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Self/Knowledge - Chapter One

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Abstract

This book describes how social identification and academic learning can deeply depend on each other, through a theoretical account of the two processes and a detailed empirical analysis of how students' identities emerged and how students learned curriculum in one classroom. The book traces the identity development of two students across an academic year, showing how they developed unexpected identities in substantial part because curricular themes provided categories that teachers and students used to identify them and showing how students learned about curricular themes in part because the two students were socially identified in ways that illuminated those themes. The book's distinctive contribution is to demonstrate in detail how social identification and academic learning can become deeply interdependent.

Keywords

educational sociology, social psychology, identity

Comments

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Learning Identity

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Learning Identity

The Joint Emergence of Social Identification and Academic Learning

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Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	page ix
1 Self/Knowledge	1
Students as Beasts	2
Making Up People, Locally	6
Denaturalizing Models of Identity	6
Timescales of Identification	8
Local Power/Knowledge	11
Beyond Dualism	12
Power/Knowledge	14
Classroom Self/Knowledge	17
Personalized Pedagogy	21
The Inextricability of Social Identification and Academic Learning	23
Outline of the Book	26
2 Social Identification and Local Metapragmatic Models	29
The Process of Social Identification	30
Events of Identification	30
Models of Identity	36
Beyond Macro and Micro	40
Trajectories of Identification	47
Gendered Models of Identity in the Classroom	49
Promising Girls and Unpromising Boys	52
Erika as Smart and Promising	55
William the Stereotypical Boy	58
William Out of Control	61
William the Slave	72
William the Spartan	77
William Content with Mediocrity	81

3	Academic Learning and Local Cognitive Models	90
	The Process of Academic Learning	91
	Events of Cognition	91
	Artifacts and Activity Systems	95
	Learning across Trajectories	101
	Learning Curricular Themes in a Paideia Classroom	105
	The Activity of Paideia Discussion	105
	Local Versions of Curricular Themes	115
	Equality 7-2521 and Lycurgus	118
	Pericles and the Analogy Between Athens and the Classroom	124
	An Example of Student Learning	131
	The Second Curricular Theme: The Legitimacy of Resistance	136
	The Overlap of Academic Learning and Social Identification	141
4	Tyisha Becoming an Outcast	148
	Overview of Tyisha's Local Identity Development	149
	Starting as a Regular Student	151
	From Regular Student to Outcast	155
	Tyisha as Explicitly a Problem	156
	Tyisha as "Conceited"	161
	Tyisha the Courageous Liar	169
	Curricular Themes as a Resource for Identifying Tyisha	178
	Tyisha the Beast	180
	Tyisha Continuing as a Beast	190
	The Outcast Resisting Authority	194
	From Disruptive to Skeptical	195
	Resisting Exploitation	208
	Conclusions	214
5	Maurice in the Middle	217
	Just Another Good Student	219
	Gendered Tensions	223
	The Girls Against Maurice	223
	Gender as a Curricular Concept	226
	Maurice the Outcast	231
	Maurice the Beast	232
	Embracing Individualism	240
	Maurice in the Middle	247
	Male Resistance	247
	Caught Between Loyalty and Resistance	252
	Conclusions	270

<i>Contents</i>	vii
6 Denaturalizing Identity, Learning and Schooling	273
Generalizability and Cross-Timescale Relations	275
Knowledge, Power and Human Nature	281
Moral Visions of Schooling	286
<i>Abbreviations of Names</i>	291
<i>Transcription Conventions</i>	292
<i>References</i>	293
<i>Index</i>	303

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1

Self/Knowledge

In functioning classrooms, as paradigmatic sites of rational activity, we expect to find focused and productive cognitive processes. Irrational and irrelevant things happen in classrooms, of course, but when teachers and students are doing the primary business of schooling – reading, writing, discussing, experimenting, calculating – we expect to find subject matter, argument, evidence and academic learning. As more sociological and anthropological studies of classroom practice have been done over the past three or four decades, however, it has become clear that social identification, power relations, interpersonal struggles and other apparently non-academic processes also take place during the primary business of schooling (e.g., Cazden, John and Hymes, 1972; Gee, 1989; Varenne and McDermott, 1998). Furthermore, these apparently non-academic processes cannot easily be separated from the academic activities that go on in classrooms. Subject matter, argument, evidence and academic learning overlap with social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles (e.g., Leander, 2002; Lemke, 1990; Mehan, Villanueva, Hubbard, Lintz and Okamoto, 1996; Wortham, 1994).

Although many have pointed out the co-occurrence of academic and non-academic activities in classrooms, significant dispute remains about how to conceptualize relations between the two. Some continue to revel in demonstrations of non-academic activities in classrooms, claiming that ideologies of academic learning merely distract from the real social business of schooling. Some treat the two types of activities as concurrent but separate and continue to maintain that schooling is primarily about academic learning. More promising accounts have begun to explore the complex interrelations among academic and non-academic activities. This book describes one way in which academic and non-academic activities can overlap in classrooms. It focuses on social identification and academic learning, sketching an account of how these two processes can overlap and partly constitute each other. Through empirical analyses of social

identification and academic learning in one classroom over an academic year, the book shows how subject matter, argument, evidence and academic learning sometimes intertwine with and come to depend upon social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles in classrooms.

STUDENTS AS BEASTS

On January 24, in their joint English and history class, Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith discussed Aristotle's *Politics* with their ninth grade students. Aristotle argues that people who live outside society, who do not experience natural interdependence with others, are not fully human: "He who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be beast or god" (Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a, line 29). This claim puzzles the late twentieth-century American students, who conceive of "humanness" as lodged in individuals' agency and inalienable rights. In order to help the students understand Aristotle's conception of human nature, the teachers give two examples. They imagine two students in the classroom as hypothetical "beasts," and they discuss how these hypothetical beasts might differ from humans who live in society.

Early in the discussion, Mrs. Bailey singles out Maurice as a hypothetical beast. ("T/B" is Mrs. Bailey and "FST" is an unidentified female student. Transcription conventions, a list of classroom participants and a key to abbreviations are in the appendices.)

- 315 **T/B:** I mean think of what- he's saying
there. he's saying if Maurice went out and lived in
the woods (4.0) [some laughter]
FST: °they're talking about you°
T/B: and never had any contact with the rest of us,
320 he would be- uh- like an animal.

With this example of Maurice, Mrs. Bailey uses the common pedagogical strategy of building an analogy between students' actual or hypothetical experiences and the curricular topic. Such analogies make familiar concepts available to students as they develop their own models of curricular topics. Mrs. Bailey probably hopes that students will better understand Aristotle's conception of human nature through a discussion of how Maurice the beast would differ from students who belong to society. Students' experiences as members of productive groups – perhaps their understandings of collective goals or shared responsibilities – might help them understand why Aristotle believed humans to be essentially social. By imagining how Maurice's dispositions and opportunities would be different if he lived apart from society, they might explore Aristotle's view of humans who do not live up to their social nature. With substantially more discussion, the

example of Maurice the beast might contribute to students' learning about Aristotle.

The teacher's use of Maurice as an example may also help to socially identify him. Mrs. Bailey's hypothetical example separates Maurice the beast from "the rest of us" – the teachers and other students who remain part of "society." "The rest of us" are social beings, working together in society as Aristotle envisioned it. Maurice the beast does not participate in this society, living instead like an animal out "in the woods." Did Mrs. Bailey choose Maurice for this role because he himself is separated from the rest of the class in some way? Is she implying that Maurice sometimes behaves like a "beast?" As described in Chapter 5, the teachers and the girls who dominate discussion in this classroom often exclude Maurice from classroom interactions. They also sometimes identify him as resisting school and as unlikely to succeed in later life. In this context, the discussion of Maurice as a beast may not be merely hypothetical. Teachers and students may be commenting on Maurice's own social identity, as they draw a tacit analogy between his identity as a student excluded from classroom activities and his hypothetical role as a beast. Chapter 5 analyzes the "Maurice the beast" example in detail, showing how teachers and students do in fact use his hypothetical identity as a beast to reinforce Maurice's own identity as an outcast from the classroom "society."

Later in their discussion of Aristotle, the teachers and students switch from discussing Maurice to discussing Tyisha as a beast. Right before Tyisha enters the discussion, teachers and students have proposed that humans differ from beasts because humans have "goals." Tyisha offers her cat as a counterexample, arguing that her cat has goals just as people do – for instance, trying to jump onto the counter. Mrs. Bailey then inserts Tyisha (TYI) into the example.

- T/B:** let's- let's- let's take what- (3.0) let's take
675 what your cat's doing that every day he sees that-
counter that he wants to get on, and every day when
he passes that counter he tries to get up there. that's
a goal. ok[ay
FST: [yeah.
680 **T/B:** how is that different than your goal, the goal
that you might have had last night when you had
this reading, or
TYI: °I don't know°

Here Mrs. Bailey again uses students' own experiences to teach the curriculum. Aristotle distinguishes between uniquely human and other goals. Mrs. Bailey asks students to consider the differences between Tyisha's goals

and her cat's goals. By exploring the differences between Tyisha and her cat, perhaps the students can better understand Aristotle's distinction between humans and beasts.

As the discussion continues, this seems to happen.

FST: humans can do more things than cats can do, like they can build

TYI: no that's not- just a goal. my goal is to win in Nintendo and

695 [laughter by a few girls in the class]

FST: that's your goal?

TYI: it's a go:al, so

T/B: okay maybe winning at Nintendo is like your cat's goal of getting on top of the-

700 **TYI:** right

T/B: the- the counter. but aren't- don't we have more [long=

FST: [better

T/B: =ranged goals than your cat getting on

705 top of the counter, or you winning Nintendo?

Acknowledging Tyisha's valid argument that humans have some beast-like goals, Mrs. Bailey distinguishes between two types of human goals: uniquely human ones and more instrumental goals that we share with other species. As they pursue it in subsequent discussion (analyzed in Chapter 4), this distinction seems to help students understand something about Aristotle's account of human nature.

This discussion also has implications for Tyisha's social identity. In arguing that her goals are the same as her cat's, Tyisha describes herself as having the intellectually and morally uninspiring goal of winning Nintendo video games. This provides teachers and students an opportunity: in addition to addressing her argument about goals, they go on to criticize and tease Tyisha herself for having beast-like goals. Right before the next segment, Mr. Smith tries to convince Tyisha that she has uniquely human goals, like the desire to get up in the morning, get to school and pursue her education. Tyisha then tries to undermine the distinction between uniquely human and beast-like goals.

T/S: so you had goals even before you s[tarted

TYI: [but not in

735 the summertime. I just got up, see, just like

T/S: ah, and in summertime when you got up because you had to come to school, what was your goal or was it to sleep until three in the afternoon? or to get up and play with your friends?

Self/Knowledge

5

- 740 **TYI:** the same goal my cat had, to go to sleep,
and get up and eat.
T/B: ahhh, isn't that interes [ting? [increase in pitch,
"mocking" effect]
T/S: [ahhhh
- 745 **T/B:** same goals as her (1.0) [cat=
FST: [cat had
T/B: =had. wow.
FST: so you are like an animal.
T/B: so you are like an animal.

The teachers and students use their discussion of beasts and goals to tease Tyisha here. They imply that the rest of us have both uniquely human and beast-like goals, while Tyisha has mostly beast-like goals. The full analysis of this discussion in Chapter 4 will show, however, that the teachers and students are not simply teasing. By this point in the year they habitually exclude Tyisha and identify her as less promising than other students. When they identify Tyisha as a beast in this example, they reinforce her social identity as an outcast in the classroom.

These brief segments by themselves did not establish anything definite about Tyisha and Maurice's social identities, nor did they allow students to learn key concepts from the curriculum. But the detailed analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 will show that, together with other discussions, the examples of Tyisha and Maurice as beasts did contribute both to identifying these two students socially and to helping some students learn about the curriculum. Over several months, both Tyisha and Maurice were themselves identified as "beasts" of a sort – as students excluded from the core group of cooperative students and considered less likely to succeed in school. Over several months students also learned about the curricular issue of what "beasts" or social outcasts are, and about how different intellectual traditions have conceived the appropriate relation between individuals and society.

The examples of Tyisha and Maurice as beasts contributed both to social identification and to academic learning. Students and teachers used the examples to reinforce Tyisha and Maurice's social identities as outcasts in the classroom. At the same time, they used the examples to explore and ultimately to learn something about Aristotle's distinction between humans and beasts. These examples show how both processes can go on simultaneously in classrooms. The rest of the book looks in detail at Tyisha, Maurice, their teachers and their classmates over an academic year, in order to explore how these students' social identities overlap with the subject matter they learned. To frame the problem initially, it will be easier to conceive of separate processes – social identification and academic learning – that occur simultaneously and interconnect. As the book proceeds, however, I will argue that it is more productive to reconstrue social

identification and academic learning as inseparable parts of more general processes.

MAKING UP PEOPLE, LOCALLY

Chapters 4 and 5 trace the identity development of Tyisha and Maurice in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom over the academic year. The analyses show how both students were sometimes identified as "beasts" or outcasts in the classroom. It took many events of identification, across several months. But eventually Tyisha was routinely identified as a disruptive outcast, as someone who had rejected the teachers' authority and who had given up on the promised benefits of schooling. Maurice also came to be identified – although only sometimes, and only partially – as an outcast who refused to join the teachers and the cooperative students in their academic community. Thus Tyisha and Maurice *enacted* the analogy between their hypothetical behavior in the examples and Aristotle's account of society. In the classroom itself these two students were identified as beasts who allegedly refused to follow the rules of classroom "society."

Based on this brief sketch of Tyisha and Maurice's emerging identities, it may look as if they were being stereotyped based on their race. Both were African American students in an urban public school classroom at the end of the twentieth century. Although teachers and students did not use these terms, Tyisha became in some respects like the "loud black girls," and Maurice became in some respects like the "resistant black males" described by Signithia Fordham and others (1996; Anderson, 1999; Fordham and Ogbu, 1986). In the examples of Tyisha and Maurice as beasts on January 24, teachers and students did in fact draw on widely circulating models of identity that involve race – models that label some African American students as more likely to reject mainstream institutions like school – as they identified these two students as outcasts. But we will see that these racial models do not by themselves explain what happened to Tyisha and Maurice. These widely circulating sociohistorical models only contributed to the students' social identities as they were mediated through more specific local models of identity.

Denaturalizing Models of Identity

By "model of identity" I mean either an explicit account of what some people are like, or a tacit account that analysts can infer based on people's systematic behavior toward others. Models of identity develop historically. "Loud black girls," "resistant black males" and "disruptive students" can be intelligibly used as categories of identity only by some groups of people at specific sociohistorical moments. Hacking (1990) describes how such models and categories of identity emerge over decades and centuries.

During the nineteenth century in Europe, for instance, it became possible to conceive of people as “normal” and “deviant” in new ways. As the concept of probability emerged and was applied to people, it became routine to classify individuals as normal or deviant along various dimensions. Bureaucracies arose to gather and tabulate statistics on different types of people – focusing especially on deviance like suicide, crime and prostitution – and it became natural to categorize some people as deviant in ways that had not been possible earlier. Before the concept of probability was developed, there had been “human nature,” and aberrations from it, but not normals and deviants along bureaucratically and scientifically established dimensions. Afterwards, both laypersons and experts had available what Hacking calls new “human kinds,” new models of identity to apply to each other. Hacking argues that societies “make up people” as they develop models, categories and technologies for social identification.

Foucault (1966/1971; 1975/1977) offers a similar analysis, in some respects, showing how models of identity and institutionalized practices of identification developed over the last few centuries in Europe. He traces a larger historical shift – from identifying people based on their behaviors to classifying and disciplining them according to their mental and spiritual dispositions – and he describes how institutionalized technologies for classification developed, first in the church and then in government. He shows how schools, for instance, developed elaborate classifications of students as promising, normal, resistant, impaired and the like – classifications that have been institutionalized in grading practices, in disciplinary procedures, in the spatial arrangement of students in classrooms and through other techniques. He also describes how the social sciences have been crucial in developing classifications of identity that bureaucrats employ and that laypeople apply to themselves and others. Foucault would agree with Hacking that, after this historical shift, we are able to identify deviants in ways that had not been possible before. Foucault adds a more detailed and more menacing account of the practices of surveillance through which institutions and people now monitor themselves and others for deviance.

By providing compelling historical accounts of how models of identity emerge over decades and centuries, Hacking and Foucault denaturalize what seem to be inevitable ways of identifying people. Of course, it seems to us, there are deviants. Surely all societies have had people exhibiting non-normative desires, behaviors and attitudes. But Hacking and Foucault show how, although there may always have been people we would call deviants, those in other places and times have identified such people using very different models of personhood. There has not always been a concept of the human “norm,” defined in probabilistic terms. There have not always been bureaucracies and social sciences to provide categories for sorting individuals and pathologizing some of them. There have not

always been processes of surveillance, in which institutions and individuals make visible the normativity or deviance of their behavior.

I will pursue Hacking and Foucault's denaturalizing argument further than they do. Models of identity are contingent not only at the level of sociohistorical epochs, but also at more local levels. We must explore the local "spaces" (Blommaert, Collins, and Slembrouck, 2004) and shorter "timescales" (Lemke, 2000) in which widespread practices and categories get contextualized. Although Hacking and Foucault acknowledge that models of identity are not uniformly applied across contexts, their analyses present contemporary European-influenced society as if we have now adopted the models of identity that they describe. They do describe widespread ways of thinking and acting, of course, ones that are becoming even more widespread through media and other globalizing technologies. But, as Agha (in press) argues, models of identity always have a "social domain." Models of identity spread over time and space, through many types of events, but even the most widespread are only used by a particular subset of people in a given and time place. Furthermore, models of identity change as they move across time and space, and they are applied in contingent, sometimes unpredictable ways in actual events of identification.

Just as Hacking and Foucault show that apparently natural models of identity in fact emerge historically, over decades and centuries, I will show how apparently widespread sociohistorical models of identity vary as specific versions emerge locally. There is not one model of "loud black girl" and "resistant black male" in the contemporary United States that recurs in the same form across contexts. It does not suffice to argue simply that Tyisha and Maurice were identified as typical black girls and boys. Other African American students in the classroom did not get identified as outcasts, and Tyisha and Maurice did not fit the typical models in important respects. In order to provide a more adequate analysis, we must investigate empirically how a model of identity can take distinctive form in local contexts and how that locally inflected model is applied to individuals in specific ways. To apply sociohistorical models of identity uncritically, as if they "naturally" have the same form across contexts, would fail to explain how social identification actually happens in context.

Timescales of Identification

Lemke's (2000) concept of "timescales" helps clarify the relation between widely circulating models of identity, like those described by Hacking and Foucault, and the versions of these models that occur in local contexts like Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom over an academic year. Processes relevant to understanding meaningful human action take place across various characteristic time intervals – from the milliseconds required for neuromuscular activity, to the seconds required for ritualized interactional

coordination, to the days or months required for group consensus-building, to the years required for the development of neuroses, to the centuries sometimes required for transformation in socioeconomic systems. Social scientists often represent these as different levels of explanation and argue that different phenomena can be explained at different levels. Lemke presents an alternative approach. He argues that any phenomenon is constrained and made possible by processes at several disparate timescales.

To understand how Tyisha was ultimately identified as a disruptive outcast in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom, for example, we need to explore "cross-timescale relations" – the set of linked processes across several timescales that collectively explain how this phenomenon occurred. As I argue in more detail in Chapter 4, it will not suffice simply to argue that she is an African American girl who was tarred with the longer timescale stereotype of being a "loud black girl." Her social identification as a beast, in the example of Tyisha and her cat, did happen only as teachers and students presuppose longer timescale models associated with her race and gender. But these longer timescale models were mediated through and changed by processes at shorter timescales.

As has been described by Garfinkel (1967), Rampton (1999), Schegloff (1988) and many others, widely circulating sociohistorical models of identity only take effect as they are successfully applied in events of identification. The application of such a category in practice is a contingent accomplishment that can misfire or take unexpected form. Analyzing Tyisha's social identification thus requires both attention to sociohistorically emergent categories of identity and interactionally emergent applications of these categories in events of identification. But I argue that, as illustrated by the cases of Tyisha and Maurice, we must attend to *other* timescales *beyond* sociohistorical and event-level emergence. In this case, we must also study how *local* categories of identity emerge in the classroom over the academic year.

In order to analyze the social identification and academic learning that occurred in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom over the academic year, we must attend to a months-long timescale across which classroom-specific habitual patterns of social identification and academic learning developed. Teachers and students developed local models of identity and habitually apply these to students like Tyisha and Maurice over the academic year. They also developed local models of curricular topics and used these as they worked to understand the subject matter. "Disruptive outcast," for instance, meant something particular to these teachers and students because they developed a local model of this identity that drew on their own experiences and discussions. This local model was constrained by longer timescale processes, but it cannot be fully predicted from those longer timescale processes. The local model was also constituted by shorter timescale processes, like the use of certain categories to identify Tyisha or

Maurice in particular classroom discussions. The local model emerged from but cannot be reduced to event-level processes.

Hacking and Foucault demonstrate the historical contingency and trace the emergence of models of identity across decades and centuries. Similarly, I will show the contingency and emergence of models of identity in local contexts like this one classroom over several months. Tyisha was not simply a loud black girl and Maurice was not simply a resistant black male. The analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 show them getting identified as somewhat familiar and somewhat peculiar versions of these categories. The social identification that actually happened to Tyisha and Maurice in this classroom cannot be understood without attending to contingent models of identity local to this classroom, because these local models emerged from but partly transformed more widely circulating models. Students and teachers could not have developed the local models they did without using sociohistorical models as resources. But they used these resources to build context-specific local models.

The social identification of students like Tyisha and Maurice, then, depends on contingent models of identity that emerge historically, locally and interactionally. Models of identity emerge at all three timescales (and across other timescales as well), and adequate empirical analyses will trace the emergence and reveal the contingent character of models at each timescale. My analyses in this book attend to emerging local models in particular, because of the central role these models play in explaining students' social identification in this classroom. I also attend to the contingent use of both sociohistorical and local models of identity within minutes-long events. Thus I analyze the interplay of emerging local models and the contingent events in which these and other models are used and sometimes transformed. I do not trace the emergence of sociohistorical models of identity like "resistant black male" across decades, although such models have emerged historically. One analysis cannot document all relevant timescales. I rely instead on others' descriptions of how these sociohistorical models have developed and are commonly used in contemporary America.

Close attention to the local timescale in this case also makes visible the intertwining of social identification and academic learning. By tracing the distinctive local models of identity that emerged in this classroom, as these teachers and students talked to each other over several months, we can see overlaps between social identification and academic learning that would not be visible if we attended only to isolated events or to more widely circulating sociohistorical models. Processes at other timescales played an important role in both social identification and academic learning in this classroom, and I attend to some of these processes in the analyses below. But I focus on the local timescale of these teachers' and students' interactions over an academic year, because this makes visible a distinctive

way in which subject matter, argument, evidence and academic learning intertwine with social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles in classrooms.

In addition to attending to models of identity that developed locally in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom, the analyses in this book also attend to the trajectories of identification traveled by particular individuals across the academic year. Just as attention to the local timescale shows how apparently uniform sociohistorical models of identity can take on unexpected, context-specific forms as they are applied locally, attention to the social identification of individuals across events shows how both sociohistorical and local models of identity can be applied to individuals in distinctive ways. In other words, there are two relevant processes happening at the local timescale in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom. Local versions of the "outcast" and "disruptive outcast" identities emerged over the academic year, as teachers and students transformed sociohistorical models and constructed distinctive local models of identity. At the same time, Tyisha and Maurice developed their own specific identities over several months in the classroom and these identities were not fully predictable from the local models. The local models of identity were shaped in part by the presence of Tyisha and Maurice as instances of them, and Tyisha and Maurice's social identities took on their particular form in part because of the local models that the class happened to be developing. But Tyisha and Maurice did not become canonical instances of the local models. In fact, they both violated central tenets of those local models. In order to understand the emergence of the local models, we must attend both to the locally typical identities attributed to students and teachers over the year and to the distinctive identities of Tyisha and Maurice. By attending both to emerging local models of identity and to how teachers and students applied these models in unique ways to Tyisha and Maurice as individuals, we will be able to explore one way in which social identification and academic learning can become inextricable.

LOCAL POWER/KNOWLEDGE

When we look at the local models of identity that developed in this classroom over the year and at the distinctive individual trajectories of identification traveled by Tyisha and Maurice, two things come into view. First, the social identification of these two students was non-normative in more than one way. It was not predictable from more widely circulating sociohistorical models of identity, although it drew on them. It was also not predictable from local models of identity that emerged in this classroom, although it drew on these as well. The non-normative, contingent character of the social identities actually inhabited by students in this classroom was complex – drawing on familiar models in some respects, but sometimes

employing them in unusual ways. By attending to local timescales and to individual trajectories, we can see empirically how social identification actually unfolded in practice and we can generate a more nuanced account of how processes at different timescales contributed to students' emerging social identities.

Second, attention to local models and individual trajectories also makes visible how heterogeneous resources contribute to both social identification and academic learning. Social scientists and educators often assume that apparently non-academic resources like practices of social exclusion and xenophobic stereotypes are relevant to social identification, while assuming that academic resources such as students' background knowledge about curricular topics are relevant to academic learning. By looking closely at the local timescale in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom, we will see that academic resources can be deeply implicated in social identification and that apparently non-academic resources can be deeply implicated in academic learning. Social identification and academic learning both depend on contingent, heterogeneous sets of resources, and the relevant sets of resources will vary across cases. To understand how students actually get identified and learn in classrooms, we must look across the typically segregated processes of social identification and academic learning and analyze how academic and non-academic resources can play essential roles in both processes. When the same resources contribute both to social identification and to academic learning, as they do in this case, the two processes deeply depend on each other.

Beyond Dualism

But we tend to resist seeing such interconnections, "purifying," as Latour (1993) says, the apparently non-academic and apparently purely cognitive realms. Despite the fact that social identification and academic learning can deeply interrelate, we tend to construe them as separate processes. Even though teachers and students might have taken advantage of the academic example of Tyisha as a beast to pursue their ongoing social identification of her as an outcast and an unpromising student, we normally think that Tyisha's emerging social identity as an outcast from the core group took shape apart from students' understandings of the curriculum. We normally think that students' emerging understandings of the curriculum – although they may be interrupted or occasionally facilitated by the social identification of students – generally take shape independent of students' social identities. After all, Tyisha could have been socially identified as an outcast even if they had been discussing a radically different curriculum, and students could have learned about the curriculum even if Tyisha and Maurice were not in the class. Social identification and academic learning may occur at the same time and through the same talk, but they seem essentially separate processes.

Why do we normally think of these two processes as separate? Latour (1993; 1999) and others argue that we are influenced by an unrealistic conception of knowledge, dating back to the Enlightenment, in which true knowledge is grasped by the individual mind as objective and certain. According to this conception, knowledge must be purged of all connections to social identities, power relations and subjective biases. Aristotle had a view of human nature, independent of what we might think of that view and how it might serve our purposes. If social identification and academic learning are mixed together, our interpretation of Aristotle might be polluted with our personal and political biases. The knowledge we aim to teach in school must be separated from subjective factors associated with our selves and our politics, the argument goes, and thus we should not mix together social identification and academic learning. Advocates of this conception acknowledge that social identification and learning sometimes go on simultaneously. Energetic social identification in a classroom may also block learning by distracting teachers and students. But genuine learning must be analyzed as the purely intellectual process it is. Whatever their social identities may have been, students either developed representations that reflect Aristotle's views or they did not. Analyses of academic learning in this classroom must bracket any social identification that may have occurred and focus on academic processes alone.

Despite the power and ubiquity of this sharp distinction between social and subjective "pollutants" and objective knowledge, many philosophers and social scientists have argued against the Enlightenment conception of knowledge (e.g., Bickhard, 1993; Cavell, 1979; Haraway, 1991; Latour, 1999; Putnam, 1998). Some have focused on language. From an Enlightenment standpoint, language stands apart from and represents the world. "Ordinary language philosophy," from Wittgenstein (1953) and Austin (1956/1975) to Cavell (1979), explores how language gets used as part of social activity in the world. These philosophers break down the distance between language and the world by describing the immediacy of relations between words and world, as words are used in ordinary contexts. They show how everyday actors cannot, do not need to and would not want to establish definite, fixed relations between their words and the world. The words and representations involved in knowing are intertwined with practical activities in ways that allow ordinary people to go on unproblematically with everyday life. Only philosophers craving disembodiment could overlook the smooth function of everyday knowledge and yearn for the inhuman purity of objective knowledge.

Such alternatives to the Enlightenment view argue against what Bickhard (1980; 1993) labels "encodingism:" the picture of knowledge as a set of representations that encode a world that is separate from those representations. The alternatives also argue against classic oppositions like subjects/objects and humans/nature, which split the knowing subject from the known world (Haraway, 1991). Instead of splitting the knower

from the world, we must embed the knower in the social and natural world. Bickhard's (1993) "interactivism" does this. In his account, representations emerge only within goal-directed action, within organism/environment relations. People learn as part of the same activities through which they act in the world, while performing social actions like identification. The resulting knowledge should not be extracted from activity and assessed objectively, if that means purged of all connections to the world. Knowledge exists only in activities, and it is only Enlightenment yearning for purity that drives us to epistemological anxiety. As Putnam (1998) puts it, body, mind and world are "braided" together, such that knowledge functions only through interactions among these intertwined components in practice. Such alternatives to the Enlightenment view of knowledge do not deny that people learn about the world. They argue that knowledge of the world does not involve a lone, disembodied thinker whose representations either correspond to the world or do not (Shweder, 1991).

Many alternatives to the Enlightenment view acknowledge that social identities and power relations play an important role in human cognitive life. Human activities, including academic and cognitive ones, both presuppose and create social identities. As Latour (1999) shows, if we trace the processes relevant to the development, validation and use of scientific knowledge – a type of knowledge typically considered "pure" – we quickly discover that social identities, institutional arrangements and power relations are bound up with that knowledge. In order to understand how people learn and use the resulting knowledge, we must explore how scientific learning and knowledge are intertwined with social identities and power relations in the world. Conversely, in order to understand how people get socially identified, we must explore how identities are bound up with and constrained by insights into the real world. But the involvement of social identity in cognitive practices like science does not undermine actors' claims to know things – if we conceive of knowledge as functioning in the social world as opposed to standing apart from it.

Power/Knowledge

Philosophers have provided abstract conceptualizations of how the mind and the world might be "braided," in Putnam's (1998) terms, but it has required empirical work by social scientists to describe more precisely how this braiding works. Many social scientific attempts to move beyond the Enlightenment conception of knowledge proceed from an alternative conception of human nature. Instead of a disembodied mind – or, in the philosophers' favored image, a "brain in a vat" independently cogitating about the world – many have proposed that human minds are essentially social (e.g., Bateson, 1972; Cole, 1996; Geertz, 1973; Tomasello, 1999; Vygotsky, 1934/1987). Humans differ from animals largely because

of our ability to pass down increasingly complex tool use from generation to generation (Tomasello, 1999). At birth and throughout life we are dependent on others to provide us with physical and cognitive tools that we use to survive in and represent the world. By nature, then, humans are sociocultural. Without the tools provided to us by other members of our group, we would not be human – we would not speak or engage in sociocultural practices. Both our cognitive and social lives depend on tools we appropriate from others, and these tools help bind together mind, body, social practice and physical world.

By exploring how people actually use sociocultural tools in practice, social scientists have given empirical accounts of how processes like social identification and academic learning intertwine. Foucault (1966/1971; 1975/1977), for instance, describes how the development of demographic and other social scientific categories simultaneously afforded new forms of knowledge and new forms of power. Foucault traces how educational institutions, as one example, developed extensive taxonomies and practices for classifying students – with respect to their ability levels, special needs, attentiveness, obedience and so on. These systems of classification facilitated knowledge of students that was impossible without such taxonomies, by making visible new types of people. Educators could subsequently know what kinds of students they had and how these students were likely to behave, in ways that had been unavailable to them before.

Foucault shows how the acts of classification that these categories made possible simultaneously involve academic and bureaucratic cognition as well as social identification and the exercise of power. By virtue of separating off and making visible categories of “special needs,” “gifted” and other types of students, for instance, the new systems of classification allowed educators to identify and enact surveillance over students in ways that had not been possible before. This surveillance is a kind of power according to Foucault because it allows institutions and individuals to label and normalize people’s behavior. Events of classification – examining students, deciding which academic sections students will attend, labeling students as disruptive or not – make visible the kind of person a student is seen as and allow the institution to treat him or her accordingly. Foucault (1975/1977; 1994/2000) has a distinctive theory of power. It is not possessed by individuals, but acts on and through people as it circulates through social relationships. Whether we use Foucault’s account of power or not, however, he makes a convincing case that the elaborate systems of social classification that developed over the last two centuries in Europe accomplish both academic and bureaucratic cognition as well as social identification and power relations.

Foucault does not argue that these systems of classification play one role in the academic/bureaucratic processes of sorting people and another role in the social processes of identifying and exerting power over people. He

claims that any act of classification *simultaneously* involves knowledge and power. When we develop or implement a category for classifying people, we both understand them in a new way and we engage in a power relationship. The social act of regimenting their identities within a system of social value – of making both the subjects of our classification and others attend to the “normal” or “deviant” categories that they occupy – is *the same act* as the cognitive one of knowing them as a certain kind of person. The cognitive effect of the classification depends on making visible and normalizing their identity within a taxonomy, and this process of making visible is both a matter of cognition and power. Social classification is inextricably both the development of cognitive representations and the exertion of power.

The process of social classification illustrates how the development and use of a tool can knit together mental, bodily, social and physical aspects in one integrated practice. When Europeans began implementing more elaborate bureaucratic systems of social classification a few centuries ago, they developed tools that changed how people thought about themselves and others (by, for instance, distinguishing between “disruptive” and “gifted” students), tools that changed how people oriented and disciplined their bodies (by, for instance, making some students stand in the corner or do repetitive tasks) and tools that changed how people used physical objects and space to create and reinforce classifications (by, for instance, having different types of students sit in different places in the classroom). By tracing the power and knowledge involved in social classification, as classificatory practices developed in prisons, schools and other institutions in Europe, Foucault explores empirically how knowledge and social identification mesh in one important set of practices.

Foucault’s translators use the term “power/knowledge” to capture the inextricability of social and cognitive processes in practices like social classification. Many acts of power are simultaneously and inextricably cognitive acts, and vice versa. The title of this chapter self-consciously echoes Foucault’s term because the book shows how “self/knowledge” implies a similar sort of inextricability as the one Foucault describes with “power/knowledge.” In Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith’s classroom, many acts of academic learning were simultaneously acts of social identification and many acts of social identification were simultaneously acts of academic learning. As the teachers and students discussed Tyisha and Maurice as “beasts,” they simultaneously identified Tyisha and Maurice and learned about Aristotle. The process of students becoming socially recognizable “selves” and the process of their learning the “knowledge” of the curriculum intertwined across the academic year in this classroom. At least in this case, the processes of social identification and academic learning were not even analytically separable, because the same acts simultaneously constituted both social identities and academic knowledge.

With the term “self/knowledge,” however, I use the risky term “self.” People often use “self” to refer to more private aspects of a person than I intend here. Sapir (1934b/1949) distinguishes between five selves: physical, physiological, psychophysical, sociological and psychiatric. Different types of analyses will be required to illuminate these various types of self, because different sets of interrelated processes typically account for these five types of consistent individual functioning. In this book, I address only the sociological self, or processes of “social identification.” I do not deny the existence of individual-level physical, neurocognitive and unconscious processes. But I am interested in the intertwining between social identification and academic learning, and one book can examine only part of what happens when students are identified in classrooms. “Social identity/academic knowledge” might have been a more accurate title for the chapter, but “self/knowledge” preserves the analogy to Foucault and is more compact and suggestive.

Classroom Self/Knowledge

Foucault describes how social identification and cognitive classification intertwine through a set of practices involving the creation and use of taxonomies for classifying people. Social classification of the sort Foucault describes certainly occurred in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith’s classroom. Like Foucault, I will take a social scientific approach and describe empirically how social identification and academic learning mesh in practice. However, I will attend to a different mechanism than Foucault. Foucault describes taxonomies and practices of classification that develop over decades and centuries. I will describe how intertwining happens through models of personhood that develop over minutes, days and months. By looking at the local timescale, across several months in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith’s classroom, we will see how social identification and academic learning became as inextricable as “power/knowledge” does for Foucault. Teachers and students drew on and integrated both academic and social resources as they developed models of “self/knowledge,” models that simultaneously helped identify individual students and helped students learn the curriculum. Chapter 4 will show in detail how teachers and students develop a local model of identity that both served to help them identify Tyisha and to construe one theme from the curriculum. Chapter 5 will show how the same thing happened with respect to Maurice and a second curricular theme. The empirical analyses in this book show how Foucault’s insights about power/knowledge can be applied productively to the local timescale. The mechanisms are different, but social identification and academic learning overlapped just as robustly in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith’s classroom as power and knowledge overlap in Foucault’s analyses of social classification.

Classrooms are strange social spaces, in part because of the discontinuity in relationships from year to year. Especially when starting their first year at a school, as happens with most American ninth graders, teachers and students do not know many of the others in the classroom. Thus, early in the year, teachers and students are often not sure how to identify individuals or what to expect about their academic knowledge. Because they lack more specific information about individuals, teachers and students must draw on more widely circulating models to interpret each other's behavior. Classroom identities early in the year are constrained by widely circulating presuppositions, like the institutionalized distinction between teachers and students and stereotypes about gender, ethnicity, style of dress, "disruptive" students and so on. But these widely circulating categories can be applied in various ways to particular individuals, as I argued above. Early in an academic year, students and teachers have more flexibility in identifying themselves and others, and there is more play in deciding how to implement sociohistorical categories of identity in context.

In other words, as the year begins teachers and students have not yet established local models of identity that include classroom-specific versions of available identities, nor have they developed robust models of many individuals' identities. As the academic year proceeds, teachers and students develop more robust local models of identity. These emerging local models are influenced both by longer timescale presuppositions about types of people and by particular events in which students have participated and been identified. If a student regularly raises his or her hand, answers teachers' questions and scoffs at others for refusing to answer, teachers and students might identify him or her more consistently as a "brown-noser" or a "cooperative student." Local identities almost always exceed more widely circulating expectations by being more specific and contextualized. Sometimes, as in the cases of Tyisha and Maurice, local identities are unexpected variations of both local and sociohistorical stereotypes.

As local models of identity and particular individuals' local identities develop over weeks and months, they relate differently to both longer and shorter timescale processes. Early in the year, more widely circulating sociohistorical models generally play an important role in establishing people's identities. Within particular events, teachers and students construct senses of who individuals are by presupposing and inflecting widely circulating categories. As local models of identity and individuals' identities solidify in their own right, over weeks and months, these become more important in mediating longer timescale processes. Instead of a widely circulating presupposition more directly constraining how teachers and students identify someone in an event, and instead of each event being a relatively autonomous arena for the construction of identities, as the academic year proceeds both sociohistorical models and the meaning

of particular behaviors are increasingly mediated through robust local expectations.

Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Smith and the students, for instance, developed a robust local model of gender – put crudely, that girls are smart and promising while boys are unintelligent and unpromising (Chapter 2 provides a detailed account). This drew on some widely circulating assumptions about gender, but it contradicted others. Once this local model was established, it mediated how longer timescale processes took effect in this classroom, skewing them more toward the local model and screening out conflicting models of gender that might have applied to a given event. Whereas a particular event would make sense early in the year only as teachers and students drew on sociohistorical models that they shared, later in the year they could draw on robust local models to make sense of that event. As local models solidified, they also became more important in constraining shorter timescale processes. Even robust local models of identity only take effect in actual events, of course. Local models exist only as speakers presuppose them in practice, and local expectations can be ignored or modified in the context of actual events, but emerging local models often provide an important resource for social identification in practice.

This book shows in detail how such local models can play an important role not only in the social identification of students over time, but also in facilitating systematic overlap between social identification and academic learning. Academic and non-academic processes can mesh as emerging local models of identity play crucial roles both in identifying individual students and in students' emerging understandings of the curriculum. Resources from other timescales also play crucial roles in facilitating both social identification and academic learning. But the analyses of Tyisha and Maurice will show how systematic overlap between these two processes can depend on local models that emerge jointly through academic and social processes. When students and teachers create and use these local models, they engage in a hybrid activity that involves "self/knowledge."

Academic learning in the classroom generally depends on local cognitive models. Longer timescale cognitive models and tools initially play an important role in making sense of particular texts and events. Early in the year, teachers and students in most classrooms have to draw on and manipulate more widely circulating background knowledge that they share. As they work together over weeks and months, however, teachers and students often develop local cognitive models of curricular topics, and they use these to make sense of particular texts. Local understandings come to mediate their use of longer timescale resources, as teachers and students use robust local models of curricular topics to make sense of texts and to build their understanding of the subject matter. As described in Chapter 3, for instance, Mrs. Bailey, Mr. Smith and their students developed a local cognitive model of the relationship between individuals and

society that took social welfare as a key example. Henceforth, their understanding of curricular issues concerning individualism and collectivism, and their interpretations of texts about these topics, were generally mediated through their local understandings of how a society should handle social welfare programs. Thus local cognitive models can play an increasingly important role over the year, just as local models of identity do. The analyses in this book will show how local cognitive models can systematically overlap with local models of identity, such that the processes of social identification and academic learning mesh.

Of course, more than three timescales (sociohistorical, local and event) are relevant to analyzing social identification and academic learning in a classroom. The local level, for instance, would require finer distinctions to capture the processes described in later chapters. As shown Chapter 2, the robust local model of “promising girls and unpromising boys” developed early and stayed consistent for the rest of the academic year. As described in Chapter 4, however, Tyisha developed at least three local identities across the year, one of which was eclipsed after two months and two others that emerged and changed over periods of several months. It can be useful to schematize classroom social identification and learning using three idealized timescales, but in fact relevant processes may be occurring across a broad range of timescales. Specific phenomena will be best explained using different configurations of relevant timescales. In some cases, decades-old racial and gender stereotypes will be applied to individuals without much local inflection, while in others, weeks-long local models will emerge and change several times, transforming the impact of decades-long stereotypes. The most productive configuration of timescales for analysis will differ from case to case and must be determined for each setting and each phenomenon of interest.

I have been arguing, and the rest of the book will show, that social identification and academic learning can mesh at the local timescale across the academic year. In general, there is some overlap between social identification and academic learning at many timescales. For instance, longer timescale processes involving social identification and academic learning intertwine in various ways. Categories used in enduring normative models of society favor certain categories of identity. A society that understands itself as composed of individuals competing with each other in a market that benefits all, for instance, may apply categories of social classification like “productive” and “unproductive” to people. Empirical studies of such longer timescale intertwining between social identification and academic/bureaucratic practices would draw on historical and institutional data, as Foucault (1975/1977), Popkewitz (2004) and others have done. Such work is beyond the scope of this book. In the analyses below I note how models from longer timescales constrained both social identification and academic learning in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith’s classroom. But I have not done the historical analyses necessary to show either how these

sociohistorical models emerge or how such models may facilitate overlap between social identification and academic practices at a timescale of decades or centuries.

Instead, this book analyzes how social identification and academic learning can also overlap systematically at the local level. As mentioned earlier, and as described extensively in later chapters (especially Chapter 3), local models of social identity and local models of the curriculum that developed in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom shared several central categories. As they developed local models to identify themselves and others, students and teachers integrated academic concepts into these models of identity. As they developed local cognitive models to make sense of the curriculum, students and teachers integrated relevant categories of identity into their cognitive models. In fact, teachers and students did not develop one set of local models to accomplish social identification and another set to accomplish academic learning. Social identification and academic learning in this classroom drew on many of the same categories and depended on hybrid, overlapping models to accomplish both ends. The trajectory of their academic learning was shaped by models of some participants' identities, as aspects of these models opened up possibilities for understanding the curriculum in new ways. And the trajectory of some students' social identification was shaped by local models of the curriculum, as these models made available categories of identity that were applied to the students themselves.

Personalized Pedagogy

Subsequent chapters show how this overlap between local cognitive models and local models of identity depended in part on the "experience-near" or "personalized" pedagogy that Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith often used. These teachers often explored students' own experiences in order to help them understand the curriculum, by constructing examples from personal experience and building analogies between curricular topics and the classroom itself. In discussing Aristotle's *Politics* and other texts, for instance, the teachers and students explored a curricular theme about individualism and collectivism. This theme involved a fundamental question: whether individuals should limit their desires for the good of the group or whether society should facilitate individual autonomy. As they built local models of the curriculum to help them understand texts that take different positions on this question, teachers and students often used their own classroom as an example of a miniature society. Instead of asking how society in general should deal with questions about individual autonomy and the public good, they asked whether their own class should offer more autonomy or demand more sacrifice for the common good. The cognitive models of the curriculum that resulted from this analogy included categories of identity like "beasts" or disruptive outcasts who refuse to sacrifice for the good of

the whole class and “cooperative” students who contribute productively to classroom discussion. At the same time that teachers and students were developing these cognitive models of the curriculum, using the analogy between their classroom and society in general, they were also constructing local models of identity and applying these to individual students and teachers. When a category like “beast” or outcast became available in their discussions of the curriculum, teachers and students sometimes applied it to students like Tyisha and Maurice during experience-near teaching. When they did this consistently, they inserted the curricular category into emerging local models that they were using to identify Tyisha and Maurice.

As more concepts like this were shared between local cognitive and social models, the analogy between the curricular topic and identities in the classroom became more robust. As shown in Chapter 4, Tyisha was regularly identified as a disruptive outcast through the same discussions in which students and teachers discussed Aristotle’s and other conceptions of individuals who do not cooperate with society. As shown in Chapter 5, Maurice was regularly identified as caught between the “resistant” boys and the “cooperative” girls, at the same time as the class discussed whether citizens can legitimately resist those in power. Across the year, local models that teachers and students used to identify Tyisha and Maurice overlapped systematically with local models that they used to understand the curriculum. Thus social identification and academic learning became interdependent, as the local models that facilitated each process were woven together. This meshing was facilitated by the teachers’ personalized pedagogy and by their use of students themselves as examples of curricular concepts.

The analogies between curricular topics and students’ own identities in the classroom were particularly important to the meshing of social identification and academic learning in this classroom. These analogies were constructed through events of classroom discussion that occurred at a timescale of minutes – and especially through a type of event that I have called “participant examples” (Wortham, 1994). In a participant example, someone participating in the event of giving an example also becomes a character in the example. The examples of Tyisha and Maurice as beasts were both participant examples because the students themselves became examples of a beast. Participant examples sometimes propose or reinforce analogies between the social organization of the classroom and the topic being discussed. In the case of Maurice the beast, for instance, Mrs. Bailey separated Maurice off “in the woods” from “the rest of us” going about “our” business in the classroom.

Participant examples can facilitate overlap between emerging local models of the curriculum and emerging local models of identity because they apply the same categories of identity to the curriculum and to the participants included in the example. With the example of Tyisha and her cat, for instance, Mrs. Bailey both identified Tyisha herself as potentially a “beast” and helped students understand Aristotle’s view of human

nature. Thus she helped cement the category of “beast” or outcast into the emerging local model that teachers and students used both to identify Tyisha and to understand curricular questions about the relations between an individual and society.

As I have shown in previous work (Wortham, 1994; 1997; 2001b), participant examples often involve both social identification and academic learning. These examples can be useful tools to help students understand the curriculum because they apply familiar models and concepts to new subject matter. They can also be powerful devices for identifying students and teachers because they allow evaluative comments about participants who become characters in the example under the guise of discussing the example. In some cases, like the examples of Tyisha and Maurice as beasts, participant examples also connect social identification and academic learning. Because participant examples bring together the subject matter and participants themselves, teachers and students can use the same category of identity, like “beast” or “outcast,” to construe the subject matter and to identify the participant with a role in the example. The analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 show how two series of participant examples, discussed on different days over several months, helped teachers and students build models of identity that they used both to understand curricular themes and to identify Tyisha and Maurice.

In previous work I have shown how single participant examples – at the minutes-long timescale of isolated events – can bring together social identification and academic learning when the examples allow teachers and students to use one model of identity that facilitates both processes (Wortham, 1994; 1997; 2001b). This earlier work on isolated classroom events has limitations, however. In order to make warranted conclusions about social identification and academic learning – processes that take place across events – I need concepts and data that allow me to follow students’ identities and their academic learning across several months. This book goes beyond my earlier work by conceptualizing social identification and academic learning across events, at a local, months-long timescale. This makes visible the complex overlap between models of identity and models of the curriculum that this book analyzes in detail. It also opens up a more nuanced understanding of how apparently non-academic processes such as social identification and cognitive processes such as academic learning can become inextricable and depend on each other.

THE INEXTRICABILITY OF SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION AND ACADEMIC LEARNING

Throughout this chapter, I have moved back and forth between discussing social identification and academic learning as distinct processes that overlap, and arguing that they are inseparable parts of larger processes. Especially early in the book, I will often discuss the two as separate processes.

Chapter 2, for instance, develops an account of social identification, while Chapter 3 develops an account of academic learning. I have two reasons for analyzing the processes separately. First, in order to build up an adequate account of the integrated processes that in fact subsume social identification and learning, we first need to consider the subprocesses separately. Second, because everyday language and much social scientific research typically separate these two types of processes, it will be clearer to start with separate accounts and build to a more integrated one. Despite this initial separation of social identification and academic learning, one goal of the book is to develop a more adequate account in which the two processes cannot be separated.

I do not deny that some phenomena can be productively explained by positing a realm of relatively pure academic cognition. As Packer and Goicoechea (2000) point out, some social settings – for instance, many schools – deliberately separate cognitive contents from the bodies, identities and social positions of the people doing cognitive work. Ryle (1949) describes how educational institutions try to enforce an idealized image of “rational scientific man,” acting as if “knowing that” is preferable to and purer than “knowing how.” Writing about science, Latour (1993) describes the purifying practices through which we separate knowledge from the “pollutions” of context and the real world. Even the special cases of school and science do in fact contain social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles. Nonetheless, in these special cases it may sometimes make sense to conceptualize academic learning as relatively independent of social identification and other apparently non-academic processes – especially when the phenomenon of interest involves academic cognition in a narrow sense.

However reasonable this strategy might be for some research questions, we must recognize that “pure” academic cognition is an idealization that obscures crucial and ubiquitous features of both academic and non-academic processes. Even in “purified” academic settings that aim for decontextualized knowledge, many apparently non-academic processes such as social identification nonetheless go on. Most phenomena of interest, even in academic settings, are interwoven with social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles. To study these phenomena as if academic learning were separable from social context would be to miss important aspects of academic and scientific practices (Knorr-Cetina, 1999; Latour, 1999; Lemke, 1990). Many philosophical conceptions of human nature unwisely extrapolate humankind’s central characteristics from the special case of decontextualized knowing – claiming, for instance, that logical reasoning about decontextualized problems is the mark of a human being. In order to develop a more realistic account of basic human processes, we must instead examine the more general situation in which activities like social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles

cannot be separated from subject matter, argument, evidence and academic learning. Note that I am not making the opposite mistake, claiming that academic “reason” is merely an illusion hiding the fact that human nature is all about power. We must acknowledge, instead, that neither reason nor power, neither social identification nor academic learning, exists in pure form. We must explore how both knowledge and power, both identity and learning, contribute to fundamental human processes.

Agha (in press) describes one fundamental human process that does not respect the habitual distinction between “pure” cognition and “polluting” social processes: the use of signs to establish social relations. Agha gives a general account of the creation and movement of the models through which we understand socially meaningful signs. He shows how all social relations depend on speakers’ construction and circulation of mostly tacit models of personhood and relationship. And he shows how the representational function of language depends on the same general semiotic processes. Because all meaningful human activity depends on the interpretation of signs, both cognitive and sociological analyses must rely on the sorts of semiotic processes Agha describes. These general semiotic processes do not respect the boundary between power and knowledge because particular signs often depend on heterogeneous resources for their interpretation – both resources that involve representations of subject matter and ones that involve power relations and social identification. In order to understand the basic semiotic processes that underlie much of social and cognitive life, we must attend to interrelations among knowledge and power, academic learning and social identification.

Packer and Goicoechea (2000) describe another fundamental process that involves both knowledge and power: ontological learning, the process through which individuals create and transform themselves as they interact with others, sign systems and the world. Packer and Goicoechea describe how even academic learning is “ontological” and not “epistemological” because it involves changes in social being as well as changes in knowing. We are constantly and inevitably changing, even if in small ways, becoming different types of people as we learn new things. This process does not respect boundaries between the academic and the non-academic because academic learning changes who we are, and because knowledge is an integral part of the general process of ontological change.

There are other fundamental human processes, but the semiotics of social relations and ontological learning suffice to make the point. Basic human processes involve both apparently academic and apparently non-academic components, woven together into larger wholes from which “pure” components cannot be neatly excised. As humans act in the world, trying to make sense of and interact with people, objects, intellectual puzzles and other things, we interpret signs and become types of people. Semiotic activity and ontological development happen continuously, and they

involve both resources that we tend to classify as cognitive and resources that we tend to classify as non-academic or non-cognitive. In most cases, these apparently different types of resources are woven together into configurations from which they cannot be abstracted if we hope to give adequate accounts of the human activity in question. Despite the fact that I begin by describing social identification and learning as apparently separate processes, then, I am working toward a more complex non-dualistic account. I intend my analysis of how social identification and academic learning participate in larger, integrated processes to illustrate how we need more complex accounts of reason and power, of identity and learning. If we rely on simple accounts of allegedly separate processes, we will fail to understand the human world.

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

Before summarizing the contents of the book, I would briefly like to discourage premature judgments about the teachers. At some points in the analyses below, I describe Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith treating students in ways that seem inappropriate. Perhaps they went too far when they teased Tyisha, saying that she was in fact “like an animal,” or in other cases when they explicitly called her a bad and disruptive student. I discourage quick judgments about the teachers, however, because such judgments would block adequate analyses of the data and oversimplify the complex moral judgments required to evaluate teachers’ actions. It would be convenient but misleading to “explain” what happened to Tyisha and Maurice by citing the teachers’ alleged prejudice, mean-spiritedness or lack of skill. Processes at several timescales played an important role in the phenomena that I will describe, and it would be poor analysis to attribute the bulk of it to some characteristic of the teachers. These were experienced teachers, using an innovative curriculum and skillfully managing a classroom. There are reasonable grounds to object to some of their actions, but I urge the reader not to let quick judgments of the teachers foreclose more nuanced analysis of the various factors in play. Chapter 6 returns to the question of the teachers’ and students’ responsibility for what happened to Tyisha and Maurice.

Chapter 1 has given an overview of the central argument. Teachers and students engage in social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles that appear unrelated or even antithetical to academic learning. Instead of ignoring this fact, or erroneously concluding that academic learning is merely a front for power relations, we need more nuanced conceptual and empirical work on how apparently academic and apparently non-academic processes interrelate. This book looks closely at the social identification and academic learning that occurred in a ninth grade classroom over an academic year. By examining local models of identity

that emerged over several months among these teachers and students, we will be able to see how both academic and apparently non-academic resources contributed to social identification and academic learning. The book describes in detail one way in which social identification and academic learning can mesh, focusing on local models that draw on both subject matter and students' identities. This demonstration makes it clear that social identification and academic learning should not be construed as separate processes, but instead as abstractions from more heterogeneous semiotic and ontological processes.

Chapter 2 has two sections. First, it develops an account of social identification. This account describes how social identification depends on configurations of resources drawn from several timescales. Our sense of naturally appropriate social identification is not constructed solely through socio-historical categories, event-level negotiations or local models, but through heterogeneous resources that work together. In different cases, different configurations of timescales are relevant to explaining successful social identification. Second, the chapter describes Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom and traces how the local model of promising girls and unpromising boys developed early in the year. This model provided important background for the development of Tyisha and Maurice's identities because each of them was the primary exception for her or his gender. Tyisha and Maurice each developed distinctive identities that were not simply aligned or simply opposed to each other, but they were nonetheless identified over time as the prototypical "unpromising girl" and "promising boy."

Chapter 3 has three sections. First, the chapter develops an account of academic learning. This account is parallel in important ways to the account of social identification developed in Chapter 2 – illustrating how the two processes might not be separable, but instead part of more general integrated processes. Second, the chapter describes Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's curriculum and the students' academic learning. It introduces the teachers' pedagogical philosophy and goals. It then describes the two curricular themes that facilitated Tyisha and Maurice's emerging social identities, and it describes the local cognitive models that teachers and students developed to make sense of these themes. The chapter also gives evidence that students did in fact learn some of what the teachers intended. Third, using the accounts of social identification and academic learning developed in Chapters 2 and 3, the chapter then articulates more precisely how the two processes meshed in Mrs. Bailey and Mr. Smith's classroom.

Chapters 4 and 5 follow Tyisha and Maurice, respectively, across the academic year. By analyzing explicit statements that teachers and students made about their identities, the interactional positioning done to and by these students and many participant examples that included them as central characters, the chapters show how Tyisha and Maurice's social identities emerged and changed across the year. Each student's identity

went through several phases. And each student's identity became increasingly intertwined with categories drawn from local models of the curricular themes. The analyses trace in detail the intertwining of social identification and academic learning, which occurred in its most complex form in these two cases.

Chapter 6 summarizes the argument and elaborates its implications. The empirical analyses show teachers and students developing local models of identity and using these local models, together with resources from other timescales, to establish distinctive individual trajectories of identification for Tyisha and Maurice. The importance of local timescale processes in this case illustrates how we must go beyond "macro" and "micro," beyond "structure" and "agency" in our accounts of social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles. The empirical analyses also show how social identification and academic learning should not be construed as separate processes. We must move beyond the decontextualized thinker and beyond non-cognitive power relations as our idealized models of basic human processes. This book provides one model of how to analyze the complex interrelations between cognitive processes like academic learning and social identification, power relations and interpersonal struggles. The chapter ends by assessing the moral implications of teachers and students' actions in this classroom and by reflecting on the inevitably moral character of schooling.