CLASSROOM PRACTICES THAT SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF PURPOSE

Brandy P. Quinn, Sydney L. Heckes, and Mary Lauren Shea
Texas Christian University

While there is growing research supporting the benefits of purpose development to adolescents and the communities of which they are a part, research about specific practices to support purpose development, specifically in high schools, remains scarce. Grounded in theories about teacher knowledge, the research team relied on a dimensional understanding of purpose and qualitatively analyzed interview data from nine high school teachers and open-response survey data from 26 high school students to generate several categories of practice that may support purpose development during adolescence. While several categories emerged, both teachers and students recognized the following as potentially supportive of purpose: connections to the real world; discussion of future orientation; positive teacher-student relationships; cultivating a willingness to try new things, perseverance, and a growth mindset; and prosocial, collaborative, and perspective-taking activities. These categories are discussed in terms of researcher and practitioner implications.

"Fear."

That was the response of one of the high school seniors taught by the first author several years ago when she asked a class of them why they had pushed themselves to achieve during their time at the college preparatory high school they attended. The student continued to tell her that he kept achieving academically because he was afraid of not making it to his next step (college), and afraid of not being able to give to his own future children the comfortable life his parents had given him. As she listened to him, the first author was saddened by the idea that this bright, capable, interesting student identified his prime motivation in his academic life as *fear*.

At the same time, the first author had enough experiences with her students to know that much more than fear motivated them. These were students who were, among many things, artists, athletes, musicians, caring friends, and advocates for change in their schools and communities. Some of these pursuits would undoubtedly helped them gain admission to college, but watching them as they performed, played on the field, cared for each other, and served others let the first author know that these pursuits also tapped

• **Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to:** Brandy P. Quinn, b.quinn@tcu.edu

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into something deeper than an acceptance letter for many of them. For some, this something deeper might have been what positive youth development researchers have identified as *purpose*, a long-term intention to accomplish something that is both personally meaningful and of consequence to the world beyond the self (Damon, Menon, & Bronk, 2003, p. 121). What might the possibilities be if academic pursuits and adolescent students' developing purposes could be integrated with each other more intentionally? In an earlier study conducted by the first author, teachers shared their thoughts about how their beliefs about their specific academic disciplines may or may not align with the their beliefs about purpose in life (Quinn, 2016). The present study extends this prior work to investigate actual classroom practices that teachers implement and students recognize as supportive of the development of purpose.

Positive youth development theorists focus on optimistic drivers of development in adolescents (Lerner, Dowling, & Anderson, 2003). Within the positive youth development framework, purpose in life has been proposed as a potentially motivating force in the lives of adolescents that is beneficial to adolescents themselves and the communities of which they are a part (Bundick, Yeager, King, & Damon, 2010). Adolescent-focused studies of purpose find positive correlates such as hope, life satisfaction, and identity development (Bronk, 2011; Bronk, Hill, Lapsley, Talib, & Finch, 2009; Burrow & Hill, 2011). Purpose in life also has been shown to buffer against some risks that are present during the adolescent years, like substance abuse, and violence, and suicide; and purposeful youth may have more positive academic self-concepts (see Hill, Burrow, & Sumner, 2013, for a review). In addition, research links the beyond-the-self dimension of purpose to traditional academic outcomes (Yeager et al., 2014), and purposeful adolescents are more likely to find their schoolwork to be engaging and meaningful (Bundick & Yeager, 2009).

However, while there are likely individual and communal benefits to the development of adolescent purpose, until fairly recently there has been less research that explicitly investigates how adults might create contexts and opportunities to support this development, especially in schools (Hill et al., 2013; Koshy & Mariano, 2011). In the positive youth development framework, development is the result of ongoing interactions between the individual and his or her multiple layers of context (Lerner et al., 2003). With this interactive process in mind, purpose researchers have identified schools as a key setting for the development of purpose (Koshy & Mariano, 2011; Moran, Bundick, Malin, & Reilly, 2012), and teachers as a key support in this process (Bundick & Tirri, 2014). Additionally, prior qualitative analysis of teacher data examined in the present study indicates that teachers do think about their content areas and their students' futures with purpose in mind (Quinn, 2016). At the same time, those teachers who do value purpose development may still feel inefficacious in their abilities to implement practices that support the development of purpose in their students (Moran, 2016).

However, theory about teacher learning and practice suggests that teachers themselves are (or ought to be) key creators of knowledge about classroom practices. Two types of knowledge are important to the framing of the present study: *pedagogical content knowledge* and *knowledge-of-practice*. First, practical knowledge about teaching practice that is generated by teachers through their professional experiences has been called *pedagogical content knowledge* by Shulman (1986). Inherent to Shulman's conception of teacher knowledge is the idea that teachers develop, carry, and implement wisdom about pedagogy that is distinct from content (*what is being taught)* alone. Second, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) introduced the idea of *knowledge-**of**-practice*, a way of conceptualizing teaching knowledge that avoids separating this knowledge into categories of formal knowledge—*knowledge-**for**-practice*—that teachers are taught

(through university programs and best practices professional development models) and practical knowledge—*knowledge-**in**-practice*—that teachers generate on their own during the day-to-day activities of teaching. *Knowledge-**of**-practice,* instead, allows for a conception of teacher knowledge that integrates the contributions of teachers across the professional lifespan into communities of knowledge-generation with researchers. The study described here was imagined as an initial step in generating *knowledge-of-practice* about teaching to support purpose during the adolescent years.

Additionally, one might imagine that students themselves could also be integrated into this community of knowledge-generation about practices to support purpose development. At the most basic interpersonal level, anyone who is in relationships with others has likely had the experience of his or her intentions not quite aligning with the other person's experience of those intentions. This may also be the case in teaching practice; students may not experience what their teachers intend with their teaching practices. From about the same time that some in the educational research community began to place a greater emphasis on teacher-generated knowledge, others have argued for increasing the ways in which students' voices are heard in research and policy creation (Cook-Sather, 2002). Just as the research team viewed the present study as an initial effort to create *knowledge-of-practice* about teaching for purpose, the team also wanted to create space for a student "check" on teacher intentions as a part of this knowledge creation.

Finally, as argued in the first study that utilized the teacher data used in the present study, one way of generating more knowledge about teacher practices around purpose may be to deconstruct the ways in which individuals are asked about purpose into its constituent dimensions (Quinn, 2016). The definition of purpose utilized in the present study includes four dimensions: intention, personal meaning, beyond-the-self orientation, and engagement (Damon et al., 2003; Malin, Reilly, Quinn, & Moran 2014; Moran, 2009; Yeager & Bundick, 2009). Intention and personal meaning are sometimes presented as one dimension—a personally meaningful intention. One key finding from the first study conducted with teacher data utilized in the present study is that while teachers tended to discuss their beliefs about teaching in their academic discipline in ways that aligned with one or more of the dimensions of purpose, this alignment was less clear when they were prompted to speak to the more holistic term, *purpose* (Quinn, 2016). While teaching to support the individual dimensions of purpose is not the same thing as intentionally teaching to support purpose as a whole, practices that emerge from a conversation around the individual dimensions provide a starting point for considering practices that may, with some intentionality, evolve into specific classroom practices to support purpose development during adolescence.

Taking into account the role of teachers and students in knowledge-generation, as well as a dimensional understanding of purpose, this study includes an extension of the research reported in Quinn (2016) through additional analyses of the aforementioned teacher data, supplemented with more recently collected student data. Our goal was to uncover classroom practices that may support purpose development in adolescents. By investigating the ways in which teachers intend to support growth across the dimensions of purpose, and the ways in which students recognize these efforts as supportive of their growth across the dimensions, the findings from this research build a foundation for future researcher and teacher work that investigates how purpose may be encouraged in high school classrooms, and provide immediate suggestions for categories of practice across a variety of academic disciplines that may support purpose development in high school students.

METHODS

The objective of the study described here was to investigate high school teachers' classroom practices that may support the development of purpose in life during adolescence. We utilized qualitative methods to understand the practices teachers use to support development across the dimensions of purpose and the practices students recognize as helping them to develop across the dimensions of purpose. The study was approved by the institutional review board at Texas Christian University. We designed the study to answer the following research questions:

1. What do high school teachers do in their classrooms that they intend to support adolescent development across the dimensions of purpose?
2. What classroom-level efforts, if any, do high school students recognize as supportive of their growth across the dimensions of purpose?

The methodology of the study rested on the dimensional understanding of purpose discussed earlier, where purpose is comprised of a long-term intention, personal meaning, engagement, and beyond-the-self contribution. Rather than only asking teachers and students to described practices related to the broader construct of purpose, in the present study teachers were interviewed about practices around each dimension, and students were asked to type in responses on a survey to questions about each dimension.

Participants

The teacher sample was purposive; the first author invited teachers interested in the topic of purpose to participate in an interview so that there would be a greater likelihood of uncovering classroom practices that may support purpose development in adolescents. Teachers were incentivized with a $10 gift certificate to a coffee shop. Nine teachers responded to the email invitation, three each from three different high schools. The high schools included a comprehensive public school (CPS), a public magnet school (MS), and a private school (PS). Teacher participants were diverse in gender and years of teaching. The distribution of academic discipline by school was as follows: comprehensive public school (chemistry, math, English), public magnet school (biology, economics, math), and private school (English, writing, math). The comprehensive public school and private school teachers had all been teaching more than 5 years, and all three of the public magnet school teachers had been teaching fewer than 5 years.

The student sample was a convenience sample drawn from students taking part in a related study conducted by the first author. All student participants were taking part in a university-based, federal program to help them stay on track to graduate from high school and go to college. Student participants were eligible to take part in this program because they met federal low-income guidelines and would be the first members of their families to go to college. Students all attended schools in the same district as the public, comprehensive high schools taught at by three of the teacher participants. Twenty-six high school students participated (1 freshman, 11 sophomores, 13 juniors, and 1 senior). Student participants were overwhelmingly female ($n = 22$). Student participants reported that they were Black/African American ($n = 9$), or Hispanic/Latino ($n = 16$), or both ($n = 1$). Most students reported that they earned mostly As, Bs, or both in school ($n = 24$).

Data Sources

Teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview protocol designed to elicit their thoughts about what they did in their classrooms to support development across the dimensions of purpose (see Appendix). The protocol included questions targeting each of the dimensions of purpose, followed by questions about the broader construct. The first

author conducted all of the teacher interviews. Interviews were audio recorded and took about 1 hour. A professional transcriptionist transcribed each interview for analyses.

Student participants responded to eight questions on a Qualtrics-hosted survey. The questions were designed to elicit student thoughts about what their teachers were doing to support their development across the dimensions of purpose. For each dimension, students were first asked whether any of their teachers during the current school year had supported them in that dimension, and then, if they answered yes, students were prompted to describe what their teachers did to support them in that dimension. An example of the prompt for the "goal" or "intention" dimension of purpose is: "What have your classroom teachers done during the 2015–2016 school year to help you discover or learn about your most important goal or goals for your life?" As another example, the prompt for the beyond-the-self dimension of purpose was: "What have your classroom teachers done during the 2015–2016 school year to help you discover or learn about how to positively influence or change your family, community, or broader world?"

Coding Process

The amount of material to be coded was such that each author could make herself familiar with all data, and each of the authors brought a background in teaching to the analytical process. Therefore, coding took place through an iterative process of open-coding, repeated rounds of consensus building, refined coding, and category creation (Saldaña, 2013).

In order to analyze the student data, two graduate assistants (the second and third authors) open-coded the survey responses. The graduate assistants coded the responses individually for any significant ideas that emerged. In consultation with the first author, they discussed their individual codes, came to consensus, and created a table of 17 finalized codes, and definitions and examples of the codes (Table 1).

Next, the second and third authors conducted first cycle coding of the transcripts from the teacher interviews. First, they coded individually, and specifically looked for classroom practices. Second, they compared their codes through a series of discussions with each other to agree upon 13 overarching codes. At this point, the second and third authors met with the first author to review their work and discuss miscellaneous codes. During this consensus meeting, the team subdivided some of the categories to more specifically capture different practices. After this meeting, the second and third authors reexamined their codes and developed a final list with definitions and examples of 32 codes (Table 2). Then, the second and third authors individually recoded the nine transcripts based on the finalized table, and met with each other to discuss and come to consensus on any areas of disagreement. They consulted the first author for expertise when necessary. They utilized an excel spreadsheet to record overall code frequencies in the teacher interviews, as well as individual transcript passages and their respective codes.

Analytical Procedure

The first author examined the tables created by the second and third author. Drawing from her backgrounds as both a researcher familiar with purpose research and a former high school teacher, she further grouped the codes into general categories of practice (Tables 1 and 2). This analytical process was also iterative, cycling back and forth between themes that emerged in the data, discussion with the second and third authors, and existing theory about purpose development and classroom teaching.

In order to further understand how practices distributed across the dimensions of purpose, the second and third authors engaged in an additional round of analysis. They utilized the semistructured interview questions (Appendix A) to refamiliarize themselves with the

TABLE 1
Student Participant Categories of Practice, Codes, Descriptions, and Data Examples

Category of Practice	• "Codes" Description *Data Example(s)*
Making connections to real life	• "life lesson" Learning how to appropriately deal with natural occurrences in life. Failure is normal and can be an opportunity to learn. *"My economics teacher when he taught he also taught us life lesson."* *"That it is ok to fail and you learn you're your mistakes and keep trying"* • "(dealing with) reality of life" Understanding and coping with the natural challenges in life. *"They have taught me how hard life will get and continue to be."* *"yes, how life actually works and how to handle what comes at you"*
Perspective taking	• "changing perspectives" Classes change perspectives. *"It changed the way I thought about different things."* *"My photography class made me think and made me have different thoughts about the way I see my pictures."* • "open-minded perspectives" Learning how to consider new things. *"He made me open my eyes more and helped go toward my passion for chemistry and some biology."* *"They helped open my eyes to what I enjoy doing."* • "varying perspectives" Realizing and accepting the unique characteristics of each individual (perspectives, opinions, etc.). *"They showed me that everyone has their own opinion."* *"showed me that everyone is different and has different backgrounds in life"*
Future orientation	• "thinking about future" Purposefully thinking about future and how the decisions you make will affect your future. *"They have had an influence in the process in identifying my purpose and what I want to do in the future."* *"He helped me realize that I want to do something in chemistry."* • "future planning" Constructing a plan for the future. This often involves career choice. *"They have counseled me in the classes I have take for me to be advance in my classes for the career I want to have."* *"by creating an outline I could aspire from"* • "future goals" Creating, analyzing, and visualizing future goals. *"We have written out a professional plan in class that allows to visualize our goals."* *"My teacher help really analyze my goal to be more specific."* • "discovery for future" Any discovery that contributes to one's future. *"They help me discover what things I liked and what things I didn't like."* *"helping me find my mission in life and giving me a mission statement that is unique to me and only me"*
Community/ other orientation	• "helping community" Actions that positively impact the community. *"We have done many different community service projects."* *"try to create solutions to my community, school, and my family"*
Self-awareness	• "self-awareness" Becoming self-aware through reflection and teacher guidance. *"They made me look more into my inner self."* *"knowing your shadow before anyone else's"*

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TABLE 1
(Continued)

Category of Practice	• "Codes" Description *Data Example(s)*
Teacher support	• "perseverance" Pushing through difficult times and never giving up. *"They told me to never give up."* *"They have guided me and helped me push through."* • "encouraging" Positive encouragement to work hard and reach goals. Motivating students based on belief in their potential. *"talked to me about my future and encouraged me"* *"Ms. S helped me too she saw the potential in me that I didn't see."*
Interpersonal skills	• "interpersonal skills" Learning skills that will help students best relate to others. *"never treat anyone terribly"* *"They have helped me because they showed me how to control what I say more and to improve my logical thinking skills and all of my other skills."*
Talking about future plans related to college	• "discussing college experiences" Retelling college experiences so that students better understand the realities of college. *"One of my teachers talked about how college was for her and how it changed her life and it impacted it her, too."* *"She also talked about her rushing experience and everything they did and what not."* • "college preparation" Assisting students with the steps to graduate from high school and be admitted to college. *"They have gave me more college information than I have ever needed, they've always given me advice and what applications and website and panels you need to go through to make it to college."* *"They teach me how the college application process works and how to handle college life."*
Trying new things	• "trying new things" Pushing students' comfort zones so that they try new things. "*extended my boundaries and get out of my comfort zone and try new things"* *"they make me try new things mostly new things out of my comfort zone"*

pertinent questions for each dimension of purpose. Then, the second and third authors created tables for each interview to determine which codes corresponded to each dimension of purpose. Lastly, they created a frequency table to identify the most common codes within each dimension in the teacher interviews.

FINDINGS

Practices that emerged in the teacher interviews are reported first, followed by practices recognized by students in their survey responses, concluding with the distribution of practices most frequently mentioned for each dimension of purpose. Recall, the aim of this study was to understand the range of classroom practices that teachers may already be using to support students across the dimensions of purpose: long-term intention, personal meaning, engagement, and beyond-the-self contribution. With this in mind, multiple participants reported some of the practices reported here, while other practices were reported by smaller numbers of participants. Frequency counts were less important for answering the research questions of this particular study, although they are included in tables depicting teacher data (Tables 2 and 3). Regardless of frequency, each reported prac-

TABLE 2
Teacher Participant Categories of Practice, Codes, Descriptions, and Data Examples

Category of Practice	• Codes (frequency across interviews) Description *Data Example(s)*
Individualized instruction and feedback	• "Assessment and feedback" (9) Evaluating students' progress through assessment and providing ongoing feedback. *"But I do score each assessment with the AP rubric so they can see as they go where they're at if they're making any progress" (CPS Math).* • "Individualizing instruction" (3) Teacher considers students' individual lives and abilities and instructs accordingly. *"That comes up a lot, too, is recognizing that the kids' lives outside of school maybe aren't as conducive to classroom learning as I would like them to be, and taking that into account and really like figuring out what's the best way to take care of those different needs" (MS Econ).* • "Feedback and response to student engagement" (11) Teacher notes students' engagement and continuously provides opportunities for students to maintain focus. *"I mean if a student is not taking notes and you can see that they're in and out of consciousness because they're about to fall asleep you know, those are the times whenever you can redirect the class and that sort of thing" (MS Math).* *"Justin you really seem dialed in'" (PS Math).*
Positive classroom climate	• "Encouragement" (9) Teacher encourages students to try their best and to get out of their comfort zones. *"So pulling him out of his shyness a bit, talking to him. Things like that" (CPS English).* • "Attending to social and emotional needs" (6) Teacher attends to students' social and emotional needs. *"From the very beginning, I try to kind of smooth that over and just say that everything they're learning is going to be important and if they do a good job in trying to understand all of these concepts that they will be fine on that" (MS Bio).* • "Positive classroom atmosphere" (3) Teacher promotes a positive classroom atmosphere to allow for deeper learning. *"I think creating a classroom atmosphere or climate that allows students to ask those kinds of questions. "Why am I doing this? What is this good for? When am I ever going to use this again?" (MS Math).* • "Teacher-student relationship" (6) Teacher creates a positive and trusting relationship with students. *"They have to do with like these connections that you are making and bonds with these students" (MS Bio).* *"And they have to trust that I actually care about them personally and academically" (CPS Math).* • "Focus and attention techniques" (3) Teacher implements specific group focus and attention strategies. *"Wait until they look at me before I go on with whatever so that they remember to put their goggles on or whatever" (CPS Science).* • "Holding students accountable" (2) Teacher ensures that students are accountable for their actions inside and outside the classroom. "*Whenever we see them skip class, give a quick call to mom and dad" (CPS English)* *"Whenever they're in class, they think I don't hear stuff, but I do and I'll always correct them on it" (CPS English)*
Opportunities for collaboration	• "Projects and group work" (15) Utilizing project-based-learning and/or creating opportunities for group work. *"In class group assignment type stuff that you'll [the interviewer] be able to see today and then they can collaborate with one another" (MS Math).* • "Cooperative learning strategies" (3) Teacher uses cooperative learning strategies as a classroom practice. *"Two stars and a wish [peer feedback strategy] is the easiest one we do" (CPS Science).*

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TABLE 2
(Continued)

Category of Practice	• Codes (frequency across interviews) Description *Data Example(s)*
Opportunities for higher level thinking	• "Questions and discovery" (11) Teacher showing students how to develop good questions. *"I'm also always willing to listen to questions. I think that students think that they know that they can always ask those questions" (MS Econ).* *"You know, kind of give them some guidelines as to what kinds of questions to formulate and the types of questions that you would structure the conversation around at different stages of the conversation" (PS English).* • "Eliciting students thinking and reasoning skills" (8) Teacher promotes students thinking and reasoning skills in the classroom. *"I mean I think about my kids metacognition and I like to think that I ask them in ways that will help them to think about their thinking or to consider the skills that they're doing now" (CPS Math).* *"Also, I think getting them to be intellectually involved in your subject, whether they expected to or not" (MS Econ).*
Talking about future plans related to college	• "College preparation" (15) Creating a classroom climate that allows for discussion about future plans, *in particular how to prepare for college*. *"[I talk about] things and skills that they are going to take with them to college I think are going to be really beneficial" (MS Math).*
Making connections to real life	• "Life skills" (15) Teacher strives to include life skills into lessons. *"So it's constantly reminding them of good habits, work habits, that they can do to push themselves to their goal" (CPS English).* *"I try and make one in which they learn lifetime learning skills and math is simply the platform on which they learn those things" (PS Math).* • "Making connections outside of the classroom" —(17) Teacher applies content to the world outside the classroom for real-life application. *"But if they can see how the thing that they're learning to do helps them to approach some problem or to think about something" (PS Writing).* *"I have to be able to connect it to their immediate everyday life in order for them to … learn about these contemporary issues that are kind of bigger issues" (MS Bio).*
Teacher planning and decision making	• "Pedagogical decisions" (10) Teacher makes informed pedagogical decisions based on their content and students. *"Well, what it looks like is sometimes literally playing games with your students. [Laughs] But then using those games to build on for academic experiences" (PS English).* "I try to help my students navigate their way to the most important thing that they're doing" (CPS Math). • "Classroom diversity and variation" (12) Teacher embeds variation into all aspects of the classroom. *"I try to make sure that the writers and the characters whom they are facing are women and men, are younger and older, are from different parts of this country, culturally speaking, be that geographic or socioeconomic…" (PS Writing).* *"But variety of everything. Make sure that everything is different than what we would have done before and even if we are doing something that has to be the same" (PS Writing).* • "Making content interesting" (7) Teacher strives to make class content exciting and interesting. *"We're not taking these courses to be entertained, but it's better than hating life all the way through the 50-minute period" (CPS Math).* *"And I guess I try to make it more exciting and attainable because I want them to make that connection, but I know that they're not all going to" (CPS Science).*

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TABLE 2
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Category of Practice	• Codes (frequency across interviews) Description *Data Example(s)*
Teacher planning and decision making	• "Making connections within the classroom" (7) Teacher encourages students to make academic connections. "That's going to connect back to what student C said" (PS Writing). *"Then we say, 'Look what you've done and how it does this and goes with that!'" (CPS Math).* • "Purposeful classroom design" (2) Teacher is purposeful in how the classroom is physically set-up. *"I want them looking at each other or I wouldn't be sitting in the circle with them" (PS Writing).* *"You can structure human interaction. In terms of how classrooms are set up physically, how time is handled" (PS Writing).* • "Teacher intentionality in planning" (6) Teacher intentionally plans classroom lessons and activities to promote students' success inside and outside the classroom. *"I like to just be intentional about what I'm doing and what I'm asking them to do" (CPS Math).* *"By giving the opportunities to be successful in small things" (CPS Math)*
Authentically bringing teacher self into the classroom	• "Teacher modeling" (3) Teacher models or shares behaviors he/she would like to see in his/her students. *"If you are modeling cynicism, negativity, devaluing of people based on any given thing ever (and there are people who do), you are doing more harm than good in the profession" (PS Writing).* • "Teacher-driven instruction" (3) Teacher utilizes teacher-driven initiatives to best teach the content. *"I think there are times where I do direct instruction for kids to learn … this past unit has been about me doing direct instruction …these are the tools of monetary policy" (MS Econ).* • "Teacher personality" (2) Teacher embraces their authentic self and embeds aspects of their personality into the lessons. *"I'm very goofy" (CPS Science).* *"I tend to be a little bit more like sarcastic" (MS Bio)*
Goal setting	• "Goals set by teachers and students" (10) Teacher and student work together to set goals. *"Maybe some of like the bigger goals, some of the big picture ideas. But without a doubt, I'm constantly asking for their ideas within that" (MS Bio)* • "Teacher goals" (8) Teacher recognizes the importance of setting goals for his/her class. *"In writing, you have to be specific about what your expectations and what you want from the students because there are some specific goals in writing that you want them to accomplish—being able to frame a quotation certainly, being able to support a thesis with evidence, and commentary" (PS English, p. 5)* • "Student goals" (7) Teacher recognizes the importance of assisting students in setting personal goals. *"I think [I need to encourage] personal goal setting, I actually do this a lot in my calc. class that I teach" (MS Math,).*
Authentically bringing student self into the classroom	• "Student Autonomy" (9) Teacher provides opportunities for student autonomy in the classroom. *"I get to step back, and they get to really do some explaining that's really neat. You know, that's the stuff that you know that kids aren't going to forget" (MS Bio).* *"The tough part of that is that sometimes the prompts aren't perfect, but you have to let them work around that still in order to truly be giving them some sort of autonomy in the work" (PS English).*

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TABLE 2
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Category of Practice	• Codes (frequency across interviews) Description *Data Example(s)*
Authentically bringing student self into the classroom (continued)	• "Attending to student interests" (10) Teacher incorporates students' interests into classroom content. *"I know that I definitely structure my classes on what they're finding, what they're interested in because again, it's going to make it more relevant to them if we can look at what they're wanting to look at and research" (MS Bio)* • *"We do a project each year in groups in my class and the only parameter for kids is that they take something that's of particular interest to them and they apply it to mathematics" (PS Math).* "Linking prior knowledge" (2) Teacher incorporates students' prior knowledge into lesson in order to encourage authentic connections. *"Then I ask them to kind of use what they know about economics and what they know about really anything—history or English or whatever they want to bring in…" (MS Econ)* • "Embracing students' mistakes" (2) Teacher encourages students to learn from their mistakes and intentionally teaches through students' mistakes. *"So you have to make room for them to stumble and fall sometimes" (PS English).* *So I wrote on his test. I said, 'Let's learn from this.'" (PS Math).*
Civics	• "Civics" (7) Teacher molds students to be productive citizens in society. *"One thing that I think is really important about that is getting kids to think about how they fit into those patterns as a whole and recognizing some of the positive patterns of our economy and how like even though things may not be working out for them immediately, they're working out for most people at one point, right, or that at some point it will work out for them" (MS Econ).* *"So sometimes just explaining to them the impact they have on other people, I think that makes a good citizen, having that empathy and sympathy for others" (CPS English)*
Passion and purpose	• "Helping students find purpose/passion" (2) Teacher helps students dig deeper into their interests to find their passion or purpose in life. *"I hope that I can at least give them some evidence that if you are thinking about what you are doing and you're thinking and asking critical questions about what you're doing, that you're going to find some sort of purpose in that" (MS Econ).* *"I guess what I try to do is just to give them a sampling of a lot of different things that they can develop a passion for" (PS English).*

Notes: PS = private school; CPS = comprehensive public school; MS = magnet school.

TABLE 3
Most Common Practice Categories by Dimension of Purpose

Goal Identification	*Personal Meaning*	*Engagement*	*Beyond-the-Self*
Encouragement (5)	Making outward connections (6)	Assessment and feedback (6)	Projects and group work (6)
Goals set by teachers and students (9)	Attending to students' interests (6)	Questions and discovery (7)	Life skills (10)
Teacher-set goals (8)	Teacher-student relationship (4)	Engagement (7)	Making outward connections (9)
Student-set goals (7)	Make content interesting (4)	Classroom variation (10)	Civics (7)

Note: (#) = frequency of code across interviews within dimension.

tice provides a starting point for future work that investigates the ways in which purpose may be supported in the high school classroom, and a classroom-generated idea that practitioners may want to further research and consider in their own classrooms.

Practice Categories Identified by Teachers

Twelve categories of practice emerged from teacher interviews (Table 2). Teachers were able to describe practices across all dimensions of purpose. These included individualized instruction and feedback; positive classroom climate; opportunities for collaboration; opportunities for higher level thinking; talking about future plans related to college; making connections to real life; teacher planning and decision making; authentically bringing the teacher self into the classroom; goal setting; authentically bringing the student self into the classroom; civics; and passion and purpose. Examples of each category of practice, frequency counts, as well as the codes included in each category, are displayed in Table 2.

Practice Categories Identified by Students

Nine categories of teacher practice emerged in student survey responses, with most students reporting that their teachers did help develop them across the dimensions of purpose (ranging from 16 to 18 respondents for each dimension). From those respondents who thought their teachers helped to support them across the dimensions of purpose, the following categories of practice emerged: making connections to real life; perspective-taking, future orientation; community/other orientation; self-awareness; teacher support; interpersonal skills; talking about future plans related to college; and trying new things. Examples of each category of practice, as well as the codes included in each category, are displayed in Table 1.

Most Common Practice Categories for Each Dimension of Purpose

The most common practices related to identification of a goal or long-term intention in the classroom included encouragement, teacher-set goals, student-set goals, and goals set by both (Table 3). Participating teachers promoted goal setting in their classrooms by actively reminding students of their goals and tangible ways to achieve them. Additionally, teachers discussed three types of explicit goal identification in their classrooms. In one scenario, the teacher and student work together to set goals. In another, the teacher sets the goals for their class, without any student input. In one interview, a teacher discussed her role in setting goals and learning objectives, and noted, "I would say that I set the goals very clearly in my classroom, that I control that. I'm the one. I choose the learning objectives. I'm the one who sets the essential questions" (MS, Econ). While some teachers expressed the importance of taking initiative when setting goals in their classrooms, other teachers described the value of assisting students in developing their personal and academic goals. This type of goal identification was categorized under student-set goals, as teachers encouraged students to take ownership of establishing and achieving their goals.

In order to help students find personal meaning, teachers most frequently utilized the following strategies: making outward connections, attending to students' interests, establishing a strong teacher-student relationship, and making content interesting (Table 3). When teachers made outward connections, they effectively related academic content to the world outside of the classroom for the purpose of real-life application. For example, one teacher noted, "So I think finding something about that class that you can appreciate and that you can connect to I think will make the class in general go a lot smoother" (MS, Math). Not only was it important for the content to relate to the real world, but teachers also created personal meaning when they incorpo-

rated students' interests into the classroom content. Teachers discussed the value of connecting with students and their interests in order to foster a deeper level of understanding. Additionally, when teachers created a positive and trusting relationship with their students, they were able to support students in establishing personal meaning. When teachers had the opportunity to build strong relationships with their students, they were able to further their excitement about the subject. Lastly, teachers cultivated personal meaning in their classrooms when they strove to make content exciting and interesting. This practice was exemplified by a teacher who noted, "And I guess I try to make it more exciting and attainable because I want them to make that connection" (CPS, Science).

Teachers most commonly supported engagement through assessment and feedback, questions and discovery, engagement, and classroom variation (Table 3). Teachers who mentioned giving assessment and feedback to increase engagement evaluated students' progress through assessment and provided ongoing feedback. Teachers also reported posing questions to further prompt student thinking and to teach students how to develop good questions in order to promote discovery. Additionally, teachers supported engagement by noticing when students were engaged and by continuously providing opportunities for students to maintain focus. Finally, teachers used classroom variation to maintain engagement. For example, the private school writing teacher pointed to variation when he said, "So I think in classroom engagement, the biggest techniques for me are about time and space—moving things around, switching things up, making the point of focus change."

The most common practices generated by teachers in reference to the beyond-the-self dimension of purpose included using projects and group work, teaching life skills, making outward connections, and civics education (Table 3). Projects and group work includes any type of project-based learning and/or creating opportunities for group work in the classroom setting. By teaching and providing opportunities to practice life skills via classroom activities, teachers believed they were helping students move into more integrated roles in their present and future communities. By applying content to real-life applications, teachers sought to help their students make outward connections. While one teacher discussed how he includes making outward connections for his students, he said, "We were like what does this look like in the real world? What is the relationship between these rules and then these real-life examples that we're reading about? And for different concepts, I'll have them look at real-life examples to figure it out" (MS, Econ). The last practice that teachers mentioned in this dimension was civics education.

DISCUSSION

The findings reported here contribute to knowledge about what researchers may want to consider as they conduct future investigations about how to support the development of adolescent purpose within high school classrooms, and to areas to which high school teachers may want to direct and cultivate their practices if they desire to support purpose development in their students. The classroom practices that have emerged from this work may best be described as general *categories of practice*, rather than specific content lessons or strategies for implementing these categories of practice. Here, significant themes across these categories of practice are discussed in terms of their researcher and practitioner implications.

Making Connections to the Realities of Life

Teachers and students noted that teachers' efforts to make connections to the real lives of students supported development across various dimensions of purpose. For teachers, these efforts focused on skills like work habits, and teaching students what to do to reach a goal, as

well as connecting content to the everyday lives of students. Students, in turn, recognized that their teachers helped them develop in one or more of the dimensions of purpose when they helped them to understand that there will be challenges in life, and that these challenges can be overcome. At the core of any of these responses is the effort to make learning relevant to students, a tactic that Hulleman and Karackiewicz (2009) linked to greater student interest and higher student grades, and that directly ties into the personal meaning dimension of purpose.

Developing Future Orientation

Perhaps the least surprising way in which teacher and student participants thought teacher practices supported purpose development was through efforts to get students to think about their futures. However, teachers actually discussed this in slightly more limited ways than students. Teachers primarily focused on providing information about college, while students additionally noted how their teachers helped them to think more broadly about their futures, beyond their college pathways. Students, in particular, noted the concrete practice of teachers who asked them to write future plans, or steps they needed to take toward future goals, and some students used words like "purpose" and "mission" to describe the ways in which their teachers encouraged them to think about their futures. Given that purpose includes a long-term intention to accomplish something, it makes sense that practices that explicitly ask students to consider their future plans and goals may support purpose development.

Building Supportive Teacher-Student Relationships

Teacher and student participants noted the ways in which supportive, encouraging teacher-student relationships could support adolescent development across the dimensions of purpose. These relationships may be particularly important for helping students to trust their teachers as sources of information and for keeping students engaged in the classroom work that may help them discover and build competencies that will help them engage their purposes. Recent theory suggests that positive teacher-student relationships are fundamental to student engagement (Corso, Bundick, Quaglia, & Haywood, 2013), along with teachers' and students' relationships to the content. The teacher and student participants in the present study add to the body of evidence to support this theory.

Cultivating a Willingness to Try New Things, Persevere, and Learn From Mistakes

Both teacher and student participants also identified a set of related ways in which teachers may be able to support the development of purpose in students: cultivating a willingness to try new things, perseverance, and the ability to learn from mistakes. Teachers primarily focused on the ways in which they handled mistakes in the classroom, and the cultivation of perseverance, while students also noted teachers who had helped them try new things or develop interests in new areas. Individuals likely undergo a period of exploration prior to commitment on the path to purpose (Malin et al., 2014), and students may be more willing to explore a variety of options if they have adopted a combination of grit (Duckworth & Gross, 2014) and a growth mindset (Yeager & Dweck, 2012), located within the supportive teacher-student relationships described above, especially with respect to mistakes. Grit may help students stick to some of the tougher learning that may be required to gain competencies to engage their purposes. A growth mindset—the belief that one can change one's competencies through effort—may contribute to grit on the path to purpose.

Cultivating a Prosocial Orientation, Perspective-Taking, and Collaboration

While the number of teacher and student participants who identified ways in which teachers helped students think about the world beyond themselves was lower than some of the other shared themes described here, given the importance of the beyond-the-self dimension to the definition of purpose utilized in this study, it is worth noting the ways in which study participants thought this aspect of purpose may be supported. Teachers who mentioned other-focused strategies tended to describe their efforts to create opportunities for collaboration and group project work, while a smaller number mentioned connecting their academic discipline to the civic roles students would play in their lives. Students, on the other hand, primarily focused on the ways in which teachers helped them develop an awareness of the perspective of others, with a smaller number noting the ways in which their teachers got them involved in community service activities. All of these categories of practice point the ways in which the adolescents in high school classrooms need (and may actually appreciate!) practices that help them develop social cognitive skills. In fact, a growing body of evidence from behavioral neuroscience suggests that adolescence may be a sensitive period for developing these skills, which means adolescents—especially young adolescents—are particularly ready to receive experiences that help them develop social cognitive skills (Blakemore & Mills, 2014) that may be important to the relational demands of enacting purpose.

Key Limitations

While the findings of this study suggest general categories of practice within which teachers may want to focus their efforts if they want to develop purpose in their adolescent students, the limitations of the present study offer room to consider future research and practitioner actions. The primary limitation of this study is that it was not designed to test efficacy, and therefore, while the study has generated information about what practices teachers believe they use, and what practices students recognize as helpful to their development across the dimensions of purpose, the study does not provide support for the effectiveness of any of these practices. Another significant limitation of this study is that the findings tended to point to general categories rather than concrete practices. Many of the "practices" that emerged may be better understood as areas of focus, with the *how* of practice as of yet uncovered. While these two limitations are significant in terms of the immediate utility of this work, the findings as they stand offer reasons for optimism, and the key limitations both point to concrete future directions for researchers and practitioners.

Reasons for Optimism and Future Directions

There is much reason for optimism in these findings, because the categories of practice that emerged represent areas of focus that are not limited to any one academic discipline, and that do not require that teachers add on additional content to what they are already required to teach. Teachers from any discipline can connect their discipline to the realities of students' lives—through content or work habits developed in the discipline. Teachers of any discipline can cultivate positive relationships with their students and discuss future plans. Teachers of any discipline would likely find value in cultivating a willingness to try to new things, perseverance and a growth mindset. Teachers of any discipline can create opportunities for collaboration and group work that develop students' perspective-taking skills, and many could also incorporate ways to serve the needs of others in the ways that they connect their academic disciplines to the real world outside of the classroom. What the participants of this study demonstrate is that some teachers already are teaching to support development across the dimensions of purpose—even if they do not explicitly name it as such. Future

research in this area should begin from these existing teacher and student experiences in order to create, test, and refine more intentional and authentic classroom practices to support the development of purpose during adolescence.

However, what can teachers interested in supporting the development of purpose do right now? So many professional development programs try to deliver evidence-based, best practices to teachers across a variety of subject matters. However, with the subject matter of purpose, the fact is that the research is not yet extensive enough to truly generate this type of *knowledge-for-practice*, and it may not be the type of knowledge that would best drive change (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). However, teachers, students, and researchers may together be able to generate *knowledge-of-practice* (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) for teaching that supports purpose development by continuing and building on conversations like the ones had between researchers and teachers in the present study. Possible modalities for generating this type of knowledge would be critical friends groups (Curry, 2008), professional learning communities (Wood, 2007), or lesson study groups (Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006) focused on supporting purpose development in the classroom. In each of these models, teachers could engage in a cycle of discussion, implementation, feedback, and refinement of practice that may generate more ecologically valid strategies for supporting purpose in the classroom. Additionally, each of these models leaves room for researcher collaboration, further dissolving the line between practical and formal knowledge (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

The youth participants in this study added their own perspectives, which, at times, varied from those of the perspectives of the included teachers. With this in mind, teachers may want to consider simply talking more to their students about some of their deeper concerns in life, and creating systems for gathering student feedback and voice in the classroom. Additionally, youth participatory action research, during which youth work with researchers to determine research questions, engage in inquiry practices, report and act on what they find (Ozer, 2017), may offer a pathway for researchers to better understand what adolescents actually think is most important as they develop purpose in their lives. This inclusion of student voice has the potential to develop strategies with which adolescents will better engage and through which they will make positive changes in their lives and the lives of others. For both researchers and practitioners, then, the findings of this study may be best understood as providing a multiplicity of potential ways in which high school teachers and researchers may be able to work with adolescents to support the development of purpose.

CONCLUSION

Recall that one student's admission that he was primarily motivated by fear to academically achieve, combined with what the first author knew about the personally meaningful pursuits of many of her students, contributed to her own motivation for studying purpose development. She, as a high school teacher, believed that there must be something more positive that she could use to help her students achieve their academic and personal goals. In fact, the first author began her high school teaching career, and still approaches her university teaching career, as a way in which she can support her students, if they are open to it, on the path to discovering the ways in which their own deep gladness may intersect with one of the world's many deep needs (Buechner, 1993). In the first study that arose from the teacher data utilized in the present study, teachers revealed that they do, in fact, conceive of their teaching within their own academic disciplines as connected to the personal meaning and beyond-the-self dimensions of purpose (Quinn, 2016). The findings from this study further undergird the contention that wisdom about practices to support purpose

development within the high school classroom may be found within the teachers and students in those classrooms. Those in the research community may access this wisdom by asking the right questions, and those in the teaching community may begin the process of surfacing and further developing this wisdom by creating intentional dialogue among themselves and with their students around the topic of teaching practices for purpose development.

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APPENDIX: SEMISTRUCTURED TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction	• Tell me a little bit about yourself. • Tell me a little bit about why you became a teacher.
Elicit purpose for content area	• (If not already answered) Tell me a little bit about the main content area you teach. • Why do you teach in this content area? • What do you think is most important for students to learn in this content area?
Elicit purpose in general	• What are your biggest concerns for your students? • What are your biggest hopes for your students? • If you encountered one of your students 10 years after he or she graduated from high school, what would make you think he or she had become successful?
Elicit connections between Purpose for content and purpose in General	• Can you talk to me a little about how, if at all, what students learn in your classroom is connected to the things you would like to see in them after they have graduated from high school?
Elicit purpose practices across four dimensions	• I would like to spend some time talking about some of the things you do in your classroom to help students learn what is most important in your content area …
Goal identification/ intention	• Some teachers believe it makes sense for teachers to set the goals of a classroom, and others believe it makes sense for students to set these goals. Can you talk to me about your own thoughts about this? o Was there ever a time when a student of yours developed a personal goal about something related to your content area that he or she wanted to accomplish? Can you tell me about this? o What are some of the things you do to help students set goals like these?

Personal meaning	• Sometimes students seem to find personal meaning in something they are being taught, and other times, it seems really difficult for them to make that personal connection. Do you think it's important for students to find personal meaning in what they are being taught? o Was there a time in your classroom when you really felt like you sparked those personal connections? Can you tell me about one of these times? o In general, what are some of the things you do in your classroom to try to create personal meaning? • You have mentioned students who have found personal connections with something in your content area. When you see that in a student, what do you do?
Engagement	• What does a student who is engaged with what he or she is learning look like to you? • Have there been times when you felt like your students were really engaged in something you were doing with them? Can you tell me about one of these times? o How do you encourage students to engage, or participate in what they are learning in your classes? • You have mentioned students who have found personal connections with something in your content area. When you see that in a student, what do you do?
Contribution/beyond-the-self	• In most content areas, we can think about knowledge or skills, and then we can think about the ways in which knowledge and skills get used in and beyond the classroom. How do you approach these two ways of thinking about your content area in your own classroom? o *(If above leads to this)* What do you do to help students see how the knowledge and skills of your content area are used beyond the classroom? • Some people say its important for schools to encourage students to think about how to make their communities and world better, and others thing that responsibility mainly belongs to others. o What are your own thoughts about this? o How do you expose your students to some of the ways knowledge and skills from your content area can be used to contribute?
Elicit integrated purpose practices	So far we have discussed things you do in your classroom to encourage your students to identify and set goals, such as … and what you do to help them find personal meaning and engage in what they do, such as…. We have also discussed how you help students think about how to use what they learn beyond the classroom, such as • Are there any ways in which you see that these four things fit together? Lead into one another? o Conceptually? o In your practices? o What are some of the things you do in your classroom that support more than one of these?
Elicit holistic purpose definition and beliefs about teacher roles	• Some people believe that everyone has a purpose in life. What does "purpose in life" mean to you? • Some researchers define purpose as being engaged in a life-long intention to accomplish something that is both personally meaningful and contributes to the world in some way. • Using this definition, what do you think a teacher's role is in helping students find their purpose in life? o Why? Why not? o What are some of the things you do in your classroom to help students find their purpose in life?
Final check	• Throughout the interview you have talked about a lot of things you do in your classroom, such as: Do these seem correct? • You have also shared your thoughts about how these things relate, such as…. Does this seem correct? • Finally, you've talked about (role of teacher in purpose development)…. Does this seem correct? • Is there anything else I've missed that you think is important?