several reasons. One teacher, after commenting on the ESL students low scores, spoke of the rift between the African-American students and the ESL students, “Some of the ESL kids are hard core. They’ve seen death and killings. Our kids have seen it on TV, but not for real. So it creates a problem.” If we consider the power of the final two speakers of the Award Assembly, it seems to have rested in a narrative of the strength and resilience of the community as evidenced by its recent history. Yet a substantial portion of the student body does not share this history. The powerful narratives of the resilient community do not speak to all members. A potential danger of an unexamined definition of community is that it can diminish the import of attending to difference and diversity within community and community-building.

**Disconnect: The difficult emotional labor of teaching.**

The likely existence of teacher frustration with the academic culture is evident in Mrs. Searls’ out of context comment about much of the work of teachers going unnoticed. Her comments also hint at both the changing definitions of teaching as a profession and the oftentimes-great emotional costs of the profession: “Teachers do a lot of things beyond the 7:30-3 day that go unrecognized.” Teachers and administers are not merely being charged with delivering curricular content and satisfying state benchmarks, a tall order in itself, they are also being asked to substantively change the culture of an
entire school. This requires a profoundly high level of emotional toil. One GPHS staff member linked culture to the emotional toll that is exacted on many teachers in disadvantaged urban communities:

There’s absolutely no preparation in a cultural sense for most middle class people who go into urban schools. There’s just no way to really train or to get them ready for what they’re going to run into. It’s an experiential thing. And they haven’t had that experience. All the books, and all the communication, still doesn’t make them, I think, emotionally ready to handle what they are going to run into when they get there. Because it is an emotional situation.

In an interview, an administrator shared his concern over the potential emotional damage of the educational process, as well as the toll that difficult life experiences exact on education. Another teacher, in recounting the story of a hard-working student coping with both the demands of school and a gunshot wound, expressed her concern over her ability to negotiate the delicate, emotional tension between being caring and attending to students’ emotional needs and being accountable for test results: “Sometimes they just need to talk. They have so much going on in their lives. I stop the lesson and talk to them. But then they’ll come to me and look me in the eye and say Ms. Bradford, you’re accountable. Why didn’t they pass?”

One Spring afternoon, near the end of the school day, I witnessed an example of the oftentimes emotional struggle of teaching and learning. An experienced, committed, white, male teacher brought a young female, African-American student into the guidance office to speak with the counselor. Both were visibly upset. The teacher was mumbling under his breath about not accepting “this kind of treatment any more;” the girl was muttering something incomprehensible, angrily under her breath. The counselor came to help. The girl complained about “taking shit” from the teacher. The teacher exclaimed,
"I can't take it anymore. I'm doing everything I can, and I can't take it anymore." He was uncharacteristically quiet and clearly at the brink of his ability to cope. The counselor initiated a conversation with the girl, asking her soothing questions about what had been going on in class, what she thought might be the source of the conflict, and whether and how she thought the teacher had been trying to help her learn. After an initial period of sullenness, the girl began to process aloud her theories about what the problem had been. By the end of the five-minute conversation both teacher and student were in tears as the young woman admitted that the teacher must just be trying to help her. The counselor walked back into her office to get herself some Kleenexes as well.

"Changing the culture of the school," a clearly stated goal within this school, depends on the difficult emotional labor of teaching and working with students, and such an emotional commitment is not attended to sufficiently within partnership efforts. The following is a quote that introduced a section in chapter two. It is re-inserted here to contrast the ease at which such difficult labor is presented in the literature.

It is hoped that the creation of school-university partnership cultures will help tear down the walls of "separation" in the American society by providing a working example of cultural coherence and integration. In the end, the present dominant, hierarchical society may be replaced by a partnership society. The future ahead of us may very well witness a return to "the partnership society of the forgotten past", as Eisler (1987) predicts. Therefore, let us be alert and have an eye out for our partners—the key ingredients of a healthy ecosystem. (Su, 1991, p. 103)

The quote heralds the promise of replacing inequitable societal structures through partnership. Yet partnership has little chance of development when it is premised on simplistic definitions of communal bonds while ignoring the profound emotional costs of building and sustaining partnership. Nor are educators prepared for such an endeavor when the literature depicts the process as a logical, rational, systematic process:
Price (1989) found that culture can act as an invisible force that can block the best effort of reformers and that a system cultural renorming can be accomplished through a thorough systematic organizational self-examination. Perhaps the first step in building partnerships is the renorming of culture. (Sorenson, 1998, p. 16)

Renewing community in this school, or “renorming of culture” as referred to above—and as framed by the school staff, requires a great emotional commitment in which diversity is the rule rather than the exception, and a rational process in which one culture is substituted for another, as advocated in the literature presented in chapter two, is unlikely to happen. The lack of attention to the emotional toil of teaching and learning is another example of a disconnect between the school and the university that inhibit partnership, especially including those partnership efforts within teacher education. The disconnects, or the missed connections, between schools and universities may be facilitated by the difficulty in which the university is able to disrupt its stance as the distant expert, as well as the ways it contains the community within the boundaries of a narrative of community decline.

Imposing the “Narrative of Community Decline”

In an interview, a faculty member actively involved in and committed to the partnership initiative shared her concern that a deficit model of the surrounding neighborhoods may be informing the university’s engagement,

The university has a sense, well I think, when I hear “communities,” I hear “what can we go in and fix?” rather than, “What’s already there—that we can learn from?

She complained that the focus is always to “enrich” which to her is code for filling a deficit, rather than to “support” the riches that the community already has. Pronouncing the community to be one that is “in decline” masks its resources and its riches. Instead, it
presents an image of a community that needs outside expertise to come to its rescue. In addition, explanations for its descent can be contained within the community itself. All of these possible attitudes serve to prop up the university’s more powerful position in a hierarchical relationship as opposed to one that is premised on the elusive egalitarianism of partnership.

Nisbet (1978) and Bender (1962) argue that uncritical definitions of community in the social sciences have led to the frequent adoption of what they call the “narrative of community decline” to explain societal problems. They theorize that academics have simplistically taken up an ideal typology of community as a unified, homogenous entity to explain the massive social changes of urbanization, industrialization, and immigration. Much of the social changes implied by these forces can be attributed to an increasingly heterogeneous society, which necessarily moves us farther from the traditional conditions for community. Thus, difference within a community may be quite difficult to read in an environment that privileges homogeneity; this can contribute to the assessment of the community as one “in decline.”

The university’s instrumental uses of the “narrative of community decline.”

The narrative of community decline may facilitate the posture of expertise assumed by the university—or in some cases, accorded to the university by others. At the Gala the same superintendent who hinted that university research may get in the way of schools stated that “we are grateful that MU has decided to work with us.” Yet there was a quiet, but noticeable chorus of response to one university administrator’s acknowledgement of past problems, “we want to fight the come and go tendencies” of past projects. The words of the union representative also spoke to the unquestioned
positioning of the university as expert; she addressed a lack in the evening’s discourse, making sure to spotlight the contributions of the teachers to the successes, currently and in the future. The second award winner made sure to point out the powerful contributions of peers within the community and the learning and development that occur in community spaces outside the doors of the school. While there was evidence during the “Gala” of attempts to interrupt the university’s role as the “expert” by non-members of the university, as previously stated, the principal theme of the event turned out to be a celebration of this very position.

The positioning of the university as an expert can contribute to a perspective that considers the spaces of the community to be a viable “laboratory” for the work of the university. This patronizing posture hinders the development of a viable partnership, and disregards the current tensions caused by experiences of this nature. There were numerous examples during my fieldwork in which the school was approached by representatives of the university for varied purposes, requests for data, entrée, or offers to “help.” For example, a university professor approached the school to conduct a school-wide, student-led inquiry project that had the idealistic objectives of effecting “student empowerment” through building leadership capacity amongst the student co-facilitators. A detailed collaborative action project was planned. Approximately 30 students missed class to participate in an initial meeting. Teachers agreed to give up an entire block of class so that the student survey could be conducted in early November, 2000. The next set of activities was to begin in January, 2001. However, the school did not hear from the professor until April when she dropped off the raw data to the programming coordinator. The activities involving students were never carried forward. Another professor and
graduate student received a grant to conduct a research and action project without first having sought buy-in from the high school teacher who would have to participate. The connections were never able to be made, and the time-schedule that worked for the graduate student was completely at odds with what the school could accommodate. Finally, near the end of the academic year a counselor exclaimed, "the last thing these kids need is another hastily put together program. That's the last thing they need," upon learning about a possible summer partnership project.

A fourth example was a class assignment of an introductory sociology course. Students were told to research any available public data from a public school and to formulate a set of questions to interview a school administrator. They were then "released" out into the school system on a set of overburdened schools. The student visiting Guilford-Park High School had done her homework and researched the school's basic data, but her questions were vague and expansive, some bordered on insulting. They demonstrated very little understanding of the work of schools and the community context. I asked her about any guidelines the professor may have developed to structure the assignment and in formulating research questions, and they were sparse. On the day she visited the high school, the counselor politely answered her questions, gently rephrasing the questions to demonstrate a greater awareness of the realities of the school. Each question was nearly worthy of an entire dissertation. Interestingly, the student did not take any notes on the careful answers that the counselor provided. In sum, the university counselor filled in the gaps created by the sociology professor—all the while, there were eight to ten high school students outside the door waiting for assistance.
Tactical inversions of the “narrative of community decline.”

The very communities that the narrative seeks to contain, however, can mobilize the “narrative of community decline,” for strategic purposes. For example, geographer Gillian Rose (1998), working with issues of community, power, and space, discussed the tactical ways that community workers in England invoked a discourse that she terms “community-as-marginal” as both a form of critique and strategy to either subvert or to strategically mobilize this discourse to effect a desired outcome. In her study, community workers marshaled the binaries, center/margin and power/disempowerment, to name that which is lacking within the community. They identified a lack, which can be filled, rather than asserting a permanent link between what these binaries denote and the community’s identity (i.e. an “impoverished community,” a “declining community”). They intentionally deployed these binaries in different ways—both outside the physical space of the community (e.g. when arguing for more resources for the community) and within the physical space of the community (e.g. to organize a community-based project). Such a construction sets up a narrative of lack, of absences, thereby avoiding the trap of an identity-based community where the issues can seem hopeless and impenetrable. This narrative is more fluid and allows for alliances across differences.

Interrupting the outsider-imposed “narrative of community decline.”

A similar interruption was evident in my project. For example, a high school administrator, Mr. Douglas, used “community” in discussions of what the community lacks. For example, “the community doesn’t have enough jobs within it,” or “the community has been failed by the city in regards to X,” etc. He also used the term to speak in a very general sense about the surrounding community. However, he never used
the word “community” to discuss broader social issues and problems, such as drugs, high crime rates due to fewer job and educational opportunities, or kids’ missing school to stay home and watch baby sister while mom is at work, etc. Instead, he used the term, “zip code.” For example, in a community meeting he stated, “in zip codes like ours, we have to compete against a lot of other demands in order to create an academic culture.” In another conversation, he spoke about “changing the culture of the zip code.” Instead of using the ambiguous term community, he employs a term that invokes a sense of a precise geographical space, not the communities of people who inhabit it. When queried about this usage, he stated that he, indeed, deliberately uses “zip code” instead of “community” because the latter term can convey the sense that the problems lie within the community, thereby occluding the fact that many of the problems stem from much larger and broader forces than those that are contained solely within this particular geographical space.

Traditional understandings of “community,” depending on a definition of a geographically bounded space, do not convey the import of interactions among spaces, such as that of the university and the multiplicity of spaces in its surrounding neighborhoods. This observation, combined with the way Mr. Douglas uses “zip code” instead of an idealistic form of “community,” taps into the perception within the Guilford community, discussed in chapter four, that the community has been deliberately neglected. Another indicator of this attitude can be seen at a community meeting held at the school in January, 2001 when as one attendee asked about the status of a program initiated by the school district, he laughed and declared, “this is a possessive
A woman in the back of room echoed, “uh-huh, there’s a long history of that!”

Doreen Massey (1994) argues that a place—such as the University Neighborhoods, should not be conceptualized in terms of its being spatially bounded, but rather as a product of interactions with other places. A discourse emphasizing the problems of this particular community, as frequently invoked by documents describing university partnerships, masks the fact that many of the community’s problems stem from its interactions, or lack of interactions, with other places. This is what feeds Mr. Douglas’s use of, “zip code,” instead of “community.” Mr. Douglass and other community leaders are resisting the “narrative of community decline” and are beginning to hold Guilford’s overlapping communities accountable.

**Authority and Community Membership**

The promulgation of an academic culture in schools is dependent in no small part on being propped up by a hierarchical culture of authority. Teachers are the knowers and the transmitters of culture; they organize the content, the delivery, and the structure and movement in the classroom. Their authority is automatic and incontestable. Or so we teachers think. There were numerous instances of power struggles between teachers and students during the performance. Teachers signaling students to be quiet and respectful were generally rebuffed, at best they were ignored and at worst egged on by students’ slyly imitating their gesticulations. As was the custom, during the performance teachers

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60 It is unclear, yet important to consider, who the marauding “they” might be. This comment should be linked to the material presented in the section detailing the community context of Guilford-Park High School which present comments regarding the possibility that the community, and Guilford-Park, had been the victims of concerted neglect, “whether intentional or unintentional.” In addition, the group that attended the community meetings were long weary of the negative representations in the local press.

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were posted as sentinels along the back wall of the audience and along the aisles up and
down the auditorium. Students readily left the school ground rather than attend the
assembly; perhaps they know that no one will seriously attempt to assert authority to stop
their actions.

Conditions requiring confrontation with students frequently surfaced in teacher
interviews. For example, it was common for students to simply walk away from a
teacher asking to see a hall pass. Many staff members felt powerless to resolve the issue
of students roaming the hall during class time. One teacher described her hall duty as the
“most stressful part of my day.” She felt trapped between needing a mechanism to back
up her authority to stop students roaming the halls and the distinct message from
administration that disciplinary reports must be kept to a minimum. The complexity of
power relations between teachers and students, and its links to community, culture, and
experience, is masked by a bureaucratic tool—the discipline referral form. The root
causes of the frequent breakdown in relations are not considered. Instead, the solution on
the part of palpably desperate teachers is to have a tool they can clutch and quickly pass
on to administration, whereas for administration the solution is to police the awarding of
referral forms.

Authority is not automatically granted based on a traditional hierarchy of school
relations. Much of the audience was polite and listened to Mrs. Searls. However, they
immediately granted more respect to their principal, an African-American male. They
responded to the ways he connected with them on a more personal level. A similar
pattern can be seen with the three guest speakers. Students were polite to the first
speaker, but they engaged with two older, African-American males who emphasized
strength, family, and resilience and spoke in a culturally recognized pattern. They were members of the community who tried to connect their honoring of Mr. Callaster’s achievements with the needs of the community’s youth.

Having shared experiences seem to be important to students in the granting of authority and respect. One African-American teacher remarked that students are often surprised to learn that she does not live far from the Guilford community. According to her, where teachers live is important to students because they expect their teachers to reside in the more affluent neighborhoods and communities far from the school and may think “that you’re coming in to visit. And I think if they see that you ARE community...because even teachers being of the same race, they still see a distinction and it’s because, in every race, there are still layers of where you have people, and the kids are aware of this. They know it, and they talk about it.” I was often surprised that students seemed to know where their teachers lived. On a related note, I was once queried about which high school I had attended by a student within a couple of minutes of the start of the conversation. I replied I was from Lancaster, a small town in the southern portion of the state. “You LOOK like you’re from Lancaster,” she chortled. Then she pressed to find out exactly where I lived at that time in relation to the school before she would continue the conversation. Power, authority, and respect seem to be related to community membership and these must be factored into the processes and practices of partnership. Authority and respect are not automatically accorded as a simple result of the teacher-student hierarchical relationship. This point can be expanded in thinking about university-community partnerships by pointing out that merely
targeting a community to “receive” university engagement does not make it so, nor does it make a community willing to engage in a collaborative process with the university.

**Additional Implications for Partnership**

I have devoted much attention to the dangers of containing “partners” within a deficit model or a narrative of community decline. While Mr. Callaster as a Family and a Self-Made Man were clearly powerful themes, the resurgence of Guilford-Park High School, and by extension, its larger community was strongly interwoven into the testament of the final speaker, as well as the spontaneous choral performance of the second speaker and the student audience. Like Mr. Callaster, the community and its high school had also had to work hard, dream big, and go the extra mile to achieve success in an environment that “didn’t come from money!” Resilience and triumph over adversity were prominently featured. The powerful testimonies of the two African-American guest speakers complicate the “narrative of community decline” that Nisbet (1962) argues has often been simplistically adopted during the development of community research.

As the final speaker gave testament to, strength and resilience had been offered up in the face of larger, outside forces that had taken away resources from a community possessing limited resources from the start. Students talked, goofed off, made fun of peers, and engaged in power struggles during the first half of the program honoring the academic accomplishments of peers. They engaged with the photographic tribute to their long-time, respected teacher. What most captivated their attention were the powerful themes of strength and agency offered by the two elder members of their community. An oppositional community identity, forged in its resistance to outside forces, seems to be
the most powerful force in terms of the themes offered up by the guest speakers as well as that to which the students responded most vigorously.

The power of witnessing and responding to testaments of strength and resilience, however, must move further than a spontaneous choral performance amongst community leaders and its youth; this spirit must be harnessed to renew the culture of the everyday school community which implies a resurgence of an academic community as desired by teachers and administrators. On the one hand, evidence in the narrative points to the development of a strong oppositional identity to an academic culture on the part of the students. Whereas on the other, community membership seems to be important to students in terms of how they respond. At first glance these points may appear not to intersect, however, when combined they inspire a question pertinent to teacher educators: what is going on in the school that fosters the conditions whereby students and staff are not connecting to the extent they need to be and what is this impact on academic achievement? Possible answers could span across factors present in and out of school that contribute to an oppositional student culture to general cultural disconnects between students and staff which reinforce the difficulties in engendering improvements in the academic culture. The entire range of possible answers is relevant to the university and its partnership efforts in that it is charged with preparing teachers for schools such as Guildford-Park. The university is also quite removed from the everyday teaching and learning interactions of the school, and as such, faculty have much to learn from such a partnership if they attend to difficult questions such as these.
Community Membership and Implications for Partnerships

Student response to the community members during the Award Assembly provides two insights that can inform the university’s efforts. First, as I have attempted to argue in numerous ways, partnership initiatives informed by a deficit model are likely to be fraught with difficulty. Among some Guilford-Park residents, suspicion is part of the immediate response to the university’s efforts. One community member, an unofficial elder statesman, respectfully declined an invitation to serve on a committee on the university’s educational partnership initiatives. “I have a few problems with what the university is doing.” On a related note, the director of a community service program spoke of his friendship with a university public policy professor who asked him to address a class. Speaking very generally of the university’s partnership efforts, he shared, “It’s hard for me follow someone who hasn’t experienced what I have… growing up in public housing, having the experience of six kids sleeping in one bedroom, you know.” He then immediately went on to list examples of strong figures in the community who have valuable lessons to teach. The proximity of these two points in his conversation implies the community has much more to learn from examining itself rather than from the assistance of the university—which in fact, could be usefully instructed by the community itself. In addition, it is necessary to find out more about the extent to which there a perception that the university fits in the category of the ‘outside raiding forces’ as hinted by the example of Guilford as a “possessive community” as this perception impacts the partnership process.

The second insight gleaned from the Award Assembly narrative, comes from reading the silences of the event, and that is that the university and what is does, or what
it is capable of doing, was no where to be found during this performance of community. The university simply was not an issue, nor part of the equation. It appears to be an absent presence much as it was in the nearby high-school in which I conducted another related ethnographic study described in chapter three. When engaging in a partnership process it is important for members of the university community to incorporate an awareness that they are working with a particular space with concrete histories that may or may not intersect with the university in multiple ways. In addition, such attentiveness can guard against the “paternalistic posture” (Gross, 1988) that universities often assume when attempting to resolve social problems.

Avoiding “Difficult Knowledge” about Partnership through an Impassioned Administrative Discourse of Excellence

If we consider the Gala to be an example of the technologies of community building, we can explore the possible messages the university is trying to create for both the community’s and its own consumption. In chapter four I discussed a critical discourse analysis of key higher education policy statements on the future of state and land-grant universities in contemporary society. One of the principal points of the analysis was a consideration of the ways that the authors, presidents of leading universities, present the case that the nation’s research-intensive universities are uniquely positioned to redress society’s most pressing problems. To fulfill this promise an impassioned discourse of administration is called forth that veils the difficult, conflicting processes sure to result from administrative efforts to affect a “coherent campus culture” as part of its strategy to be a more engaged member of the community. These forces can be seen operating within the “Gala.”
The Award Assembly at Guilford-Park High School amply illustrates the urgency of needs presenting themselves to many urban K-12 schools. In addition, it illustrates that many of these revolve around inherently difficult questions of difference and diversity; race and gender; economic and social inequities; and relations of power in the multiple networks that overlap into schools. Calling forth a coherent community, on campus, and looking for a clearly marked community, off campus, without attending to these difficult questions will achieve little but add to the emotional demands of the already overburdened educators. In the “Gala” performance sponsored by the university we see passion, we hear brief snippets here and there of the challenges facing schools, and we definitely hear ways to improve the administrative practices of the university. However, we hear little else. Invoking an administrative discourse of excellence and simplistically calling forth community may very well occupy our attention to the point that we have the possibility of evading the more troubling aspects of schooling and our own complicities in perpetuating unfair educational structures.

Everyday Events, Ethnography, and Partnership

The everyday, too, is produced and experienced at the intersection of many fields of embodied individuals; at times and in places it may also be a limit that cultural practices, especially those that attempt to move across cultures, aim to escape. And... it does not possess a single history. It exists within multiple histories, many of which escape the way the past is remembered and stored officially—in universities, for instance. (During, 1993: p. 21)

The Award Assembly, a ritual event at most of the nation’s schools, not only can tell us much about the communities at Guilford-Park High School, it also illustrates the school’s multiple histories: 1) the former glory of school; 2) the efforts to bring it back from the brink; 3) the difficult and emotional labor of teachers and administrators; 4) the multiple cultural disconnects in the school; and 5) the ways that individual lived histories

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intersects with the collective. It allows us to see that communities do not simply exist by virtue of occupying a particular geographical space, rather they are always in process and need to be both nurtured and fought with/for. Communities exist, and are created, in their performance. All of these forces are important in determining the everyday events in the classrooms at GPHS. Yet most teacher education programs rely on technical-rational models of teaching and learning and rarely consider schooling in the context of its great complexity (Bascia & Hargraeves, 2001; Hytten, 1998; Osajima, 1989).

I have raised many possible points of disconnection between the school and the university in the juxtaposition of the two performance narratives and their discussion. However, an overarching objective of this analysis was to inspire educators to investigate more closely that which is performed in the context of everyday events in schools. There were many forces present in the performances that I did not discuss, but which are nevertheless, important when thinking about partnership ties between schools and universities to improve the conditions of teaching and learning in urban schools. For example, what might the incidences of student resistance tell us about the identities that they are developing and their “styles of belonging” (Williams, 1985) within the academic culture of the school? In fact, an absence in this dissertation project is a greater consideration of the ways students articulate their own identities through the ways they resist, or do not resist, the cultural practices of the school. Was the mimicry of students a way of belonging to a culture that resists the academic culture? Were struggles between teachers and students a way to subvert an authoritative power structure that students do not think teachers deserve?
Ethnographic study can provide a strategy to "defamiliarize" the power struggles to re-think what the students' actions may tell us about the disciplining routines of school (de Certeau, 1998/1994). Correspondingly, closely examining every day events can help us to re-think the actions of the school. For example, this was the second honor assembly in less than a space of a week's time, and it was powerfully paired with the honoring of and testimonies to the accomplishments of someone from the community. The high school is to be commended for its efforts to promote a stronger academic climate that draws from its own resources. However, it would be useful to examine what insight this ordinary event, a collective performance of community, can provide regarding the extent to which the values put forth as desirable for the school community are followed up in the every day actions and relations in the classrooms. The same thing can be argued in respect to the Gala. The university has staked its claim and made promises in its own efforts to assert its identity and relevancy to society. However, so far many of those promises remain unfulfilled.

I have argued that developing a successful, sustainable partnership between schools and universities depends on the strength of the communities found within each site and the extent to which the underlying definitions of "community" can be usefully unmoored at each site from their attachment to the idealistic construct's commonsense definitions. The discussion was framed by extending Phelan's (1994) point that popular views of community ignore the multiple "technologies of self" to include a consideration of the 'technologies of community' undertaken to sustain the collective selves. For example, the emphasis on academic achievement and the honoring of a "community hero" at the Award Assembly at the high school were part of the technologies teachers...
and administrators are using to re-new the GPHS school community. Similarly, the Gala was a performance of community on the part of the university, an attempt to construct both an institutional sense of community as well as to foster the network of personal connections needed to build any kind of sustainable partnership between the university and its neighborhood schools. The performances provided a space in which difference is more visible within the various communities, and the narratives offered a fertile site from which to consider the possible effects of the intersections of unity, coherence, intelligibility, and difference within community-building efforts. Both partnership and community imply difficult, arduous processes as opposed to the fuzzy, warm feelings educators may get upon reading the ways that they are so lovingly described in the educational literature.

Attending to the nuances of the two performances may allow members of the community to see, in process, the ruptures within that which members at each site were trying to represent. Neither site has achieved success in its efforts. In the case of the Gala, members recognized some of the very well real dangers to past efforts, the traces of which could remain to jeopardize current efforts. The sometimes half-hearted referrals to "gala" may reflect an awareness of the not quite appropriateness of its use. According to Phelan, "Performance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/place frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterward" (in Orner, Miller, and Ellsworth, 1996, p. 149). The question is whether the performances of community at the high school and university left visible traces. Or instead, do such performances become a substitute for the tough work required to negotiate the cultural disconnects between schools and universities? They may leave
only a trace as they simply provide a measure of comfort that something is being accomplished. However, for some these traces may prove quite substantial. For example, for one university administrator the Gala had a very real, vibrant trace, it was a "watershed event" that may help to wipe over past mistakes in terms of university engagement in the neighborhood schools. It gave him hope for continued action, action he deems difficult but necessary in terms of democratic commitment to society. For the kids at the high school, there had been other such events with the intended objective to renew community. The difficult work is to translate the traces from these performances to larger, more forceful imprints.
CHAPTER 6

DIFFICULT KNOWLEDGE AND THE IMPURE SPACE OF THE UNIVERSITY: COMPLICATING THE DISCOURSES OF HOPE, CRISIS, AND REFORM

I advance a critique of the partnership movement with caution and care, as my professional interests are in line with the promises that school-university partnerships make, especially in respect to better preparing teachers for the demands of the ever-changing contexts of [urban] classrooms. In this final chapter, I offer a summative discussion of my central arguments by bringing together data from the components of the dissertation study: the school-university partnership literature, the policy statements, and the ethnographic data. University faculty and school-based practitioners are increasingly positioned within an uneasy tension among the discourses of hope, crisis, and educational reform. School-university partnerships have emerged as a common strategy to solve institutional ills from the elementary to the post-secondary level. I have provided many examples of the impassioned tenor surrounding the promise of partnership. Yet in the literature, there are few examples of successful, sustained partnerships. There is very little concrete evidence that partnerships have been able to bring forth that which their promoters promise. Little evidence exists of evaluative studies of partnerships, nor of the existence of partnerships tied to measurable outcomes—e.g., increased academic
achievement of students in partner schools, noticeable changes in teacher education programs, higher participation rates of minorities in higher education, etc. Quite simply the promise of partnership seems largely rhetorical at best.

The ethnographic data from this case study of Midwestern University’s school-partnership initiative support these observations from the literature. In addition, the case study illustrates a context in which the university is undertaking a significant partnership effort within a climate marked by a considerable degree of mistrust and disengagement. The disconnects between the university and the schools, and the dubious manner in which some school-based educators characterize the work of the university, hamper the university’s efforts to make its mission to society intelligible to the public through a commitment to partnership with a set of nearby schools. Because the emergence of this incongruous scenario was a theme in the data in the pilot studies, I focused on the barriers to partnership in the dissertation as specific sites from which to learn about ways to move past the impasse created by relying on the rhetorics of hope, crisis, and reform. The urgency called forth by these fervent discourses exacerbates the significant obstacles to school-university partnership by diverting attention from the more troubling aspects of partnership, some of which are highlighted below. In addition, the urgency implied in these discourses may allow both university and school-based educators to avoid confronting their own possible complicity in enabling ineffective and inequitable educational structures.

In many respects, this study has been somewhat unwieldy. For example, I drew from many sources. I explored the complex trajectory of the development of higher education in the United States and offered a critique of the partnership literature. In
addition, I drew extensively from critical, feminist post-structural, and post-colonial theories to inform my reading of both the education literature and the data. The empirical portion of the study was two-pronged. First, I subjected a set of higher education policy statements to a critical discourse analysis to consider the strategic uses of an impassioned administrative discourse on university outreach and engagement practices. Second, I conducted an in-depth, multi-sited ethnographic study to explore the disconnects between Midwestern University and an urban high school struggling to renew the strength of its vibrant history. I attempted to link these two foci—the effects of an administrative discourse of excellence and the disconnects between schools and universities, by focusing on a foundational term in the field of education, ‘community.’ At this point I turn to an outline of the findings from a research project that deliberately sought to avoid the telling of tidy “victory narratives” (Lather, 2000b; Pillow, 1997).

Findings: Attending to “Difficult Knowledge” in Education

The overarching argument is that educators should resist relying on either 1) a romantic, idealistic vision of the university and the work of schools; and/or 2) a discourse of crisis in respect to the university’s relevance in society, as well as the work of urban schools. Neither helps educators move toward actually achieving partnership objectives as each discourse avoids the more complicated questions and issues that frustrate the processes of partnership. The following were evident in this case study and are examples of the complex, yet frequently occluded questions:

- unequal power relations within partnership
- gaps in the perceived value of cultural diversity
- issues of equity in education
the contrasting, yet intersected, histories of the more privileged members of the university community, generally speaking, and the residents in disadvantaged urban community spaces.

...and finally, the ways that race intersects will all of the above.

In sum, these complex issues and questions are examples of "Difficult Knowledge" (Pitt and Britzman, in press), crucial concerns that are difficult for educators to know, to acknowledge, and to reflect on the possibility of their own collusion in their promulgation. Difficult Knowledge is a heuristic tool to consider the effects of the following: 1) power and instrumental motivations within partnerships, 2) the barriers to partnership that are hidden by either the illusory language of partnership or the dreary discourse of crisis common in the literature, and 3) idealistic, uncomplicated definitions of "community" within education. In this final chapter I summarize the main findings of this study as a counter-voice to the absence of Difficult Knowledge in the existent literature and the higher education discourses on university outreach and engagement. What follows is an outline of the dissertation's key findings in respect to the partnership literature, the analysis of higher education policy statements, and the ethnographic focus on the disconnects across the sites.

Partnership Literature

The partnership literature provides little concrete assistance for overcoming the significant barriers to partnership. Variables within this scenario include:

A general reliance on either a glowingly-positive discourse of hope and promise or one invoking an imminent crisis in education. Either discourse, or both in collusion, may enable the imposition of top-down solutions to "fix" schools.
A common pattern of publishing articles that describe only the early stages of school-university partnerships. These provide general descriptions of the difficulties of partnerships, but little guidance on overcoming them.

Little evidence of evaluations of partnerships and of partnerships tied to specific outcomes.

The difficulties of partnerships are acknowledged by many, yet a prominent feature of the literature is to gloss over difficulties with sweeping claims of the great promise they hold to revitalize both schools and universities.

Not only do the above patterns contribute to the literature’s limitations in providing measurable assistance in building partnerships, but also they may actually inhibit the development of successful, sustainable partnerships. They may inhibit partnerships by veiling the gravity and complexity of the partnership relationship and the disconnects between universities and schools.

This point is elaborated by specific examples in a subsequent discussion.

CDA of Policy Statements and MU Discourse on Outreach and Engagement

The policy statements make strategic use of an impassioned tone in respect to the university’s mission and relevance to society. This rhetorical strategy potentially masks the authors’ reliance on a dispassionate, discourse of administration in achieving their proposed action plan. However, possible effects of the discourse of administration include the following:

The policy statements cogently argue the university’s realized and still-to-come contributions to society. However, the statements themselves may
serve in the place of concerted action. The university's promotion and tenure system largely does not reward the type of "discovery and engagement" described.

- The passionately argued discourse of administration deflects attention from the more instrumental reasons for partnership, e.g., to enhance the university's image, to make its practices more intelligible to the general public, to secure more stable sources of funding, and to secure intern placements for university students.

- It belies the fact that while the policy statements may express a desire for diversity on campus, the texts' efforts to form a "coherent campus culture" depict cultural diversity and diversity of opinions as a dangerous state of affairs.

- It may allow university administrators and faculty to avoid complicated questions of the value of philosophical diversity and 'dissensus' on campus and correspondingly, the potentially divisive questions that will impact university engagement in disadvantaged urban communities. The heart-felt expressions of a discourse of administration in the policy statements are a potential surrogate for the passionate conversations sure to arise over topics of equity and access in a changing society if they were to be included.

- A combined use of a discourse of administration and a discourse of crisis is effectively articulated by the president of Midwestern University to argue for an enhanced institutional identity and position of relevance to
the state. He strongly expresses a commitment to partnership with business and technology leaders, yet there is little evidence of university efforts to interrupt the assumption of a "paternalistic posture" or the "inherited" models of outreach as a "one-way process in which the university transfers its expertise to key constituents" in its partnerships with those "left behind." Possible effects of this follow in the ethnography section.

**Ethnography**

- To build more successful and sustainable school-university partnerships Midwestern University must attend to the following issues:
  - The extent to which the University is relevant in the community, and the factors that influence this determination
  - Community mistrust of the university's intentions
  - Past history of failures or failed promises.
  - Instrumental reasons for effecting partnership.
  - Its more privileged, powerful position within the partnership.
  - There is evidence that attention to the above is taking place, yet it mainly occurs on an individual level as opposed to a systemic or structural level.
  - While links between power, gender, race, and collaboration may be acknowledged, they are not attended to sufficiently within planning, implementation, and evaluation of partnerships.
  - One effect of the two above points is the likely positioning of the university as the distant, neutral "expert" to assist a "community in decline," often in university,
rather than community-identified, ways. There are several possible dangers of containing the community within this narrative of community decline:

- Easier to consider the community as a "lab"
- Time-consuming for schools
- Fosters ill-will, mistrust of the university in community
- Can reify stereotypes among university-based educators and students in respect to the community
- May facilitate the creation of the oppositional identities evident among community members and students
- The rhetoric of hope or crisis can be supported by unexamined definitions of popularly-defined, idealistic constructs in the field of education. "Community" is an example of such a term. Potential effects of the work of this unexplored idealistic concept includes the following:
  - In many cases, "partnership" is coded as "community" or "community-building" in both practice and the literature. Community often proceeds, or is privileged, over partnership in school-university partnership discourse. Thus, efforts to build and sustain community at each site influence the possibilities of partnership across the sites.
  - As an example of a foundational assumption operating in a popular, commonsense, the definition can actually impede the development of sustainable partnerships and make it more difficult to see or to attend to the disconnects between schools and universities.
Tying the data together

- Desires for easy clarity within both the processes of partnership, and in educational research in general, thwart efforts to attend to the following barriers as well as their effects. I elaborate on these below.
  - Ambiguity within partnership and its effects, particularly in respect to goals, objectives, and the roles and power of various stakeholders
  - Conflict
  - An enforced sense of "good will" on the part of educators
  - The emotional costs of partnership, and working in urban schools in general
  - Attention to the difficult, and potentially divisive questions of equity, power, race, and gender within urban education

My central argument has been that efforts to construct an easily intelligible, coherent narrative in discourse, social practice, and research mask the many real barriers to building successful, sustainable school-university partnerships. I conclude my synthesis of the dissertation with two short sections tying together the partnership literature and the data from this study. The first discusses power within partnership, and the second illuminates the barriers to partnership that are often de-emphasized by the elusive promises of partnership. A quote representative of the "promise" of school-university partnerships introduces each section. I conclude the dissertation by attempting to further illustrate a connection between the incredible promise promoted in hopeful
claims, the potentially unhelpful quest for coherence, and the very real barriers to partnership.

**Necessity, Power, and Partnership**

In many cases, the university personnel just want to lecture to the school people and then go back to their “ivory towers,” but not to listen to the real problems in schools and on their own campuses. More often than not, the university people seem to choose to forget that they also need to restructure their own programs and that they need schools’ help to do so. In reality, the universities may be in bigger trouble than are the schools, at least with respect to their role in the education of educators and the improvement of schooling. (Su, 1991, p. 32)

This quote carries an urgent tone, more akin to crisis and necessity than hope and promise. Nevertheless, its intent is to affect the revitalization of colleges of education and schools through a joining of forces. The statement provides a glimpse into the most essential themes within the partnership movement: the need for a restructuring of all tiers of the education system, and the power and culture gap between faculty and school personnel. The necessity for the “bumping together of university and school cultures” (Goodlad, 1993, p. 25) or the “collision” between the two sets of values (Million and Vare, 1994, p. 6) is implied by the urgency of the tone. The above quote is instructive in considering the intersection of power and partnership practices. For example, who and what are urging the partnership forward? How do unequal power relations among the various roles and positions of multiple stakeholders (i.e., positionality) interfere with the process of forming a coherent partnership? How does power traverse through the process of revitalizing educational structures?

Universities are often the initiators of a partnership effort, frequently for their own instrumental purposes. This is despite the call in the literature for collaboration in setting objectives and action (Harkavy, 1999; Osajima, 1989; Stringer, 1997). One
superintendent of a large, Midwestern school district groused to researchers, “I am so
damn busy meeting with deans and college professors wanting to ‘help’ I can’t get
anything done” (Anglin & Mooradian, 1990, p. 170). I found a similar scenario at
Guilford-Park High School. Several times during the year the programming coordinator
received calls from colleges or businesses offering to ‘help’ the troubled school or calls
asking for the school to provide data or entrée for research. Several of the requests would
have required a substantial amount of time on the part of the already overburdened high
school staff. Urban schools are also likely to be serviced by multiple higher-education
institutions, thereby increasing the likelihood of a “piece-meal” approach (Anglin &
Mooradian, 1990). In addition, school-based educators are often distrustful of the
intentions of the university, pointing to a perception that schools are simply “the field”
for gathering university research (Brookhart & Loadman, 1992). Teachers and
administrators who spoke with me during this study echoed Osajima’s (1989) observation
that university research can be perceived as “exploitative.” There is an expansive divide
between the calls in the policy statement for application of its expertise to solving
society’s “most vexing problems,” as argued in the policy statements and the on-the-
ground sentiment within the community that university research is self-serving and
exploitive.

Partnerships may be initiated when colleges of education, located in an uneasy
tension between research and practice, find themselves in dire need of revivification and
of re-asserting their relevancy and position within the university (Labaree, 1997;
Osajima, 1989). Goodlad (1993) suggests that many of the more rhetorical, rather than
actual, reform efforts since the 1980’s stem from the near-absence of colleges of
education from *A nation at risk* (1983) and the resulting conversations. The "identity crisis" of colleges of education during which many colleges of education have aligned themselves with the research agenda of higher education has resulted in what many see as an inappropriate power differential between faculty and school personnel. Goodlad (1993) subsequently opines that partnerships are difficult to effect because school personnel have been "virtually subservient" to the affected stance of universities as the "noblesse oblige" (p. 30) within the school-university relationship. This argument raises questions regarding the extent to which university faculty and graduate students attend to the tensions among the desire to "want to help," their own assumed higher status, and the multiple reasons why they need to collaborate with schools.

Power surfaces in myriad ways, including its intersections with prestige within partnership relationships and interactions. Within the academic community research and scholarship carries more prestige than the "practical" work of preparing teachers. The tenure and promotion model generally does not reward the kind of work needed to build effective, sustainable partnerships (Brookhart and Loadman, 1990, 1992; Bullough et al., 1999). Building the relationships needed for a successful partnership requires a great deal of time, potentially interfering with scholarship, as such it can be particularly dangerous for probationary faculty. Thus, if school-university partnerships are part of the agenda of revitalizing both institutions, faculty must be able to derive benefits from participation that will advance their careers in the university (Benton et al., 1996). In my study one senior faculty member, long active in nearby schools, shook her head as she spoke of junior faculty, "someone ought to tell them, you're a sucker if you do this."
The question of power and prestige in partnerships is not clear-cut, nor automatically held on the part of the university representatives, contrary to the implication of the introductory statement. The university personnel who perform the majority of the partnership labor are often marginalized, non-tenured personnel sponsored by "soft money" funding, and as such, partnership objectives may intersect very little with the central tasks and role of the university department, contrary to the visionary objectives of many of the partnership models (Lieberman, 1993). It cannot be assumed that a faculty member holds enough power to affect substantial change, or will even be able to accomplish the original objectives. Participants in the state sponsored partnerships studied by Teitel (1998) expressed frustration over their miniscule impact on the university's programming given that their principle contact with the university was limited to interaction with only one university faculty member. Faculty are often so stretched, and the promises so vague in the beginning, that disappointment is almost inevitable, despite the presumed hierarchy between schools and universities and the promise of what the university should be able to provide (Bullough et al., 1999).

This was also the case in Midwestern University's efforts. Organizations were re-configured and the impact of any one person, or small group of people, is limited. Indeed, one example of "difficult knowledge" that informed the dissertation is the realization that I have left only a trace, if even that, on the landscapes of the university and Guilford-Park despite many hours of hard work. I was often "positioned" by members of the school community as the "expert," however, as just one representative of the university, I was extremely limited in what I could accomplish or provide in the way of tangible resources. For example, I initiated a small pilot project to place graduate
students as “instructional assistants” in a high school classroom. However, at the high school the extent to which the classroom teacher was able to effectively use the graduate student as an instructional assistant was limited given other demands. In addition, limited impact can be seen on the university curriculum in that the wheels of the institutional structures that create new courses or intern opportunities move slowly, and the ties that I forged at the school cannot easily be picked up by another university representative not part of the initial project.

Lieberman (1992) wonders if collaboration is even possible in that both schools and universities, as institutions, are alike in that each “jealously guards its turf” (p. 152). Conflicts may arise when partnering crosses too far into the institutional lines of one partner over the other. Million and Vare (1994) describe a conflict over a graduate course offered some time into a successful partnership relationship. A serious conflict erupted when the middle school educators objected to being placed in the role of a traditional “learner” and evaluated by their university “partners.” Such a scenario raises a powerful concern: “We believe it difficult if not impossible to maintain a collegial environment when one partner must evaluate the other” (p. 7). Benton et al. (1996) argue that the existence of gaps in power among partners is one of the most important barriers to educational reform. They constructed their report by using the multiple voices among the stakeholders in order to disrupt commonly held assumptions of power, collaboration, and change.

The link between power, gender, and collaboration has been tentatively raised in the literature as an issue, but not explored in depth. Lieberman (1993) describes an uncomfortable reaction by the male school administrators to a plan to offer a “teacher
leadership” course. Administrators were concerned that the course may encourage tension and conflict in the district between administrators and the teachers union. She suggests a link between gender and power dynamics between teachers and administrators as an area for future research. Another tentative link to gender for future exploration is the observation raised by Kersh and Masztal (1998) regarding the potentially uncomfortable position of the school principal, often a male, “who must accommodate the administrative expectation of the principal as a strong leader while simultaneously releasing “power” to teachers to participate in decision making in the collaborative” (p. 223). Copper (1998) provides another interesting example of the need to consider the effect of gender. During a presentation of small group work to the larger group in the context of an initial planning meeting held with teachers and faculty, the group of teachers began each statement with qualifiers such as “Can we?” “Would it be possible?” “Will you consider?” This pattern, commonly associated with female speakers (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990), was pointed out to the teachers, who were then asked to rephrase their original statements, which according to the authors, completely changed the entire dynamics of the meeting.

Su’s introductory statement disrupts the accepted power hierarchy between the two sites. She challenges commonsense perception of professors as more powerful by asserting it is faculty, the “knowers” who lecture school teachers, who are out of touch with the “real problems.” They are blind, or arrogantly unwilling to see, that it is not the schools most in need of reform, but their own “ivory tower” homes, and that such a task cannot be done without the assistance of the schools. Thus, university personnel are not the more privileged and not the exclusive “knowers.” In addition, the literature interrupts
the easy construction of power as residing primarily on the side of the university.

Midwestern University credentialed many of the teachers in the partner schools and serve as gatekeepers for advanced degrees and professional certification for others. Faculty at MU evaluate and assign grades of the teachers in their partner schools. MU is charged as the official depository of the “knowledge” that teachers use, and indeed, are creating in their everyday practices in the schools. Within the network of interactions required by partnership there are many issues clamoring for attention that relate to complex power relations between schools and universities as well as complex answers to the questions of where and how knowledge that informs practice is created.

Consistence, Logical Integration, and Intelligibility within Partnerships

[In order for partnerships to succeed] individual cultures must be suspended and a new one created that is built on a shared vision. We need co-creators of this new culture in which we tested innovations, solved problems, and found ways to consolidate our learning. We needed to take time for reflection, collaboration, and building positive relationships and clear understanding of our goals. (Lemma et al., 1998, p. 11)

This section explores five barriers to partnership that desires for coherence and intelligibility within partnerships may hide. The statement that introduces this section is representative of the school-university partnership rhetoric of hope and reform and it can be usefully interrupted by a closer consideration of issues of consistency, stability, logic, and intelligibility within partnership. An objective of the dissertation is to call attention to the difficulties and dangers of creating partnerships premised on a call for a “clear understanding” and “shared vision” of partnerships and goals. I have attempted to present a case for always leaving open the possibility that we can ever clearly understand the partnership process by arguing that grasping at the promise of a “clear understanding” may preclude our ability to see the numerous barriers to the contested process of
partnership between schools and universities. Indeed, at least five "hidden barriers" are evident in both the literature and in my study that may prove dangerous to partnership: ambiguity; conflict; emotional costs; enforced 'good will' of educators; and the desire to avoid complex and potentially conflicting and divisive questions. (Britzman, 1998; Pitt and Britzman, in press).

Ambiguity

In the heartening statement introducing this section the overarching task is to "suspend" the existing "individual cultures" and to create a new collaborative culture among schools and universities in its wake. A demanding set of criteria is advanced to resolve the difficult task of co-creating a new culture. A sense of coherency, resolution, and intelligibility of the new culture permeates the statement. However, the task, or perhaps more accurately, the mission being charged is inescapably a dangerous and unstable process in which we should not expect to encounter stability at its foundation. For example, change and constant movement are common in urban schools, particularly in respect to frequent change of teachers, administrators, and students. This is combined with growing ethnic and linguistic diversity in the K-12 system (Teitel, 1998; Zetlin et al., 1992). There had been five new principals out of 13 partner schools the year I began my study. A second example is a turnover of nearly 20 percent of the student population in the first term of my data collection at Guilford-Park High School; 120 students left the high school and 121 students enrolled all by mid-October. Two of four administrators did not return the following year and their spots were filled by two new principals. The school staff was approached several times during the year with offers to "help." While

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the near constant movement in urban schools may initially escape the radar screens of partnership planners, its effects will not remain hidden for long.

Ambiguity and confusion are overwhelmingly found during the initial stages of school-university partnerships and may be more difficult to detect amidst calls for a coherent partnership. Kersh and Masztal (1998) describe partnerships as “messy” with “large doses of ambiguity, uncertainty, and confusion” (p. 20). Selke (1996) describes a problematic partnership, initiated at the upper levels of university administration with the very vague, ambiguous goals of “enhancing both educational programs.” Both professors and teachers were unclear about goals and objectives. University faculty are often at the front end of the planning (Osajima, 1989; Benton et al., 1996). Thus, it is quite difficult to co-construct a clear and concise partnership when only one side is at the table. Bullough et al. (1999) point to the inevitable confusion over roles among partnership participants. They argue that this condition is further aggravated by the likely context of not enough time to effect resolution. Many programs are put together so hastily that university faculty, in particular, may intensify their labor in attempting to fulfill the very vague and vast promises. Since the task is so overwhelming, disappointment is sure to follow; the condition of promising too much is facilitated by the ambiguous nature of the promise in the first place. Ambiguity in terms of thinking about commonly held roles also threatens a partnership relationship. In one partnership ‘success story,’ a teacher writes, “...my initial feelings were one of nervousness and uncertainty, quite a contrast to my school persona where I am considered articulate and knowledgeable” (Lemma et al., 1998, p. 5). A tolerance for ambiguity, the importance of which is downplayed in calls for coherency, is a vital ingredient among partners (Denton & Metcalf, 1993).
Conflict

The second hidden barrier, the discursive masking of conflict, may be facilitated by the rhetorical avoidance of ambiguity in partnership discourse. Conflict is nearly inevitable given the common starting point of vague and ambiguous goals as detailed above. In addition, calls for consensus, coherence, and clarity may leave partners ill-prepared to deal with tension and power struggles. A source of conflict in one partnership was that different stakeholders held quite different perceptions of the principle objectives and goals of the collaborative alignment (Zetlin et al., 1992).

Lieberman (1992) points out that the partners must be ready and willing to confront conflict and discomfort. In fact, she argues that “it may be that these collaborations create conflict in proportion to their effectiveness: the more serious the reform, the more intense the conflict” (p. 153). However, she goes on to posit that various stakeholders must consciously work against developing a “we/they” mentality.

Wrestling with conflict, and even failure, is largely missing from the partnership literature (Teitel, 1998). Teachers are often ill-prepared to deal with points of conflict and tension (Sorenson, 1995, 1998). Richmond (1996) observes that faculty seem much better prepared to deal with conflict and argumentation than teachers. Brookhart and Loadman (1990, 1992) found many points of conflict between the culture of the school and that of the university. Bullough et al. (1999) attempt to address this gap in the literature by focusing on problem areas as sites for learning. Thus, there is an inherent tension between the vast calls for coherent and collaborative partnerships and the inevitability of conflict in such relationships.
Emotional Costs

The third hidden barrier, the emotional costs, is facilitated by the academic calls to clarity as illustrated in the introductory statement. The calls for coherency emphasize logical understanding, and downplay the substantive emotional toil. For example, trust and a strong, interpersonal relationship have been identified as essential to partnerships (Osajima, 1989; Trubowitz, 1986) to construct the 'shared vision' identified by nearly every piece of literature, including this section's introductory statement (e.g. Su, 1991). Wistfulness and disappointment are also possible (Bullough et al., 1999; Teitel, 1998). Finally, suspicion and criticism can also be found, even in the face of contradictory evidence. Osajima (1989) links this to a “sense of passivity and victimization” (p. 120).

The Award Assembly narrative and its discussion provided several examples of the profound emotional costs of teaching and learning in urban schools. Simplistic calls for coherent, intelligible partnerships can both bring forth emotional barriers to collaboration, as well as leave stakeholders unprepared to deal with the emotional labor as it arises.

Enforced “Good Will”

The fourth barrier hidden by the rhetoric of promise in the partnership literature is what I call trading on the good will of participants. This rhetorical strategy glosses over the seriousness of the difficulties in the process of building partnerships, and its possible effects can be linked to both the difficulty of dealing with conflict and the aggravation of emotional costs to building and sustaining partnerships. An example comes from Moguel (1997), who states, “The literature suggests that even as the rewards of collaboration overcompensate for its difficulties, the potential of school-university partnerships to change teaching practice is not being realized” (p. 12). My concern is that statements
such as this, while acknowledging the “difficulties,” albeit superficially, make
unqualified claims that the rewards of partnership far outweigh its costs. Despite the
acknowledgement of the very real difficulties and dangers, there is very little concrete
evidence of rewards and benefits beyond the wildly hopeful claims. Instead, partners are
asked to take on a mantle of incredible dedication. For example, Sandholtz and Finan
(1998) describe the necessary ingredients of partnership leaders: allegiance to the
partnership; acceptance of unpredictable time demands; focus on intrinsic rewards;
emphasis on relationships; and a view of the long term. Goodlad (1993) urges
collaborators to be “moral stewards.”

The literature, while possessing the admirable intention of inspiring educators to
take on the gigantic task of reform, trades on their good will and urges already
overburdened educators to take on the significant emotional labor required for
partnership and “renorming the culture” as part of their moral obligation rather than
professional duty. The time and emotional costs are simply added to existing roles
without taking any responsibilities away or providing additional compensation. In
addition, it may create the conditions whereby educators feel guilty if they are not able to
rise to the lofty goals of the partnership, feeling inferior at an individual level when there
are quite real institutional barriers to partnership. This may lead to passive, or defensive,
resistance to partnership efforts instead of dealing with any problems or concerns openly
as they arise.

**Difficult Questions**

The identification of final hidden barrier in this discussion is inspired by Pitt and
Britzman’s discussion of “difficult knowledge.” My use of the term makes reference to
attempting to openly wrestle with those points of knowing that are, indeed difficult for educators to acknowledge, to know, to think about, and to incorporate into their daily relations with students and peers. In this focus on partnerships in urban schools, I limit the discussion to issues of diversity and equity. There are a few examples of PDS models that orient their lens toward these issues. For example, Osajima (1989) focuses on the promise of school-university partnerships in urban areas. Zetlin & MacLeod (1995) incorporated a focus on the social context of student learning within a school-university partnership. Kersh and Masztal (1998) describe partnership efforts within the context of school reform initiatives. Teitel (1998) links the PDS model to issues of social equity in education. A specific example of the latter orientation comes from Noffke et al. (1996) who recount their efforts to concentrate on issues of equity and the implementation of an African and African-American centered curriculum within the context of a partnership for school reform. Their project, with roots in the activism of the local African-American community, involved university researchers, teachers, and pre-service interns. However, these five examples stand out in their focus on critical social issues within the PDS model. Indeed, there does not seem to be a great deal of evidence that PDS sites have been specifically established in schools serving a diverse student body in terms of culture, income, or ethnicity (Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 1992), thereby possibly reducing the saliency of wrestling with these important, yet difficult and potentially divisive issues.

I found little discussion in the literature devoted to issues of equity, access, and diversity within PDS models. Erskine-Cullen (1995) hints briefly at this in her conclusion by wondering how growing ethnic diversity in schools will impact the partnership in the future. Perhaps indicative of the difficult nature of wrestling with
diversity and education in partnership is the experience described by Erlandson et al. (1999). They explicitly highlight the only “crisis” in the first year of a collaborative program as being a series of difficult conversations around racial inequity and social justice. White cohort members were initially very hesitant to even talk about the topic. The authors cite the assigned, specifically racially-charged readings as helpful in facilitating honest and difficult discussions among the non-whites. This discussion of personal experiences, combined with the readings, gave the white participants “crucial insight for understanding diversity issues” (p. 564). Further unpacking of this event would have been helpful, especially in view of the relative paucity of such discussions in the literature. The limited treatment paints an incomplete picture in which the transmission of knowledge was unidirectional from the participants of color to the white participants. There is no discussion of how the discussions affected the participants of color, their impact on the white participants and subsequent group discussions, nor of the possible links between such “difficult knowledge” and professional practices. The rhetoric of hope and reform allows a too-easy tale to be told by researchers and administrators that hides the many very real barriers to partnership.

Difficult Knowledge and the Impure Space of the University

Higher education does not occupy a pure, romantic space simply dedicated to the disinterested pursuit of knowledge. The educational options beyond high school have proliferated according to needs, as well as opportunities for profit on the part of private enterprise or funding on the part of public ones. There are elite research institutions, land grant universities, liberal arts colleges, state and regional universities with roots as normal schools or metropolitan institutions, community colleges, technical institutes, and
for-profit, short-term vocational programs. Indeed, a somewhat overlooked fact is that the business community currently spends more money on educating and training its workforce than the entire k-12 system in the United States. Corporate institutions have made forays into those portions of the educational system that many would like to think of as being more “pure” than not: the on-line University of Phoenix, traded on the NASDAQ, is the largest private university in the country and publishing companies are now entering the lucrative market of professional development of elementary and secondary teachers (Levine, 2000).

I raise these points to argue that we do ourselves a disservice by holding on to an idealized vision of the university’s past as the transmitter of culture and the institutional home of the disinterested pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. The entire post-secondary system, including its large research universities, has always been subject to multiple, intersecting demands that compete, conflict, and complement each other. I concur with the argument advanced by Readings (1995) that we find ourselves at a moment in time in which it is imperative to re-consider the purposes, mission, and history of the university. The geo-political forces that sustained the dramatic expansion of higher education in this century have shifted. The industrial complex which greatly impacted the rise of the research university has changed as the means of production change. The demographics of the nation have changed, as have prevailing opinions on who is most deserving of greater participation in society. All three forces have intersected and created greater access to higher education among a larger, more diverse portion of the population. This in turn, has helped foster the conditions in which even greater, and more vocal, demands for considerations of issues of equity, access, and justice can be made.

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However, we will be limited in our attempts to examine the mission of higher education and to respond to the needs of society if we become lost in discourses of crisis and redemption of schooling that are facilitated by romantic visions of the university.

It is ironic that calls for *clarity, coherence, and rationality* are subsumed into a passionate discourse of crisis by those holding both conservative and radical orientations. This appears to be a rather uneasy mix of logic and emotion in which each ignores, and enables, the effects of the other. What are the effects of looking for clarity and coherence of purpose by invoking such an impassioned tenor? What are the effects of arguing for the role of the university as a site of *rationality*, where “neutral facilitators” claim the ability to resolve society’s ills through the use of the emotional, passionate discourse of crisis and redemption? My concern is that we may become lost in the great rhetorical power of these enabling discourses and as a result, devote precious little effort to the serious contemplation of the complexity of the issues before taking action. Am I arguing that we cast aside the constructs of *clarity or coherence*? No, instead, I am suggesting that we attend to the dangers of the process of *fixing* clarity and coherence as well as how we mobilize the discussion of this process. To that end I have tried to convey a sense of just how messy the university’s development has been, and that a conscious working within the university as a conflicted space will be more productive in “re-imaging the university” (Readings, 1995; Wortham 1999) so that it might become a more sustainable partner.
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