

EXPLORING INNER MEANING THROUGH REFLECTIVE  
DIALOGUE: A CURRICULAR PERSPECTIVE

By

DIANE M. HENSLEY

Bachelor of Science in Education  
University of Tulsa  
Tulsa, Oklahoma  
1980

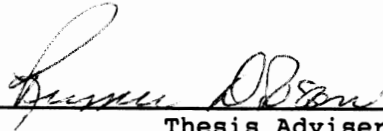
Master of Education  
Northeastern State University  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma  
1984

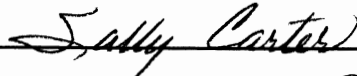
Submitted to the Faculty of the  
Graduate College of the  
Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for  
the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
December, 1991

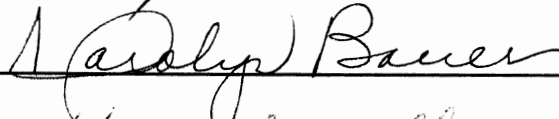
EXPLORING INNER MEANING THROUGH REFLECTIVE

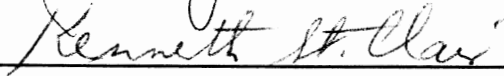
DIALOGUE: A CURRICULAR PERSPECTIVE

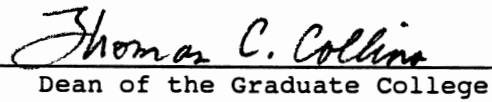
Thesis Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Adviser

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate College

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Russell Dobson for his advice, insight, moral support and encouragement throughout my doctoral program at Oklahoma State University. Also, without the support and personal interest each of the other members of the committee have shown me, none of this would be possible:

Dr. Carolyn Bauer for sharing her joy in children's curiosity, Dr. Kenneth St. Clair for his wisdom, and Dr. Sally Carter for her generosity and thoughtful inquiry.

I wish to dedicate my achievements to my father and grandmother who taught me courage and inspiration in their short lifetimes. Their zest of living and love of people remain cornerstones of my life. My brothers, John and Mike, and sister, Pat, gave me encouragement and confidence to meet life's challenges with a smile. Thank you for your unwavering support.

I wish to thank the students and staffs of the schools in which I have worked for all they have taught me about love, education, and life-long learning. Their patience and support created the framework for my search of personal meaning. I have been very fortunate to have many wonderful friends in the doctoral program who have inspired trust and confidence in my attempts to make life more meaningful for children and teachers in the classroom. Many of them share this achievement with me.

My love and appreciation go to my family, Kim and Matt, Greg, and Steve, who unselfishly gave me the time and fortitude to grow personally and professionally. Special thanks goes to my husband Lloyd who realized how important education can be. A special hug goes to my six month old grandson, Andrew, for providing the trust, love, and laughter which makes the struggle for meaning in classrooms so essential in the future.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY . . . . .	1
Introduction. . . . .	1
Problem Statement . . . . .	2
Background. . . . .	3
The Purpose . . . . .	6
Significance. . . . .	7
Organization of the Study . . . . .	9
II. REFLECTIVE PROCESS . . . . .	10
Process . . . . .	10
Personal Meaning in Education . . . . .	12
Personality of the Culture. . . . .	18
Nature of Reflection. . . . .	20
III. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY . . . . .	26
Introduction. . . . .	26
Theory and Methodology. . . . .	26
Research Site . . . . .	28
Data Source . . . . .	29
Data Collection . . . . .	30
Data Analysis . . . . .	31
Reporting Data. . . . .	32
Statement of Professional Integrity . . . . .	33
IV. THE SETTING, THE AUTHOR, AND THE TIMES . . . . .	34
The Setting . . . . .	34
The Author. . . . .	35
The Principal . . . . .	36
The Times . . . . .	47
V. COMING TO KNOW . . . . .	54
Reflection on Action. . . . .	54
Introduction. . . . .	54
School is School: A Personal Perspective. . . . .	56
August 1990 . . . . .	56
September 1990 . . . . .	60
Curriculum in Transition . . . . .	61

Chapter	Page
Faculty Meetings . . . . .	63
School Discipline Plan . . . . .	64
October 1990. . . . .	67
My Schedule. . . . .	67
Lunch in the Cafeteria . . . . .	71
Lunch in the Lounge. . . . .	72
Afternoon Schedule . . . . .	73
Team Meetings (Unquestioning the Questionable). . . . .	75
Teachers' Backgrounds. . . . .	76
Teachers' Ideologies . . . . .	76
Resource Lab . . . . .	77
November 1990 . . . . .	78
Parent in Charge . . . . .	80
December 1990 . . . . .	83
Prejudice and Placement in L.D.. . . . .	83
January 1991. . . . .	86
Covering Classes . . . . .	86
Culture Shock. . . . .	88
Hall Passes and Hall Walkers . . . . .	89
February 1991 . . . . .	90
Counselor and Referrals. . . . .	90
March 1991. . . . .	92
The Turning Point. . . . .	92
April 1991. . . . .	95
Teacher in Charge. . . . .	95
May 1991. . . . .	98
Pen Pal Trip . . . . .	98
Graduation . . . . .	100
 VI. OTHER REFLECTIVE LENSES. . . . .	 102
Reflection in Action. . . . .	102
Introduction. . . . .	102
Categorization. . . . .	107
Categories of Content	
Student Autonomy vs. Teacher Control . . . . .	108
Disruptive Behavior. . . . .	111
Intergroup Relations . . . . .	113
Interpersonal Relations. . . . .	115
Expectations . . . . .	117
Personal Satisfaction. . . . .	118
Personal Dissatisfaction . . . . .	118
Personal Philosophy. . . . .	119
Philosophical Questioning the Problematic. . . . .	120
Catharsis. . . . .	121

Chapter	Page
VII. EDGE OF HOPE . . . . .	123
Reflection for Action . . . . .	123
Introduction. . . . .	123
Innovative Erosion. . . . .	124
Curriculum Encounter. . . . .	125
The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same. . . . .	127
The Crisis of Consciousness . . . . .	128
The Meaning of What I Do. . . . .	129
REFERENCES. . . . .	131
APPENDIXES. . . . .	138
APPENDIX A - ENTRY LEVEL TEACHER'S JOURNAL . . . . .	139
APPENDIX B - TENURED TEACHER'S JOURNAL . . . . .	154

## CHAPTER I

### RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

#### Introduction

Freedom is essentially an inner thing . . .  
the discovery of meaning from within oneself and  
the burden of being responsible for the self one  
chooses to be (Rogers, 1969).

Education is a dynamic process of making personal meaning out of the world around us. In this search for meaning, each of us weaves what we already know (schemata) with the meaning we create concerning the unknown. In children, the process is natural and occurs dynamically in their everyday dealings with the world around them. Just as language evolves naturally through the desire to have needs met, learning evolves by having met the need to establish meaning in one's existence. The spiritual aspect of learning, the establishment of meaning, can not be quantified or qualified in research, as it can only be actualized in the individual for him/herself (May, 1983). The self liberation from unknown to known is the passage each of us takes in education. Where our passage leads, however, holds the key to either self actualization or acculturation of the world view espoused by the hegemonic consensus established by others for us.



### Problem Statement

Does schooling meet the individual need for personal meaning, or does it merely compromise that personal need in search for the "common good"? Does education serve to facilitate the struggle for personal meaning by nourishing the critical and creative consciousness each child possesses? In exploring the ethical dimensions of the accepted way schools view students, no one questions the morality of its mission: to produce independent productive citizens (Kliebard, 1975; Illich, 1970). This presupposition is rarely investigated since it is the core of the commonsensical worldview of education today (Apple, 1979). But how can education be sure these assumptions are not shattering the ontological process of personal "becomingness" that meaning-making establishes for the individual--one's own vision of self affirmation. The existentialist's approach to education, therefore, lies at the heart of the dynamic search for meaning (May, 1983).

The source of meaning of the schools in society and the source of meaning for persons engaged in schooling reside in the human activity that takes place in the school. This meaning resides within persons regardless of society; and its traditions, conditions, and goals are merely boundaries and directives that enter into the shaping of activity itself (Macdonald, 1972).

By looking at the personal activity of people in the schools, educators may be able to reflect on the social and personal meanings of that activity. Granted all activity has a social meaning, but what do we understand concerning the quality of that activity and its relationship to personal relevancy. To the extent that we may

come to know and understand the phenomena of meaning making for the individual, can we hope to imagine curriculum theory that "sees, thinks, and knows" children (Macdonald, 1988).

### Background

In the social movements around the world today (Glasnost, Perestroika, the tearing down of the Berlin wall, Russia's cry for democracy), people have begun to question the "taken for granted" assumptions which removed them personally from the quality they sought in everyday life. The confidence in challenging their traditions, conditions, and goals can only stem from the need to realize more meaning in their personal lives. For the process of liberation lies dormant within each individual until questioning the unquestionable begins to tear away at the spiritual foundation of personal meaning. How can this be any different in the bureaucratic domain of education which has yet to establish the "purpose of education to be the bringing of people to a realization of themselves as humans" (Arthur Foshay, 1986).

It can be argued education has become an act of depositing, in which the student's actions only extend as far as receiving, filling and storing the deposits of information. Information is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. The projection of information onto others isolates education and knowledge as processes of inquiry based in personal meaning. The key of transforming mere information into meaningful knowledge may lie perhaps in Paulo Freire's (1970)

resolution of the teacher/student contradiction:

the teacher teaches and the students are taught;  
 the teacher knows everything and the students know  
 nothing;  
 the teacher thinks and the students are thought about;  
 the teacher talks and the students listen--meekly;  
 the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;  
 the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students  
 comply;  
 the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting  
 through the action of the teacher;  
 the teacher chooses the program content, and the students who  
 are not consulted adapt to it;  
 the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own  
 professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the  
 freedom of the students;  
 the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, which  
 the students are mere objects.

For these contradictions of attitudes and practices can not be resolved without school culture allowing all participants to become "realizations of themselves" and trusted partners in their own quest for life-long meaning.

The romantic ideology of education (Kohlberg and Mayer, 1972) established its domain in the most important aspect of human development that which comes naturally from the individual. Their interpretive and phenomenological approach to education saw learning as not coming from a collection of external stimuli, but rather from a process which had intrinsic meaning characterized and sustained by individual interpretations of social reality. The phenomenon was produced by individual actors and always became problematic in the discovery of meaning.

Carl Rogers (1969) spoke of the "freedom to learn" wherein pedagogy was based upon unconditional positive regard and was the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting. The

interpretation implied the assumption of a fundamental human essence in all of us, which precedes all social experience. However, the potential of recognizing human essence continues to be repressed through the manipulative institutions of traditional schooling.

Historically, in the study of dominant structures of meaning, referred to as paradigms, educators ask their questions, engage in research and design environments for students relying on technological/rational interest. This approach, grounded in logical positivism, the blending of symbolic logic and the scientific method (Dobson, Dobson, Koetting, 1987), preoccupied itself with the effective operation of systems management and its deterministic and manipulative outlook. Thought, action, and feeling were reduced to separate and identifiable components, each of which could be known before the student engaged in activity. The environment was then controlled (as was the student) scientifically so that neither the individual's behavior nor his/her thought would deviate from the prescribed goal. In this way education strived to reduce human phenomena into predictable goals controlled by school practices reflecting this ideology.

The bureaucratization of the school (standardization of activity or work resulting in comparable products) which has taken place in the twentieth century was the result of the breakdown of a community-centered society, and with it, the idealism of the individual as the unifying element in social life. Man became merely a cog in a great machine (Kliebard, 1975). At the turn of

the century, the idealized form of bureaucracy led by Fredrick Taylor's guidance committed the future of society to be enveloped in a model of efficiency. John Franklin Bobbitt (1912), prominent force behind efficiency in curriculum, defined the course of school practice when he aligned its direction in the efficiency of scientific management. He not only interpreted plant and worker efficiency in schools but established curriculum production standards as well. "Educate the individual according to his capabilities" (Kliebard, p. 56) allowed schools the practice of judging the innate capacities of children which affiliated curriculum with the probable destinations schools determined for children.

One voice of opposition was heard; Charles W. Eliot (1923), Harvard University president emeritus, speculated the inevitable result of scientific management would be the destruction of the interest of the worker in his work, and that standardization was having the same effect in education. "The true educational goal," he said, "was the utmost development of the individual's capacity or power all through life" (Kliebard, p. 59). The Charles Eliots seem to be missing from the schools today for the least voice heard is the one of the individual with the most vested interest--that of the participant.

#### The Purpose

With the ingrained acceptance to the prevailing ways of perceiving and operating schools today, education legitimates a good

deal of the day-to-day activity never relating these activities to the complex reality outside the classroom (Pinar, 1975). The study of personal meaning in school culture necessitated the unmasking of hegemony which influences all thought, feeling, outlook, and behavior in classrooms. Through phenomenological curriculum inquiry, I hope to uncover the voices seldom heard. These voices are the means through which students and teachers actively engage in dialogue with one another (Giroux, 1986).

Phenomenological inquiry provides for the probing of thought beyond the surface features of everyday life into the realm of intersubjective meaning where people, having the greatest vested interest, share a similar context. This process of thought was founded on the work of Alfred Whitehead (1925, 1929) who argued reality of thought lies in experience not outside experience. We construct thought; we do not discover it. The shift from an absolute observer (objective) outside an experience to a participator (subjective) inside the experience may create the transition of information-knowledge-wisdom.

#### Significance

In a personal reflective relationship of teacher-student/student-teacher operating from positions of trust sharing thoughts, insights, problems, honestly and freely the transformation of information-knowledge-wisdom may take place. If curriculum is representative of life, the continuous process of reconstructing knowledge advocated by Dewey, Bruner, Piaget (Doll, 1989) may emerge

naturally as the culture's self reflection, deliberation, and critical inquiry evolves for "reality is becoming, not standing still" (Freire, 1987).

It is in reflection that meaning is derived as it is situated historically and transmitted culturally through interaction with others. Voice is the cultural grammar and background knowledge (schemata) that individuals use to interpret and articulate experience. In order to demystify the dominate school culture, the different voices (student, teacher, school) must be heard and interpreted regarding the meanings they reveal.

Therefore, this inquiry into the understanding of personal meaning begins first with me for "the place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head, work outward from there" (Pirsig, 1974).

Since curriculum theorists draw heavily on their own experiential base, I am similarly driven into action by a personal belief system. In studying the activities of the classroom, I bring to this inquiry a set of assumptions about children. My assumptions of children before they begin school are as follows.

- Children are natural knowledge seekers.
- Children are eager for independence (take risks).
- Children are confident as learning evolves in context.
- Children are owners of the meaning they create.

This set of assumptions about children may begin to clarify my interpretation of the everyday activities experienced in school.

### Organization of this Study

An introductory discussion concerning the study's significance, guiding questions, assumptions, and organization was presented in chapter one. The second chapter was a review of literature which relate the major avenues of study: process, personal meaning, culture, and reflection. A description of the research process was the focus of Chapter III. Chapter IV entailed the historical context of the school's culture. A personal reflection of the school's cultural milieu was described in Chapter V. The sixth chapter related the perspectives of others (teachers, students and parents of the school). Finally, Chapter VII summarized my endeavor to describe a cultural setting called school.



## CHAPTER II

### REFLECTIVE PROCESS

Education in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole existence is gathered (Kristamurti, 1953).

Since school culture is not static and has its own history, I had a particular perspective from which I viewed my context. I envisioned an interweaving of four strands: Process, Personal Meaning, Culture, and Reflection helpful in describing the culture of Southside School.

#### Process

Process is grounded in the concept of personal knowledge, the personalization of the outer world through the inner potential of human beings, as they interact with outer reality. Process is not taught but is a presence or direction toward the nature of being and reality (Oliver, 1989). A sense of being, the ontological sense, is "modern man's image of himself, his experience of himself as a responsible individual" (May, 1983, p. 96). Emerging from the existentialist approach to mankind, one seeks a new understanding or rediscovery of the nature and image of the human being--oneself.

Alfred North Whitehead (1929) proposed the concept of pattern (process) to be a deeper conception of reality, or the multiplicity of dynamic relationships that define happenings or occasions. The

groundedness of knowledge begins with and includes feelings, inarticulable thoughts, and imagination which meshes with the more precise and technical description of happenings as they come into being and as they depart. Within grounded knowing, we feel the many facets of an event as they move into the unity of the occasion.

In contrast to the growing search for harmony comes the fascination of technical knowing entrenched in today's scientific paradigm. The allure of power to describe, control and manage the material environment gives the illusion of reality. Proposed realism, often called professionalism, gives a sense of legitimacy to the act of "knowing what one is doing." But technical/rational knowledge loses its potency when it does not allow for the expression of a deeper involvement in events that define our relationship to the cultural or natural world around us. Quality of life or the deeper grounded quality of knowing allows us to feel a connectedness and continuity with the complex natural relationships in which we live (Oliver, 1990).

The sense of connectedness between individual and culture as well as culture and nature (experienced as unitary events) leads mankind to believe that there are layers of knowing from a grounded human experience. These layers may begin with simple feelings of comfort and discomfort, to intuition, to the imaginative translation of feelings and intuition into images and stories. Process philosophy (Whitehead, 1929) is an elaboration of a continuum of experience which provides "depth" as an important dimension of knowing.

The process of entering into a shared moment of understanding (connectedness) is what schools are failing to celebrate. We have, instead due to mechanistic Newtonian view, tied the knowledge base of schools to a set of external facts out in the world, not to the view of becoming or actualization in a common world. We have been coming to know from the outside but not from the inside. We have not shared the relationship between self and nature as a single entity. For it is in this interaction, the essence of reality becomes a relationship between self and other, between the subject and the facts (Oliver, 1990).

#### Personal Meaning in Education

The aim of education according to Mary Richards (1974) could be the centering of the person in the world. It calls for the completion of the person or the creation of meaning that utilizes all the potential a person possesses. Creation of meaning is a fundamental process of a human being: to make sense out of his perceptions as well as cognitions of reality.

As teachers are immersed in the process of centering from their own points of view; the relationships between teachers and students are mutually responsive to the aim of making sense of their experiences. Therefore, understanding the child takes on a much deeper interpretation than knowing the child. It demands the "indwelling" in the other, a touching of the origins of the other. Understanding provides for what Huebner called the "joint pilgrimage". "To know a child is to describe his characteristics; to

understand him is to be able to write a poem that captures his essence" (Macdonald, 1974, p. 115).

Learning is significant only when it responds to personal necessity, to the individual's recognition that the learner is personally "condemned to meaning" and must take responsibility for his/her own life. It can only take place when the individuals consciously look from a variety of vantage points upon their own lived world, and when they achieve what Alfred Schutz (1986) called a "reciprocity of perspectives" upon their own realities. Through the recognition of created meanings and existences, perhaps individuals might choose to become more inquirers of the world around them (Greene, 1986).

The world is in a state of flux (all things are flowing--B. Russell). From decade to decade mankind has been faced with a physical, intellectual and moral universe so vastly transformed that yesterday's interpretations no longer meet today's needs. We are witnessing the growth of a civilization in which every human is effected with every other, linked with the other in fellowship, whether each wishes it or not, except where obstacles of a political nature are placed in the path of the spread of news. We are becoming a "civilization of forced kinship". The marvel of brotherhood of men has emerged so rapidly; it is too early to measure its countless implications. In one sense, the modern individual is doomed to autonomy, obligated to freedom. It can only be experienced by one who is willing to pay the price. The price is education which never ends, which develops the potential being of each individual, whether

from the intellect or from the heart and imagination (Lengrand, 1970).

In education there is a tendency to identify the actual, that which really exists with the true, right, and just. In contrast, the ontologically possible products of the imagination are discredited. This prejudice against the possible in favor of the actual is most prominent among those who pride themselves in being "practical" realists as they like to call themselves. Maxine Greene (1988) concluded that "one's reality rather than being fixed and predefined, is a perpetual emergence, becoming increasingly complex as more perspectives are taken, more texts are opened, more friendships are made". Her dialectic between the actual and the possible lies in the language of social construction, community, and communication based firmly on metaphysical foundations.

It may be necessary for us to recognize that what we take for granted as "natural" and unrelenting is a human construction, susceptible to reinterpretation and change. Among these actualities are included our own internalized visions of ourselves and others. Maxine Greene (1988) concluded,

We are back to the dialectic, back to the subject/object relationship and the realization that freedom can be achieved only in an ongoing transaction, one that is visible and legible to those involved. But there is always more, always possibility which emerges from the dialectic of the actual and potential, the subject and object, the necessary and possible, the real and imagined which needs and leads to freedom.

What more can education hope to be than the possibility of potential realized for each and every one.

This philosophical embeddedness is an attempt to express the infinity of the universe in terms of the limitations of language (Whitehead, 1929). Language is primarily a social thing, a means by which we give our experiences to others and get theirs again in return. When it is taken away from its natural purpose, it becomes a complex and difficult thing to (teach) understand (Dewey, 1900). Contrary to conventional pedagogical practice, we have left the student out of the process intended to actualize his existence. We have not allowed the student the means of sharing his experiences of the universe, freeing his possibilities of knowledge creation with us. This dialectic of actual to possible is only created by the teacher not being limited by the technocratic paradigm controlling educational vision today. The word "educate" is closely related to the word "educer" which meant the drawing out of a person something potential or latent. This drawing out may only be enhanced by learning what the person already knows.

Our expectations in education according to Whitehead (1965) should be seen primarily as a process of self realization (self creation of actual entity). Is the task of education to assist this process of self development in which the student has the primary responsibility for his own education and major control over it? The major contribution of education could be that of furnishing ideas and ideals in helping students achieve their goals.

Teaching, as many have viewed the activity, is an undertaking oriented to empowering persons to become different, to think critically and creatively, to pursue meanings, to make increasing sense of their actually lived worlds-to say something in their own voices (Maxine Greene, 1986).

In order to survive in a world of rapid change there is nothing more worth knowing, for any of us, than the continuing process of how to make meaning from the world around us. This is the possibility of relevancy in education or "transactional psychology" as John Dewey and Arthur Bentley formulated in Knowing the Known based on the perceptual demonstrations of Adelbert Ames in 1938. His "optical illusions" provided understanding to the interaction of what human beings are and what they make their environment into, as a product of a mutually continuing bargaining process between what is inside their skins and outside.

Hadley Cantril, in Education for What is Real, suggested that the schooling process would change when Ames' studies were understood and applied. The fact is that our perceptions come from us, with outside stimuli only becoming known as they are filtered through a human nervous system. Reality, therefore, is a perception located somewhere behind the eyes. It seemed clear, that what is perceived, is largely a function of our previous experiences, our assumptions, and our needs. We are unlikely to alter our perceptions, until and unless, we are frustrated in our attempts to do something based on them.

Since our perceptions come from us and our past experience, it is obvious that each individual will perceive what is "out there" in a unique way. We have no common world, and communication is possible only to the extent that we have similar purposes, assumptions, and experiences. Therefore, the process of becoming an effective social being is contingent upon seeing the other's point

of view. This perception is a function of the linguistic categories available to the perceiver. Behind those eyes there is a language process which through its meaning causes us to act (Postman and Weingartner, 1969).

Without a grasp, a reaching toward what is not yet, we would be submerged forever in the every-dayness of what is called the 'given'; and our lives would strike us as largely meaningless. We would have not inclination to teach or to learn (Maxine Greene, 1986, p. 75).

John Dewey regarded the imagination as the only gateway through which meanings derived from prior experiences find their way into the present and make us more conscious. Without consciousness, there is only recurring, complete uniformity. "Meaning making" as a preferred metaphor of the mind stresses the process view of pedagogy focusing on the individual and his unique ability to make meaning. The freedom to make meaning is one of the necessities we must realize by opening up the possibilities for all children in school. Reason alone cannot guarantee this freedom. Reason cannot liberate the imagination, neither can it arouse our passions. To be emancipated it is necessary to educate not only reason, but the imagination and passions as well. An education that illuminates merely the intellect, the cognitive faculties, is not enough. We might think of freedom as an opening of personal and public meaning as well as perspectives, with everything depending on the action we undertake in the course of our quest, the praxis we learn to devise. After all meaning is not "in" words but in people. (Greene, 1990)



### Personality of the Culture

Culture is the activity of thought, and receptiveness to beauty and humane feeling. A merely informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth. What we aim at producing is men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction. Their expert knowledge will give them the ground to start from and their culture will lead them as deep as philosophy and as high as art (Alfred Whitehead).

Many people in positions to plan and execute school programs to address social maladies spend a good deal of their time in criticism of schools without an intimate knowledge of the cultural setting they wish to change. Each school culture is a distinct structure or pattern that governs roles and interrelationships within the setting (Sarason, 1971).

James Macdonald defined the culture of human life to be a common set of personal constructs grounded in individual personal meaning and insisted that our shared culture, as well as language, serve as basic survival devices (Pinar, 1974). From the point of view of people within a culture, self evident truths of everyday life map out routine behavior and answer the basic questions of meaning for the people involved (Oliver, 1990). Geertz (1973) related, "We are . . . incomplete or unfinished animals who complete or finish ourselves through culture" (p. 49).

Culture is, therefore, always changing since cultural occasions combine the intentions of people and books in unique interpretations. These interpretations are the reconstruction of past ideas and behaviors into the actions of each new generation.

When humans create ideas, habits, and artifacts in a self conscious way (culture), they are hoping to improve their quality of life.

(Oliver, 1990)

In every school there are rules that describe for people what is right and correct to do, what is acceptable, and what is expected. These values and beliefs held by members of the work group are called norms. School culture focuses attention to the symbols, behavioral regularities, ceremonies, even myths that convey to the people the covert values and beliefs that are shared by members of the group.

The artifacts of the culture are observable in what people say, how they behave and how things look. Verbal artifacts include the language systems that are used, stories that are told, and examples that are used to illustrate certain important points. Behavioral artifacts are manifested in ceremonies, rituals, and other symbolic practices of the school. The school climate is also an important cultural artifact.

Less obvious but important is the attitude of the culture, the shared commonness that exists in solving problems, how they define situations they face, boundaries of acceptable or unacceptable behavior and how people work together. Values provide the basis for people to judge or evaluate the situations they face, the worth of their actions and activities, their priorities, and the behavior of people with whom they work. Values not only frame what is important but often things that are not important. In schools, values are depicted often in the form of mission statements or statements of

philosophy.

Assumptions are the "tacit" beliefs that members hold about themselves and others, their relationships to the other people and the nature of the organization in which they live. Assumptions are the implicit abstract principles that determine the more explicit system of meanings. Since the assumptions are difficult to identify, they often must be inferred from what is found as artifacts, perspectives and values. Much is learned by examining the historical perspective of the school. Believing that an organization's basic assumptions about itself can be revealed through its history, one can analyze that record to identify the major crises, crucial transitions and other times of stress (Sergiovanni, 1990).

When humans live within the confines of a single culture, their behavior is determined by reflexive unreflective custom. People do not think in terms of moral alternatives; one's life is mapped out by traditional solutions to life's problems whether that be black students in public school or white teachers in a black culture.

#### Nature of Reflection

John Dewey (1933) distinguished reflection as a specialized form of thinking. Reflective thought rises from a directly experienced situation which puzzles or surprises us, which leads to purposeful inquiry and problem resolution. The process draws its strength from the paradox that one cannot know without acting and one cannot act without knowing (Grimmett, 1988).

More than once I have heard the fourth grade teacher say, 'I have to think this out some more.'

The tentative resolution to the question is arrived at subject to further examination. Reflection obliges us to active, persistent and careful thought of any belief or form of knowledge in light of the situation that does not support it.

Deliberation always leads to a demand for resolution which guides the whole process. It begins with observations made by oneself or others in a directly experienced situation. According to Dewey, data (observation) and ideas (suggested courses of action) constitute the two indispensable and correlative factors of reflection (Grimmett, p. 6).

Schon (1983) contends that knowledge-in-action of practitioners is to be found in the professional actions of practitioners and their reflection on actions rather than theoretical thinking. He prefers to consider "science" before the fact as a process in which scientists grapple with uncertainties and arts of practice. The quest for professional knowledge-in-action gravitates around a search for "an epistemology of practice" implicit in the artistic intuitive processes which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict (Schon, 1983, p. 49).

The study of reflective practice is essentially concerned with how are educators making sense of phenomena of experience that puzzle them. The purpose of the endeavor in Donmoyer's (1985) terms is the pursuit of meaning as distinct from the pursuit of truth or fact. Because teaching involves the interaction of complex human

beings capable of creating ways of giving meaning to phenomena experienced within a socio-linguistic culture, questions of meaning precede questions of truth. How individuals attribute meaning to phenomena is the initial focus of this research rather than the investigation of validity of meanings.

The purpose of this kind of research is neither prediction nor explanation; rather it is to explore phenomenologically how educators and students create what Shulman (1987) describes as "wisdom of practice" within what Lieberman and Miller (1984) have characterized as the complex and dynamic work of teachers.

Reflection has been conceptualized by three main views according to how research is reported:

- a) directing teachers in their practice;
- b) informing practice in the sense of providing a rich basis for selection as teachers deliberate among competing alternatives for action;
- c) constituting one source of information whereby teachers understand practice as they reconstruct their classroom experiences in hopes of identifying a new possibility of action (p. 11).

The constructionist view of knowledge denotes reflection as a means by which a practitioner appreciates practice. It includes conceptions of reflection as the reorganization or reconstruction of experience that leads to new understandings of action, new understanding of self as teacher or cultural milieu of teaching, or developing a critical posture of theoretical tradition, and new understandings of taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching. Teachers through reflection begin to build and rebuild their personal, practical knowledge (p. 13).

Reflection has common features of problem setting in an action situation which is problematic itself. Teachers can either address features of the situation that were previously ignored, or assign new significance to previously identified features. The significant cognitive action (Greene, 1974) involves revisiting situations in light of clarifying questions, reconsidering the conjectures on which previous understandings were made and beginning to rethink the range of possibilities that are available. The result could be what Dewey described as continuous reconstructing of the knower's experience which would enrich meaning and evolve possibly to moving beyond the existing social situation (praxis).

Much of the work in reflection is phenomenological in nature, aimed at providing interpretative accounts of the way teachers structure their knowledge and participate in their culture. Reflection, then, is regarded as a process in which teachers structure and restructure their personal, practical knowledge since the framework on practice includes one's past and present teaching as well as personal biography (Grimmett, p. 13).

Reconstructing the taken-for-granted assumptions about teaching conceives reflection on a critical level. It enables the participants (teachers, students, parents) to discuss and ultimately liberate themselves from the social, political and cultural constraints that frustrate understanding. This reflection begins with such questions as "in whose interest is this knowledge being used" (p. 13)?

Schon's view of reflection, however, is on how practitioners generate professional knowledge in order to appreciate problems and their solution. He builds on and extends Dewey's foundational properties of reflection in a manner that is clearly different. The reflection that Schon focuses on takes place in the crux of action. And it is his marked emphasis on the action setting that sets Schon's work apart.

Teaching is reflection-in-action, reflection on phenomena and on one's spontaneous ways of thinking and acting while in the midst of action to perpetuate further action. What is learning--the same!! Surprise and dilemma are at the heart of reflective teaching. But this means not having the answer, at least for a time. It may mean sacrificing the possibility of a right answer.

There is a current belief among teachers that one should know the right answers, whose source is uncovered outside oneself. This belief is supported by schools of education, by the dominate epistemology of practice built into all professional schools and universities.

Reflective teaching opens a teacher up to bewilderment, to not knowing, and to vulnerability. It serves as a catalyst in questioning a belief system that reveres the right answer only, in a world filled with possibilities. Reflective transformation, which germinates from inquiry of self, is childlike in nature and demands the natural, the curious, and the creative.

Reflection, dialogue of thinking (Schon, 1983) labors against the constructs of the knowledge process built into the school

bureaucracy. The lesson plan oriented to the reporting of standardized units of privileged information, its standard division of time and space, its system for testing and promoting students and teachers, its powerful system of incentives--are all geared to a view of knowledge, learning, and teaching built from the foundation of bureaucracy. Without reflection the past recreates itself with no opportunity for time to be curious, to listen to children or dialogue with them. It reaps only the answers it wishes to sow, preventing the participant's chance to grow.



## CHAPTER III

### DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents a description of the research. The research components are described in the following sections: The theory and methodology that guided the study; the setting for the study; the source of the data; the procedures for collecting the data; the interpretation and reporting of the data; and the trustworthiness of the research. The last section of the chapter is a statement of professional integrity. In this statement the researcher identifies personal biases that influenced the research.

#### Theory and Methodology

Through the action of human thought and communication people seek to understand their lives. This sociology of knowledge (construction of reality) is part of normal activity in which people make sense out of their world and derive a measure of satisfaction from it. Implicit in this perspective is that social objects and phenomena have few intrinsic meanings other than those people assign to them (Palonsky, 1986).

Humans are viewed from the sociology of knowledge perspective as dynamic actors in their own lives which gives meaning to the

world as they act upon it. They accept the world but they tend not to just react to it, they reconstruct it, or remake it for their own purposes (Durkheim, 1983). Qualitative research reflects an approach of psychological phenomenology concerned with the examination of the subjective worlds or perspectives of human actors.

The importance of the phenomenological approach has long been recognized in the social sciences. Just as Berger and Luckman (1966) spoke of the "social construction of reality," Schutz (1970) directed attention to the "multiple realities", "meaning contexts," and "interpretive schemes" of the actor. This common concern involved a shift from an external to an internal frame of reference. The task is to discover the underlying meanings, to comprehend the individual's subjective world, to capture this process of interpretation, attempting to see things from other peoples' points of view (Stainback and Stainback, 1988).

According to John Ogbu (1986) epistemology is exploring the participant's point of view, or his "social reality" that forms the basis of their participation and interpretation of social events. The success of schools depends in part on the folk epistemology of the people and their model representation of and responses to schooling. In essence, research is directed toward the search for meanings, or the interpretations and meanings people give to events, objects, other people, and situations in their environment.

Descriptive research used educational ethnographic methodology which theoretically recognizes the contextual value of culture. Its purpose is to "provide rich, descriptive data about the contexts,

activities, and beliefs of participants in educational settings" (Goetz and Lecompte, 1982). The design and plan of the research emerged from the study as it was conducted. The data analysis was constructed as the study unfolded.

Erickson (1986) reviewed specific questions which qualitative research helps to address:

- What is happening in a particular setting?
- What do these happenings mean to the people involved?
- How are these happenings organized in patterns of social and learned cultural principles in the conduct of everyday life?
- How is what is happening in this setting as a whole related to happenings at other system levels outside the setting?
- How do the ways everyday life in this setting is organized compare with other ways of organizing social and cultural life in other places and at other times? (Stainback, p. 15).

John Ogbu (1981) argued strongly that qualitative researchers need to examine the relationship between the educational system and other institutions in society. "School ethnography should be holistic; it should show how education is linked with the economy, the political system, local social structure, and the belief system of the people served by the schools" (Stainbeck, 1988, p. 17).

#### Research Site

The research site for this study was an urban independent Oklahoma school located on the edge of a large metropolitan city. The enrollment of the elementary school (K-5) is approximately 500 students. The students of this school represent a cross-section of the socio-economic segments of society with the majority (89%) of

qualifies for free lunches, with an additional 34% qualifying for reduced priced lunches.

The selection of the school was determined by the researcher after becoming employed as the learning disabilities teacher. In order to conduct a naturalistic study of school culture, the researcher needed to be able to gain acceptance as a newcomer or participant of the learning environment. In this way I could become a natural part of the site, someone whom everybody takes for granted and who belongs.

#### Data Source

Meanings are created in every social environment. By their daily interactions and responses to the complex demands of work and play, the community of students, parents, teachers, principal and patrons of this school created and maintained a social reality about curriculum which they understood as reality. They constructed attitudes toward work and one another as a response to the context. The teachers gave meaning to their work which was readily understood by other teachers which went far beyond what could be found in official job descriptions (Peshken, 1986).

In order to describe the ethos of the school, it was necessary to collect data that covered the full range of experiences from fire drills to scheduled observations. An in-depth, holistic description of events, programs, procedures, and/or philosophies as they operated in context was needed to understand and make informed decisions. In order to explore the interrelationships of the

decisions. In order to explore the interrelationships of the school, a broad range and variety of types of data were necessary.

The sociology of knowledge perspective implied that complex social relationships are best understood from the vantage point of a co-actor in that situation. For a period of nine months, I was a teacher at Southside Elementary. My perspective as a complete participant observer developed over those two semesters of the school year, 1990-1991. The view I give was more heavily influenced by the teachers with whom I shared students, the faculty with whom I ate lunch, and with those teachers and parents with whom I conferenced as well as with whom I visited during the day. My view of the job of teaching was reinforced by informal interviews with most of the teachers in the building. Due to my intimate relationship in the school, I believe most of the teachers, students, and parents, would support my description of Southside Elementary, if not my interpretation of it.

#### Data Collection

Observation began the day I entered Southside School for we are all trapped in the schemata we have previously experienced called school. In October, the principal of Southside School participated in the first formal interview, a data process I would use both formally and informally in my study. Having known her from a curriculum writing in-service held the previous summer, I had already developed rapport professionally.

In April 1991 at a regularly scheduled faculty meeting, I invited the teachers to share with me on paper anonymously their concerns and personal philosophy of teaching. I sought volunteers of the faculty to submit to formal interviews for more in depth discussion of school. Besides the principal, five teachers, five students, and five parents were interviewed. The interviews were held at school, informally initiated when it was convenient for the participant. Most interviews were held after school in the classroom or the lounge, a gathering place at the end of the day.

Each formal interview was confidential in nature and taped with permission given by individual participants. Each participant was given a manuscript of the interview in order to read and comment on the accuracy of the reported events and conversations. The five students selected were students of the five teachers who volunteered to be interviewed. Each of them, students and teachers, kept a daily log of their impressions of school life. I also gave the students several writing assignments in order to involve reflection on their part. A composite of these impressions (descriptions of school, what is good/bad in school, how would they change school?, etc.) were gathered to give a more thorough view of the participants' perceptions in context.

#### Data Analysis

Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert:

The naturalist prefers inductive (to deductive) data because that process is more likely to identify the multiple realities to be found in the data.

Data analysis occurred throughout this research study for inductive data analysis may be defined as a process of "making sense" of field data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Inductive analysis was used to sort the data into categories that provided descriptive or inferential information about the context or setting from which it was derived. As these categories, based on similar characteristics, began to emerge, propositional statements were written to serve as a basis for inclusion/exclusion decisions.

The constant comparison method described by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was utilized as a means for deriving (grounding) theory in the process. The first rule in this method is that "while coding an incident for a category, compare it with previous incidents in the same and different groups coded in the same category" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). From the categories, theories that follow from data rather than preceding them were developed.

#### Reporting of Data

The study of Southside School is narratively described and the impressionistic portrait of the culture is exclusively my interpretation. It was my way of painting the background or context of the cultural setting. The voices of the participants are used as much as possible. I carefully selected examples that seemed to present the culture holistically, showing consensus as well as dissention. I attempted to question the familiar (Erickson, 1977) and to offer cultural interpretations as possibilities for inquiry.

### Statement of Professional Integrity

The study was conducted with the assumption that all researchers and their research are biased. While it was impossible to study everything, I tried to guard against limiting the scope of the investigation in such a way that isolated elements out of context would not become the focus of the study.

I, further, tried to allow the data gathered to guide me toward whatever data was needed for an understanding of the contextual scene, as it was the contextual understanding which gave meaning to the data gathered. The most I can hope is to be aware of my biases, disclose the ways in which I view reality, and allow the reader to decide if my analyses are valid, given the limitations of perception.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE SETTING, THE AUTHOR, THE TIMES

#### The Setting

Each culture needs a theme--a song, a song of the people. The song is like a vessel, a cup from which the people drink their life and find their meaning. It is a memory of belonging, of identity, of joining for an individual lifetime in a journey that constantly changes yet moves with recognizable rhythm past familiar landmarks. A song connects the past to the present, the individual to the tribe, the dead to the living, the people to the land, and the sky and the water--and to all that lives and moves and is. Without this song of understanding the spirit of the people dies, and the peoples' lives fade into mindlessness, with no greater aim than to be free from the oppression of boredom and drudgery (Mary Clark, 1990).

Nestled in the once prestigious neighborhood of upper middle class homes, five minutes away from downtown, Southside Elementary stretches across an 8.75 square acre tract of land eclipsed by the city's skyline. Built in 1925 and still shadowed by the pseudo-Knob Hill communities adjacent to metropolitan society, this quiet school of five hundred carries on its task of education. The freshly painted school with its peaked dormer windows in front herald its academic goals against the backdrop of an uncertain community of unemployment, crime, and innumerable social ills.

The school, echoing sixty years of children's dreams, blends past eras of money and prestige with the present economic depression, uncertainty, and neglect. The community consists

primarily of one story family brick and frame homes built prior to the Second World War. The peeling structures themselves stand firm while whispering solemnly of their not so distant pasts. They stand unpainted with broken windows inviting the outside world in, if it so dares. The museum of delapidated old cars decorate the yards both front and back adding a history of transition which can only be deciphered by the owners themselves.

Across the street from the school a small restaurant and convenience store carries on the only business in sight. And except for the almost daily drone of police sirens and firetrucks, Southside School with its staff of thirty-two carry on business as usual in conjunction with, sometimes in spite of, the world outside.

#### The Author

I entered Southside Elementary in August 1990 after leaving the school in which I began my teaching career ten years ago. My original plan when I left undergraduate study had been to teach children who were up against not only academic failure but personal, social, and economic barriers as well. But with the offer of a job in a school with a reputation of dedication before my last semester was over, I took the apprentice's way out and decided to hone my pedagogical skills in a world of probability instead of possibility. Now ten years later with much trepidation, I embarked on the journey I envisioned as a novice teacher hoping to make a difference in the world. My first impression of the school came with a telephone conversation with my soon to be new principal in which I was offered

the job. I hesitated, mentioning that I would like to see the school first. But from the moment I entered the big wooden doors that blistering August noon, I knew the possibility for my own growth was there. For what I did not realize in my naivete a decade before, was I, not the students, would be the one up against my own barriers of personal transformation. Only now do I realize that the most meaningful impact of schooling can best be measured when people have left school and settled into those activities which characterize and nurture their lives spiritually and physically.

#### The Principal

Leadership is really more shadow than substance, more inferential than factual, more intangible than tangible, more subjective than objective, more cultural than behavioral, more social meanings than social facts (Thomas Sergiovanni, 1981).

Jean Keaton, Southside principal, epitomizes the growing trend in administration today. Attractive, stylish, youthful, she offers the school environment personable relief in the stark narrow procedure and policy atmosphere so often associated with the role of principal.

Missing today in research is the behind the scenes analysis of the more informal aspects of leadership and the more subtle effects of the leader. The real action for leadership is in the testing of common assumptions, in the creation and nurturing of standards, traditions, and beliefs, and in the establishing and supporting of a school culture which governs behavior (Sergiovanni, 1981). It is in this vein of striving for leadership meanings instead of facts that

I begin with her interview (October 1990).

"Jean, when did you know when you wanted to be an educator?"

"About the time my dad said, 'You are going to have to support yourself--when I was graduating from high school and picking my university. I was loving art, and one of my friends said, 'I think I will look into art education.' That's when I said that's what I want to do. It had never occurred to me that I would have to earn a living."

"What is your experience in education?"

"Art (K-12); English and journalism certification for upper grades. My teaching experience has been strictly elementary art (K-6). I have taught seventeen years in the classroom. I started out in Broken Arrow--a new program; I was new; they were new and none of us knew anything. I had to purchase supplies, used a rolling cart moving between two buildings--moving in and out of classrooms. I didn't know 'come here from sick'um'--found out a whole lot about the world. I worked there two years and then came to \_\_\_\_\_.

I was at one elementary for a year, filling in for a teacher on leave, and then I went to another for five years, and then to \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary for the remaining time."

"When did you become a principal? How long have you been a principal?"

"This is my fifth year."

"Why did you become a principal? . . . from art to administration?"

"Well, everybody (well, I guess everybody) . . . you reach a

point where you say I would like to try something different, and I was already looking. I had put my name on the transfer list, and I was looking for different experiences, but at the same time, I was working on a Master's. When you've got a B.S. in art, you have to decide to either to go back into education (go back to that degree process: Elementary Education) or you pick something you can build on top of. So I looked at Administration with no intention of going into it until I worked under an absolutely miserable administrator and said to myself, 'If that person can do it, I can do a lot better job. I'll go for that.'

"How is administration more rewarding than the classroom and teaching art?"

"It's not more rewarding; it is just different. What you miss in administration from the classroom is that immediate failure or success for the child. You don't have that . . . just like in this building, I didn't sense growth and success until this year. And, of course, we're not anywhere near where we are going to be...but that's three years. That's not immediate gratification. You have to accept that it is a much slower process. It feels good to know now where we are as opposed to three years ago, but you have to keep pointing that out to yourself."

"But you don't always see the improvement?"

"You don't see it or sense it. You know where you want to be and hope your people are going with you, but you don't always have a complete thumb on it. It's not like kids where you see the light bulbs come on."

"Are there incremental steps where you see that you are moving in that direction? even in the first couple of years?"

"Yes, I think you do. The first year is really just feeling your way around; and even though you think you're not making changes, you are because there are things that you don't do that the other person did. The second year they know more where you're coming from, and you know where they're coming from so your staff and yourself read each other better. So you either agree or you disagree . . . to agree or disagree."

"So you'll either unite or you won't?" (as a staff)

"And that's the point where the staff decides 'I go with where this philosophy is going, or they choose to move out. And that's when you start seeing some really good movement as far as staff uniting and sole purpose and everyone taking ownership of that."

"I had never thought of that . . . how it would have to be gradual. They don't jump on the band wagon right off."

"In fact, when we (I say, we first, came in) when I first came in and looked at it, I said to myself five years or get out. That I felt like should be time to make some progress in the direction of where we needed to be. And we're definitely on the way, so I don't have to worry about getting out unless somebody tells me to."

"Then this wasn't your first position as a principal?"

"No, I was at Jefferson Elementary for two years and knew immediately that there was no where to go there."

"So you had that experience to build on when you came here?"

"Yes."

"If you had not had that (previous experience) would you have seen or thought there was no growth here either, not having that comparison to go by?"

"No, because it was two totally different experiences--two totally different kinds of people . . . one staff was entrenched in the way that they did things and so was the neighborhood. It was a small school; there was no growth in numbers . . . in fact, it was slowly deteriorating as far as membership was concerned. The neighborhood was going down--into total rental. There . . . and the people there were not the kind of people who would seek change. You either changed to match them, or it wasn't going to happen. And so, when I came here it never occurred to me that it wouldn't change because Southside was a school that I had always wanted."

"So each school is really unique?"

"Yes, definitely."

"They (?) don't explain all this to you before you take an administrative position, do they?"

"No, they don't tell you an awfully lot."

"They just say here's your school; and this is what you do, and it is expected to move forward...like that's an automatic given. And that can't always happen because of what?"

"You don't know your staff, you don't know your community . . ."

"You have to have all those components and know them well before you can sense what to do with them."

"Yes."

"When did you come to Southside?"

"Three years ago in 1988."

"How large is this staff?"

"We have thirty-two teaching staff members now. We were not quite that high at that time. We grew by three due to State Bill 1017; we were at twenty-nine when I came."

"In doing a little historical background in the past few weeks, I found out another school was consolidated with Southside when you began as principal here, how did that effect your position?"

"That happened the first year I came which was another reason that first year was big--there was a lot of turmoil and adjustment for everybody. We closed \_\_\_\_\_ Elementary with Southside getting 150 \_\_\_\_\_ students who didn't want to be here..parents and students did not want to be here. Frost had traditionally had a black/white conflict, and that was something that the neighborhood fed on; Southside had not. But that population fed in on top of a magnet population that had been declining. With the swell in Blacks, our white percentage dropped drastically overnight, and so we did experience some white flight of magnet parents."

"Some of the patrons who have talked to me have said that they (the population from \_\_\_\_\_) were really wanting the former principal . . . so that in turn would have caused you added conflict your first year as well."

"Yes, \_\_\_\_\_'s principal had wanted to be here too. That is what she had hoped for. So there was a lot of conflict. The



population that had been here had been very happy with the former administration, and we were trying to merge two staffs. Because a good number of the staff members from \_\_\_\_\_ came over (but not by any means one hundred percent); because of this new influx of students, we ended up with some openings . . . so we were pulling people from all over the city. We were trying to mesh several different ways and plans and philosophies in one year with a population who didn't want to be here."

"I can't imagine where they have had to do that anywhere else in the city."

"We didn't. Somebody said, 'Well, she's got the hardest school in town, but at the same time I guess ignorance is bliss! I didn't know it. I just rolled with the punches. It was an unbelievable year. But you know what was interesting is that with that first year--we were just feeling each other out. I wasn't doing it right; they weren't doing it right; nothin' was a hundred per cent right.

The following year, in fact at the end of that first year, when we were identifying what we were wanting our goals for the school to be--whether they said whole language or the new program at all, the teachers were saying our children are language deprived. Our children do not come in with the ability, and we do not encourage that growth in language. They do not have the background experience. So whether we called it that or not . . . they were seeing a need and that was not the two staffs that merged--that was everybody."

"Community, as well?"

"Right! And our children's scores were suffering because of that. And that was another thing that was interesting when you look at the test score history (if you go into that). The year the schools merged, scores dropped due to white flight and all the outside influences. I feel this year (three years later), we will have the true picture of 'is'."

"Just the knitting together of schools would take at least a year . . . before the kids could begin to have a sense of home anyway."

"They didn't own it, and if they had a parent that didn't want to be here (how come we're going over there with her?). It was hard on them. And, of course, the Southside staff that stayed and wanted to help do the building--all of the sudden sensed this conflict that they weren't comfortable with."

"Also, you're replacing a male administrator, and I didn't even think of that. You had a dual dilemma with the community wanting a particular black former principal. Then you are replacing a male who had a reputation of control. What were those problems like?"

"Very entrenched. I didn't hear a lot of it, except it was more like you don't do it like they did it. I don't know if it was male/female, but some of it was because of the things he had done for them and helped them through. And the relationship for me just wasn't there. But one of my friends sent this xeroxed thing..it was the evolution of administration. It showed bear footprints, then masculine shoe footprints, and finally female high heeled

footprints. Maybe there was some problem, but I was not aware of much."

"What were you looking for in the teachers you have hired at Southside?"

"I have hired thirteen since the close of last year. Up to that point, I really was not hiring, I was picking up trims that were available. It wasn't really a hiring practice. But once we were starting from the ground to build up, I was looking for people who in some way were expressing a concern for kids. Black/ white was not the issue . . . it was kids . . . a willingness through that conversation to do whatever they needed to do for whatever child they had in their room to be successful. Now, of course, that is idealistic, but you're looking for that because you're working with so many people who if the child doesn't fit, you put them out. I was looking for people that said, 'if they (kids) are out, why are they out and how do I get them in?'"

"That's a totally different philosophy from . . ."

"Completely different; and, of course, I keep saying 'we'. I also started saying it's not me that's hiring; it's 'we' that's working together. So there was always someone over the summer, if at all possible, from the team who met with me in an interview, so that we had something to feed back from each other.

If we both had the same sense of (the interview) feeling good; or if we got conflicting understanding, it was something else. You were either together or you weren't. And if you weren't, something wasn't going to mesh."

"Do you have a personal philosophy that you are trying to match with your new teachers?"

"Possibly."

"What is your personal philosophy of education?"

"I hate that question. That's asking somebody to take this whole big picture and try to put it in a nutshell."

"But you have a repeating theme that keeps coming up, and that is success--the core of your program seems to be that."

"But I don't know how you put it all into words. I would probably fail to be hired on an interview because I have a terrible time putting that into words. I guess it's what you're looking for in teachers . . . philosophy of love, that you're here for kids and whatever it takes, you will do it (midnight or 6:00 a.m., your pocketbook or maybe the school's). Let the glue ruin the dress you spent ninety dollars on, whatever that whole connection is. It has to be child centered and experience, too. There's something else to education besides providing rote learning, and that's something philosophically that was always me. That's where I was coming from, as far as art.

We never really dealt with those lower levels of learning, we were always into the analysis and application. The kids were always solving problems, they didn't know they were, but it was space, composition. It was the use of materials. They may know their colors, but they had to use those colors in an appropriate way to be successful with it. That's always working on a higher level.

With creativity, that's another little element you want children to have. When I first became a principal at \_\_\_\_\_, test scores came back (and that is a deprived neighborhood), and I looked at those kids, hugged them in the hall, been in classrooms with them, taught art to them after school because I didn't have an art program, and I even tutored some of them. Then those test scores came in, I was just furious. EAS scores were 18, 20, 22; some of those kids were performing 50-60, and the only explanation the Education Service Center could give was that they were overperforming. I was having a fit! Wrong, that test isn't telling us what they know. I feel that is true, also, for a lot of kids at Southside. Our kids don't score where they need to be scoring, but I don't think the test is measuring their ability. I told the superintendent I could be fired, but I am not concerned over test scores. But I am concerned with developing contributing citizens who can function in society. I guess this is my philosophy."

"That is your philosophy. It shines through in your conversation."

"It's kind of sad when you teach on a staff where they ask, 'when is testing? Let's get it over with so we can have fun.' Teaching ought to be fun all year long."

"Do you have a school philosophy?"

"Is that different? My philosophy about how a school should be has changed with this building. When you talk about curriculum and orientation for kids, I am a firm believer that they have to have lots of experiences: music, art, P.E., etc. They don't get enough

of this now, and I'm moving back to self-containment for them here at this school."

In the ongoing development of a personal philosophy, a principal has the task of meshing both personal philosophies and the culture of the community. The real action for leadership is in the testing of common assumptions, in the creation and nurturing of standards, traditions, and beliefs, and in the establishing and supporting of a school culture which governs behavior. This is an informal activity where messages and images, beliefs and values, and behavior modeling may be more important than leadership. In schools today we seem more concerned with leadership facts rather than leadership meanings (Sergiovanni, 1981).

#### The Times

What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child,  
that must the community want for all its children. Any  
other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely . . .  
(John Dewey).

Some people want their children to read and write fluently; to speak articulately, to listen carefully, to learn to participate in the community, to utilize self-discipline, and to appreciate the values of a free democratic society is assumed without question. But it is in questioning the unquestionable, that we find school's misplaced compassion assuming the right to determine that some students will get an education of high quality while others will get a weakened version.

Even though attention to school desegregation and other issues of equality connected with race relations has diminished over the

past twenty years, it is not because the social and economic subordination of minorities has been eliminated or because blacks and whites have finally found a way to live together in harmony. Contrary to this premise, in a published report (1988) by the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, whose members included Presidents Carter and Ford, it was concluded:

America is moving backward-not forward-in its effort to achieve full participation of minority citizens in the life of the nation. In education . . . , gaps persist-and in some cases are widening-between members of minority groups and the majority population (cited in The New York Times, May 29, 1988; Schofield, 1989).

In July, 1971, four of the city's nine predominantly black elementary schools desegregated in compliance with judicial order. The ruling found four elementary schools in Southside's neighborhood to be de jure segregated schools, segregated as a result of the dual system found unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1954. As the School Board considered the integration options available, they issued an invitation to the schools to devise plans for desegregation and present them to the Board at designated evening meetings. Numerous plans were presented and arguments were heard. Some condemned the evils of busing while others implored the Board to adopt a city-wide integration plan, not to impose the total burden on only a few schools.

Finally in October, 1971, the Board approved a plan which, it was hoped, would pave the way for final court approval. This plan, implemented in the fall of 1972, paired schools--a white with a black school. Later, as the pairing of schools resulted in low enrollments, this plan was dissolved. The move to dissolve the plan

had the strong support of parent groups in the city and also the endorsement of each principal.

Meanwhile a group of concerned citizens proposed to Southside School officials what proved to be the first successful voluntary integration effort in the city's public school system. Encouraged by their initial efforts, these patrons met with both black and white parents at Southside Elementary to discuss the emerging idea of an open-space school with a continuous progressive curriculum based on a successful model from a pilot program in a school across town. With assurance that there would be a sufficient number of volunteer students for the present 86 percent minority enrollment, the school administration rushed preparations to remodel and equip prefab buildings on the Southside campus, to design the curriculum and to select and train teachers. The school opened in November, 1971, with 79 black and 98 white students. The black children came from the Southside area, but the white volunteer students were transported from all sections of the school district.

The Southside School with its restyled curriculum offered a smoothly operating example of how children of different races can study and live together. The success of this effort was very important in demonstrating that other schools could also be integrated voluntarily (Neither Black or White, 1986).

Today Southside Elementary can not begin to offer the answers to integration that the system revered twenty years ago. The fourteen per cent white volunteer population presently attending are primarily concerned, according to the parents I interviewed, with future enrollment in the magnet programs at the middle and high school levels. These parents felt that their



children's enrollment in Southside would automatically give them an upper edge in being accepted at the more exclusive upper level programs. Only one parent interviewed mentioned the curriculum or magnet feature of language arts at Southside being a consideration in enrolling their child. (Curiously, in the black student population graduating from Southside this year, only one was accepted into the magnet middle school approximately two miles from the elementary school.)

Social scientists since Gordon Allport, who wrote The Nature of Prejudice, have reported that contact between two previously isolated groups may do little to improve relations between them. For desegregation, the mere mixing of students differs substantially from integration in which contact between the groups are cooperative rather than competitive with a supportive environment to rely on. Allport (1954) argued that equal status was crucial in this development which many schools only define as equal access to the formal roles of the students and teachers in the school. However, actual interaction between the groups reportedly held a prominent grip in promoting equal status as well (Schofield, 1989).

James Banks, in Black Self-Concept, stated that the black man's status in relationship to whites has actually worsened in recent years. He felt that we are rapidly returning to "two separate and unequal societies," which presumably the Supreme Court decision of 1954 had declared obsolete. The average black American has never been able to establish social or self-identity that is comparable in terms of social valuation to that of the white majority.

Social scientists and cultural deprivation theorists have created and perpetuated descriptions of black children which are little more than old stereotypes phrased in new and sophisticated terminology because they are legitimized and given a wide audience through professional writing and mass media. "At risk" and "culturally deprived" are misnomers created and perpetuated through cultural deprivation theorists who based their speculation and conjecture on unsound empirical research. This irreversible cognitive deficit theory thrives today only because people possess cultural traits different from their own, and in turn, they hold resistance in placing any value on that difference.

It is very possible for a well-intentioned teacher to succumb unwittingly to thinking that children who live in housing projects, who are supported by public assistance, whose skins are dark, or whose language is nonstandard, are not able to learn (Banks and Grambs, 1972).

The black community has indicted the American educational system for attempting to socialize black children into accepting history, culture, value systems and the behavior patterns of white Americans. Black people, according to Black Children: Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Style, need to maintain a clear identity of themselves as an oppressed people if they are going to be able to make a contribution to the struggle for racial self identity. This liberating struggle is long range, and the educational process must serve a conscious-raising function that helps prepare black people to make a contribution to a struggle that began centuries before they were born.

Many people, inside and outside the schools, do not believe that all children can or should be given the sort of education that is found in our most advantaged schools. In view of the disproportionate number of black students labeled mentally retarded, hyperactive, suspended, expelled, and pushed out of schools, coinciding with their high unemployment rate and overrepresentation in the prison population, we are forced to realize how the schools have not been effective in educating Black Americans (Hale, 1982).

John Dewey, in The School and Society, maintained that the primary waste in education to be that of human life, the life of the children while they were at school and afterward because of inadequate preparation. Black children grow up in a unique culture and, therefore, need an educational system that recognizes their strengths, abilities and culture and incorporates them into the learning process. Most black children do not need smaller class placements doing the same things they were doing in large classes. What all children need is a system that recognizes first their abilities and their culture and draws upon their strengths and incorporates them into the teaching process (Hale, 1982).

Having begun this adventure of not only becoming an educator in an urban black school, but as a participant of the Southside culture, I intend in this study to share the world of this particular public elementary school. The diversity of this school culture will hopefully converge into a perspective or idea which provokes thought beyond my limited endeavors.

I will in this process reveal enough about myself in sharing what I see and what I conclude about what I see, that others can make their own judgments about "what I saw, what I missed and what I misconstrued" (Peskin, 1986). This study will reflect the phenomena of meaning experienced by the students, teachers, parents and administrator of Southside Elementary.

## CHAPTER V

### COMING TO KNOW

#### Reflection on Action

Whatever we do in teaching depends upon what we think people are like. The goals we seek, the things we do, the judgments we make, even the experiments we are willing to try, are determined by our beliefs about the nature of man and his capacities. It has always been so (Arthur Combs).

#### Introduction

The public knows so little about how the organization of school operates day to day. Teachers and students have documented so little to guide outside forces which tear at its seams unrelentingly. In directing this quest for understanding the quality of life in Southside School, my inquiry was framed in the meaning the participants generated day to day in communion with each other.

The significant task was to make explicit what was implicit and tacit to informants and participants. It was important to unfold knowledge of the native culture and articulate this knowledge in a natural form. That is, the personality of the culture is emphasized, and how that culture pervades the lives of educators, and is, thus, reflected in the practice of schooling. I wish to frame my narrative within the realms of what is happening? what do these happenings mean to the people involved?

How are these happenings organized in patterns of social organization and learned cultural principles in everyday life (Erickson, 1986)?

What is missing from the knowledge base of teaching, according to Cochran-South and Lytle (1990), are the voices of the teachers, themselves, the questions teachers ask, the ways teachers use writing and intentional talk in their work lives and the interpretative frames teachers use to understand and improve their own classroom practices. While a teacher's narrative may include cognitive or critical aspects, the emphasis is on teacher's own interpretations of the context in which professional decisions are made. Narrative style can be a powerful force in heightening teachers's awareness of their own professional reasoning. Stories written by and about teachers form a basis of narrative inquiry (Eisner, 1986).

I heard so often when I first began to teach "You don't teach like any Learning Disabilities teacher I've ever been around". I never in ten years of teaching found the typical L.D. teacher with whom I was being compared. For that matter, I never had an opportunity to observe another teacher's work for more than twenty minutes in that ten years either. I was just as naive about the pedagogical endeavors of other teachers as I was about my own daily task of assisting children in creating meaning in the day to day existence of classes; meetings; lesson plans; discipline; curriculum design; duty in the cafeteria, in the hall and outside; assemblies; confidential files; and monumental documentation for everything from

grades to referrals to the counselor, office, cafeteria, other faculty, nurse, psychometrist, speech therapist.

I chose to go to Southside Elementary primarily because it was one of two schools which were allowed to deviate from the mainstream of curriculum in order to foster pilot programs in "whole language philosophy". Being a strong advocate for student ownership and responsibility of learning, as well as autonomy for the classroom teacher/student, I saw this as an opportunity not only to study the so-called school "at-risk" but to give more of myself to a philosophy I had epitomized as a breath of fresh air in a stagnant lull before a storm. I had feared for many years the mindlessness associated with programmed instruction and how it had controlled teachers' and students' abilities to look beyond test scores.

With my years as a reading specialist, I came into the assignment with the expectation that children who found meaning in what they created (essentially in reading and writing), could be responsible for their own learning. Coming to a school with no basal reading series driving the curriculum, I hoped to find a new wave of inquiry about children's abilities based on their assets instead of their deficits.

### School is School: A Personal Perspective

August 1990

Entering the halls for the second time, I had no idea what hard work lay ahead. Boxes, tables, miscellaneous furniture, library supplies, not to mention the cabinets filled with media supplies

overflowing on to shelves and tables below, greeted me as I inspected my new home. My classroom was one end of the air-conditioned library freshly divided from the rest by concrete blocks sealed from floor to ceiling. This part of the library had previously been used as a computer lab for the room now was completely encircled like a belt with steel trapped outlets which allowed computers to be jacked anywhere around the circumference of this 20X20 area. Windowless, the room was painted a soft blue which reminded you of the blue skies you no longer could see. The red carpeting, a welcome treat from the tile floors usually found in older buildings, was stark in contrast with the new pastel painted walls. But how could I ever complain about decor since I was one of only six teachers who would benefit from the air-conditioning installed when the building was remodeled in 1979.

With no one there to help, as the janitors had only a few days left to finish waxing a brand new tiled hall which ran the complete length of the school, I began to push and pull furniture and equipment onto one side of the room in order to move in my own multitude of boxes and crates of accumulation from the last ten years. Where did it all come from? But worse still, where was I going to put it all with only one wall of cabinets and shelves so narrow that medium size cartons stuck out over the edges and cabinet doors wouldn't shut.

In the two days before school was about to begin, teachers arrived and began to grumble about the lack of supplies. If all schools in the system are allotted the same dollars where were the



books, paper, and most especially the fans? Where are the fans in an unairconditioned building facing a Fall typified by one hundred plus degrees of temperature?

As teachers began to mill around the building, introducing themselves to others, inevitably the conversation would turn to supplies. The quest for information seemed to be a maze of uncertainty. The teachers new to the building were upset but confident that supplies were forthcoming as they had always been more than adequate in buildings where they previously had worked.

A few days later the supply catalog circulated among the teachers with a memo that they could order up to fifty dollars each for classroom supplies. This pacified the unruly for a couple of weeks until the wait for requisitions to be typed, mailed and processed became so painfully slow to watch. Basing a reading program on literature, the faculty was astonished to find no books of any kind. But even with the supplies on order, the mystery of books and fans went unanswered. As my best speculation, I assume the former teachers' perceptions of ownership seemed to consider the materials of the classroom personally owned donated to the individual teacher instead of property of school district. I, just as the former teachers had done, removed my personally owned materials as well as the depleted learning materials from my former classroom (not wanting to order too many supplies, using my new teacher's allocation for supplies).

A room without books is like a body without a soul  
(Cicero).

I began loaning out my personal literature since I was coming in primarily to teach grades 3-5 instead of first and second graders whom I had taught for the last ten years. I expected most of my primary literature to be too simple for the older students. I certainly was glad I had brought the stockpile of construction paper, scissors, and glue as I dispensed most of it the first few weeks of school. I soon became a major distributor of the school system without the bureaucratic red tape of requisition forms in triplicate.

But still books did not appear. For the rest of the year any money that was earned through candy sales and book fairs was budgeted into the general fund. The board of control, a group of four teachers and the principal, earmarked all funds to be spent on literature. By March the trade books began to appear for classrooms. Until that time, the limited school library of 5,000 volumes provided the reading material for the school. Many teachers supplemented their classroom libraries with personal purchases as well as traveling to the public library two miles away every week or two to check out fifty books of various genre.

This helped to relieve the shortage of reading materials as long as the teacher wanted to take on the responsibility of carting books back and forth to the library as well as keep tabs of each and every book. The responsibility was mammoth as the public library's policy was the replacement cost of each lost book if not returned. Several times I returned books in book drops which did not always recode the books as returned which meant repeated correspondence and

communication personally with the library to clear my checkout card. Many times before returning books to the library, I would spend several days trying to locate a book loaned out to another classroom when the book was needed by another teacher for a specific activity.

September 1990

From the first day school was in session for students, I recognized the "sameness" of parents concerned, standing in line to register and asking the familiar questions: "how much money for lunch?" "what records do I need to enroll my child?" "where do I find out the supplies he needs?". Kids, "shiny new" in loose soft cotton clothes and bright hair ribbons bobbing up and down the hall as they are led by moms, grandmas and a few conspicuous dads. Up and down the halls, inspecting each door, scanning the lists of students' names taped to each frame, proud parents, pat their child's head as they gently scoot their hesitant offspring through the doorway. Smiles of promise cross their faces as they head outside, many of them with a couple of toddlers still hanging on. They give us their "best" as they head out the door to wait eagerly for their child to return home at the end of his first day of school.

Of course, the older, wiser, more sophisticated third, fourth, and fifth graders parade down the halls, laughter preceeding them, in groups of fours and fives. How much easier it is for them to enter these whitewashed halls after three months, the contact with friends softens the loss of summer freedom. Peers, with smiles and

cheers of recognition, ward off the boredom of the long hot days which now begin to be just shadows soon to be forgotten. Occasionally, in the hall singular figures appear, white and black, who seem to not belong. Glancing, timidly to the others who do not appear to notice, these lone bodies with empty faces, keep walking, eyes straight ahead in search of the resting place that beckons. How hard it must be to begin new. Perhaps this is the first time I really felt their emptiness too, as I began my journey with them.

#### Curriculum in Transition

The task of the school is to provide a resource-rich environment so that the child will, without coercion, find what he or she needs in order to grow. The metaphor is biological: "growth is the aim of life" (Eisner, 1985). Being centered around the concept of whole language philosophy, Southside Elementary proposed pedagogy based in meaningful, relevant learning.

Historically, this "child-centered" philosophy was advocated by John Dewey. With a cognitive psychological view of learning, whole language philosophy unites all language process (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) as learned naturally and in meaningful contexts as a whole. With this perspective a holistic framework integrates the language arts with all content of the curriculum. In this philosophical outlook emerges a set of beliefs or attitudes which provide the heart of the classroom.

Children redefine reading, writing, thinking, and listening as processes for creating meaning. For this meaningful (relevant) form

of educational experience to occur, it is vital that teachers view students as individuals and not just members of a class. The role of the teacher must be that of child watcher, building rapport and understanding concerning how the child establishes meaning in present activity using schemata built from previous experiences. In promoting the realization of children's psychological freedom, the process will cultivate the child's talents and allow the child to become his or her own person.

Reconceptualists Max Von Mannen and William Pinar emphasized the importance of authentic personal experience. They claimed that education occurs when those engaged in events or activities do so out of choice and with deep personal commitment. Philosophy in fostering personal relevancy focuses the curriculum on authentic communication components. The reading process emerges from literature rather than from a reading series. The writing process whether journal, learning log, or reports evolve from the student's own experiences.

In actuality, when moving in and out of classrooms and teacher's conversations, curricular discussion revealed very similar reading activities were being used throughout the building. Most of the reading was done in one trade book selection with the teacher guiding the reading chapter by chapter. Discussion was intermittently used to assess comprehension of the material being read silently by the whole class. Independent writing activities usually followed (summarizing character profiles, prediction with follow-up activities, time lines, story maps, etc.).

The library was accessible to each classroom once a week for book check out, but the development of library skills as a content area was only offered once every three weeks on a rotating schedule for forty-five minutes. Often teachers and students forgot their scheduled time. Children were encouraged to take advantage of check out availability but were very lax in the return of books. The library assistant who was present five days a week was responsible for the follow-up on book returns in closing the library at the end of the year which meant telephone calls to the home. This process was further enforced by the office's refusal to release report cards at the end of the year until the child's missing library books were returned.

#### Faculty Meetings

At least twice a month, on the first and third Mondays, faculty meetings are held at 3:15 in the school library. Most of the teachers attend for the duration except for a few who have classes at a local university which begin at 4:30. These meetings, for the most part, calendar events for the upcoming two weeks. Occasionally throughout the year, information from the central office might be disseminated, for example in the case of standardized testing rules, schedules, and make up dates.

In the beginning of the year, the principal invited the different team leaders to share ideas and activities that their team found exciting or unique. This sharing lasted approximately two sessions. The format of the meeting has been directed almost

exclusively by the principal with very little discussion or questioning on the part of the staff. Most of the staff seemed uninvolved in the meetings and offered no input. When questions were initiated by a faculty member, talking began with a few glancing at the clock as symbolic indication that they did not have time for that. Most of the staff seemed to manifest impatience any time the principal was not talking directly to the whole staff. The majority of meetings have lasted an average of one hour this year and contained little discussion of curriculum.

#### School Discipline Plan

One of the most often discussed topics in staff meetings was the discipline policy. This area was addressed at the initial faculty meeting and many subsequent meetings thereafter. The school-wide discipline plan itself contained a few fundamental rules followed by the consequences which would result if the child chose not to observe the guidelines provided.

The teachers were directed to follow a sequence of procedures when a child chose inappropriate behavior. The teacher was to offer at least one warning for the child to recognize his poor choice in order to adapt to a more appropriate behavior on his own. Following this warning, the teacher suggested ways for the child to correct the problem. The suggestion might include an apology to another child, isolating himself from the person or the group he was having a problem with, or leaving the room for a few minutes to get away from the situation in order to cool off. If none of these

suggestions helped, the teacher was to call the parent for input before sending the child to the opportunity room, which was a special section of the library supervised by the full time library aide as a time out area.

When sent to the opportunity room, the student was to fill out a personalized discipline plan stating what the problem was and how he was going to handle the problem in the future. S/he was required to stay at least thirty minutes the first time s/he developed a plan, presenting the plan to the teacher when s/he returned. A copy was then sent home for the parents to sign to and be return the next day, and a copy was sent to the office for the principal and counselor to become familiar with the situation. If the child continued to have problems, his time in the opportunity room increased to a half day for a second offense and a whole day for the third offense with classwork provided by the teacher. Any child having further problems was required to meet with the principal or counselor for a parent conference before being able to return to the classroom.

I had been accustomed to seeing teachers handle their own discipline in other buildings. It seemed to be a necessary step to have discipline procedures in written form with which everyone agreed. Where the plan broke down, of course, was in implementation. The first week of school the children were to review school rules and the discipline plan with their parents, requesting their signatures on a form to be returned to the classroom teacher. Less than twenty five per cent of the parents



returned these forms in September.

When problems arose in the classrooms, many teachers arbitrarily bypassed the steps agreed upon in the first faculty meeting, by sending the student directly to the counselor especially when the teachers appeared frustrated. From my observation, very few parents were called by the classroom teachers. The teachers seemed to pass off that step as unproductive. Some teachers remarked that the parents were unconcerned and hard to reach. However, some of the faculty found it very hard to leave a classroom of twenty five students to go to the office (in some cases, all the way across a building or from an outside remote area) to call parents who, in several instances, did not have correct vital history information on record. In these cases, what was intended to have been a simple five minute conversation often resulted in several telephone conversations with parent employers and other family members in order to locate the parent.

The breakdown in school discipline is one of the biggest factors attributing to the public dissatisfaction of education today. Teachers are committed to structured discipline plans until the effort becomes time consuming and tedious. There was also a great concern for not provoking the wrath of parents, especially those black parents who tell their child not to be pushed around. Many times this year the faculty discussed the need for frequent positive telephone conversations with parents concerning their children's personal progress not only academically but socially. But with so many time constraints and the limited access to a

telephone, very little follow up was done. We tried to send a positive progress report to each parent the first six weeks to foster an optimistic view of schooling missing today. As the year progressed, however, the positive notes decreased as the negative ones grew.

October 1990

### My Schedule

I awaken every morning about six in order to arrive at school by 7:45 after a twenty-five minute drive from Claremore, a rural outlying area northeast of Tulsa. I monitor the breakfast program from 8-8:30 every morning which leaves little time before school to prepare for the class day. As I drive into the parking lot, rain or shine, I already see at least ten to fifteen children dancing up and down the school steps, trying to get in to cool off on warm mornings or to warm up from the frost-bitten morning air.

As I enter the building from a side door to the cafeteria, which also serves as the Child Care Center before and after school, I hear students beat on the old wooden door heralding entry from the outside. If it is not below freezing or raining, their beckoning to enter the hall early will go unheeded until I appear to let them in at eight o'clock.

Every morning I open the doors to youngsters, hungry and angry, because they have had to wait. It takes a few moments to calm them as they incite each other, pushing and shoving to get in a line to get through the doorway. Approximately one fifth of the student

population eat breakfast at school each morning. The food varies as far as appeal with most morning menus highlighting dry cereal, milk, juice, fruit. The children pay according to ability with the majority receiving free lunch and breakfast, as well. At 8:20 a.m. I close the doors to any late comers which delights the cafeteria server, a black woman who watches the clock in case I try to smuggle extra children through the door. This became a game of wills a few times throughout the year until she began to trust my judgment as to late bus arrivals and the extenuating circumstances of children needing that breakfast no matter what the cost to me or anyone else. I knew after just a couple of weeks observing the children in the morning which ones needed the nourishment instead of just the conversation. I questioned why she minded since the food was there, and she didn't have to worry about the teachers challenging her on tardies. I came to believe that she just was trying to keep the new white teacher in line; she did not want to work any longer than she had to and possibly did not like me controlling the situation.

As I leave the cafeteria I find the halls still teeming with late arrivals after the final bell has rung. Students of all sizes meandering with snail-like precision down the halls toward their lockers. I hustle them along with "good mornings" and "let's get to class, you're late." I head down the hall with them to Ms. Stephens' fourth grade classroom to assist the teacher with Positive Action.

Positive Action is the district's newly acquired self esteem program financed through federal drug education funds. Adopted by

our principal and many other schools threatened with the label "at risk", Positive Action has been rumored to be implemented in all the elementary schools next year. The program itself consists of daily fifteen minute lessons consisting of scenarios and activities fostering positive ways to handle peer pressure and the negative feelings of poor self image. Students are to be taught positive vocabulary and self monitoring techniques to help them better understand themselves and others. (The district's answer, no doubt, to positive discipline.) Unfortunately, the scenarios are too far removed for the actual experiences of Southside students . . . it remains another attempt to program the teaching of human values, positive and negative, in isolation without contemplating the cultural context of the students.

Some of Positive Action's premises are good but somewhere in the packaging, things went awry . . . The main premise is to help children make their own decisions and choices. This sounds great until talk starts about tokens and stickers, which are all external motivators. It gets very involved with graphs and charts and which class has the most tokens or whatever. Plus there is a teacher's guide that starts out each daily lesson with directions to the teacher, 'Say this \_\_\_\_.' We are supposed to read a little vignette each day and ask our class how they would solve the problem. Yuk! I don't want to spend 15 minutes a day doing this. I already use Positive Action in their own real-life experiences. It is valuable until you take the learner out of the experience. This program cost \$4000 just for our school. (It was funded through the Drug Prevention Program). We could have had a workshop on problem-solving and autonomy in the classroom and forgotten about the kits . . . (11-09-89 Tenured Teacher).

Ms. Stevens, the fourth grade teacher, is in her mid-thirties and comes to Southside with fifteen years teaching experience

from parochial schools. She is of medium height with short brown hair lightly dusted with gray. Her warm smile and enthusiasm in the classroom is further accentuated by the laughter in her voice. She has high behavioral and academic expectations for her students which she fosters through consistent day by day planning in a structured environment. She entered public school this year in order to secure her future retirement as well as augment her limited previous salary. We became instant friends after the initial break-in period each of the new teachers experienced as we sized up the group of teachers with whom we would be spending the next nine months.

By 8:50 a.m. I am on my way down the hall to my own classroom to begin greeting the sporadic arrival of students (2nd-5th graders) who are being released from their homerooms after Positive Action. Since I am responsible for the academic areas identified by individualized evaluation batteries, I may be teaching reading, spelling, language, handwriting (cursive/manuscript), and math to the ten children in my charge. At 11:00 a.m. I add eight third graders to my already full classroom due to a schedule conflict which was never solved this year. I release the others as their work is completed, and then I begin the process of teaching all subject areas to all children who qualify again until 12:15 when they leave for lunch. I now have five minutes to retrieve mail in the office and go to the restroom if possible before reporting to the cafeteria myself for lunch duty from 12:20-12:30. Finally, I have time to retreat.

### Lunch in the Cafeteria

Lunch begins at 11:00 a.m. with the kindergarteners served first. By the time I arrive for duty at 12:20 inevitably the cafeteria is full with classes from third and fourth grades. The noise level is deafening as boys and girls speak, laugh, and yell. The teacher that I relieved each day was an entry level Chapter I teacher who could only get the attention of the children by blowing a whistle. This worked on a temporary basis. Usually in about five minutes the volume would rise again. Many times I would caution them once to keep their voices down and then take hostages. Culprits who were disrespectful or too loud from then on would stay to clean tables or sweep the floor. This proved effective until several of the teachers started to use this strategy, and then there were more students cleaning than were needed, arguing and fighting over tables.

The janitor, a white man of sixty-five, worked daily in the cafeteria scraping trays and loading them in the dishwasher. He was at a strong disadvantage when students became belligerent and disrespectful. Mild mannered and soft spoken, he was totally ignored by the defiant students. When students talked back to him, I would step in to eliminate the trouble with consequences for disrespect. I know it was hard for him to have me take care of the situation. He told me many times he was getting just too old for this work, but I think it was not the work he disliked but the student's lack of respect and concern for keeping things orderly. Often he would just have to leave the cafeteria and go

outside for a while.

### Lunch in the Lounge

The lounge is located across the hall from the office. It is just large enough to contain two drink machines; a candy machine; refrigerator; microwave; small vinyl sofa, loveseat and matching armchair along the walls. Four conference tables and chairs grouped lengthwise in pairs overpower the middle of the room. The only telephone for teachers' private use is located on a solitary wooden end table by the door as you enter. This is generally where you find anyone missing from their classroom during the day.

Lunch in the lounge during the last period from 12:35 - 1:05 included the fourth and fifth grade teachers with both Chapter I teachers and one third grade teacher who was male. Most of the lunch periods average about twenty minutes after you go to the cafeteria to purchase a lunch and/or run by the restroom to wait your turn. During this twenty minutes many teachers try to unwind from their morning routines. Often they sat back digesting conversation as well as the food they had just gobbled down in the twenty to twenty-five minutes allotted.

Parents, parent volunteers, substitute teachers, and day care workers also use the lounge throughout the day for informal meetings and conversation. Many of the teachers referred to these meetings as the parents' gripe sessions, but I never saw them take place. Most of the time this did not pose any kind of problem except for the one or two teachers who felt compelled to discuss students, specifically

their deviant behavior, their backgrounds, or their parents' shortcomings.

These teachers approached the principal asking her to keep the 'others' out of the lounge. As there was really no other place for them to go, the principal refused their request. The refusal was a growing concern for two or three of the teachers for the remainder of the year. I don't know if it was easier for the principal to refuse those teachers because of space or because it would foster continued separation of parents and staff. I felt it was probably the former reason as well as the fear of inciting the parents' wrath at being moved.

#### Afternoon Schedule

After lunch, I usually had time especially in pretty weather to walk outside to the playground and visit with the teachers on duty. While the fourth and fifth grade boys played basketball, soccer, and kickball; the girls were generally sitting talking on the jungle gym on the north end of the playground.

The small group of white students generally could be found there most afternoons unless they were milling around the front steps and sidewalk which ran the length of the building. They sometimes played two square, formed line dances, or practiced cheerleading jumps. Sometimes the more confident black girls would join them for awhile usually returning to their friends when the activity slowed down.



The teachers stood around on the steps or within a few feet of the front porch of the building watching the kids play and discussing any concerns they had with one another. They seemed to laugh and talk a lot on the days I joined them. Scheduled class time was to begin at 1:05 p.m., but many times the classes did not come in until about 1:20 p.m. when the need for restroom breaks was urgent. My afternoon class would not begin to assemble until about 1:30 which allowed only 1 1/2 hours of instruction time compared to the 2 1/2 hours allotted to the morning sections. Often I would encourage the third graders to come in also at 1:15 p.m. to finish any work they had not completed in the morning. They came almost every day, often to escape the supposed pressure they felt in regular classrooms. When special activities were going on in the regular classroom, however, they would never appear unless sent out for discipline reasons.

The afternoons were generally a high stress time, when the kids came off the playground, especially on hot muggy days. Tempers seemed to flare over the smallest things when the kids were tired and lethargic. I found that more time was needed to get them started on independent work. I generally read to them for fifteen minutes as a calming effect as well as directly influencing their growth in listening comprehension.

By three o'clock my voice was usually spent, as well as my body. The students would be fidgeting and eager to join their friends outside. If any behavior problems or tardies had transpired that day, those children would be entering the door as the others

left. These students would give up an equal amount of after school time for the time taken from instruction for problem solving, which gave us a few minutes to discuss the personal side of the problem and realign the bridge of communication.

Team Meetings (Unquestioning  
the Questionable)

Each Wednesday afternoon teachers were called to teams' meeting (Kindergarten, 1st-2nd, 3rd, 4th-5th grs. which included special education, Chapter One, and special subjects teachers). The smallest team, Kindergarten, had five members while the largest team (4-5 gr.) was composed of twelve teachers and the counselor. In teams' meetings, the majority of the time was spent disseminating general information with little discussion. The team leader appeared to be focused on the agenda at hand and rarely created an atmosphere for discussion.

When teachers, especially new ones to the staff, inquired about the rationale of a certain activity, the leader often greeted the inquiry with passive comments of "we did it this way last year." The majority of the teachers who attended the weekly sessions apathetically ingested the information, without question or concern for change. The consensus seemed to be "let's get the show on the road", "the sooner we start, the sooner we can leave," or "just tell me what you want me to do."

The rare times when discussion was encouraged in the group, the topic was usually discipline. Generally, the discussion centered on

passing down the halls from class to class or bathroom breaks. During these short discussions, ideas were shared concerning what worked for certain teachers and how such control would work for the others.

#### Teachers' Backgrounds

Southside Elementary's thirty two teachers live across the city in all directions. Nineteen per cent of the staff is Black with only one of the four male staff members being Black. Forty one per cent of the teachers are non-tenured, having taught less than three years. Thirty four per cent have taught between three - ten years with the remaining twenty five per cent of the staff with over ten years of experience. One black woman has taught her whole career of twenty-one years at Southside. Sixty eight per cent of the teachers are married. Most of the teachers indicated that they chose teaching because of their love for children.

. . . I have chosen this career because I love children and want to make a difference in their lives (Tenured Teacher).

#### Teachers' Ideologies

The vast majority of teachers at Southside take their traditional academic responsibility very seriously. Maintaining a quiet orderly classroom was emphasized in general conversation throughout the staff. Due to the focus on academics in the classroom, many opportunities for intergroup relations between students went unanswered. Although discussion was unanimous that

students did not have social skills to foster positive relations with others, the need went unheeded except for the fifteen minutes each morning when Positive Action was implemented. Teachers emphasized academics first basically because they were comfortable with that role and believed success in that area would have an impact on student personal and social development. The academic failures in regular classrooms were very often regarded as discipline problems.

She don't like me and I don't like her. When I go to her class I don't do no work becuz she don't let me play games whit the other kids. In her class I just set down and do notheing. Man I don't know why I just hate her. Ugly Ms. ----- (5th grade boy).

The principal endorsed social as well as academic success in her initial interview with me, but I did not for the remainder of the year hear her verbalize that priority again in my presence. However, a few times through the year, she took symbolic steps to acknowledge students who were unsuccessful in academic settings: she set up a potter's wheel and individually helped each fifth grader make a clay pot culminating a unit study on Indians, for example, which placed less emphasis on the academic stronghold so prevalent in the building.

#### Resource Lab

To enhance the academic curriculum of Southside Elementary, a lab containing thirty five computers was located in the air-conditioned media center located west of the library. With programmed instruction in basic reading and math skills, children

were scheduled into the lab two to three times per week for twenty five minutes each visit. Each child is assessed, placed in programmed instruction appropriate for drill in basic skills at their independent level, and re-evaluated for mastery of objectives practiced.

Children new to Southside seemed excited to spend so much time on computers each week. Many times the excitement faded when the colorful images began to repeat themselves in order to retest children who had not mastered the objectives. The interactive learning concept developed by Josten Learning Corporation cost the school district over thirty thousand dollars.

What has been most interesting, many of the teachers were capable of correlating the lab instruction to go along with the objectives they taught in their classrooms if they wished. Yet very few teachers exercised the option as I am sure it meant added planning time spent correlating the computer software with classroom instruction. However, when it was discovered that the lab computers could be used for writing processors during an in-service requested by some of the new teachers to the building, three teachers began to use the lab time for writing process instead of drill on basic skills. Amazingly the fourth graders who used this option began to develop editing skills as well as becoming adept with the writing process software itself, much more so than the teachers themselves.

November 1990

I enter the building bright and early Monday morning, hoping to

catch up where I left off Friday afternoon as I wearily left the building long after everyone had gone. I rush around my room and complete placement papers on a new student scheduled to begin today. I race to the office to place them in the mailbag before reporting to the cafeteria for breakfast duty at 8:15 a.m.. As I enter the office, the principal and the secretaries greet me as they continue conversations about their weekend. Mondays seem sweet as we begin a new week refreshed and ready to take on the world.

After duty, I return to the office on my way to class to find the principal standing at the office counter, seemingly frustrated, as her earlier carefree mood has now turned gray. She calls me to join her as she begins to unravel the telephone message she just received from Marilyn's husband. She died of a heart attack this morning--just minutes ago. She had complained of pains Sunday night and had stayed overnight for observation in the hospital where she had just died. Marilyn, forty-five, vivacious and beautiful, entering her own classroom for the first time after raising her own two children. Marilyn, who I had last seen Friday in the workroom, rushing around trying to get away from the building early. It was then about 5:00 p.m. as we told each other we would have time on Monday after the faculty meeting to finally get together for an entry level supervisory meeting and discuss how things were going in her classroom. We each apologized for being so busy, but we would definitely meet no matter what Monday.

How many times we only saw each other at the end of a long day, passed in the hall, too fatigued to even offer more than sighs and

chastisements to each other for staying so late. Why had I not taken the time to walk those extra few steps out to the mobile unit to visit more often? Why didn't I help her more? Why didn't I give more? Now I am walking out to see what I can do to help until counselors from the trauma unit of the hospital arrive to console and counsel the class of second graders, . . . only this time, Marilyn won't be there.

Today was a very difficult day at school. Marilyn, one of our second grade teachers, died early this morning at the hospital of a heart attack. She was only 45 and it was her first year of teaching. It was a shock to all of us especially to her class. Counselors from the hospital crisis center came to school to talk to her class and others that had contact with her. The counselors said that they usually do not see very much emotion from children when they are first told of a teacher's death. They said it usually manifests itself over several days or a week. In this case, quite a few of her children were very upset and some were angry. My class didn't seem to quite grasp the fact that she isn't coming back. They kept speaking of her in the present tense (Second grade teacher).

#### Parent in Charge

As I leave to attend Marilyn's funeral in the afternoon around one o'clock, Mr. Smith arrives in my room. I have seen this tall lanky black man in the halls many times. We had observed each other in passing exchanging hellos for a couple of months. He seems to be almost a daily fixture in the school always neatly dressed with an eager smile on his lips. I don't need to introduce him to the students for they all seem to know him well. He assures me all will be fine while I am gone this afternoon. Little does he know, or maybe he does, that I dread going to a funeral more than almost

anything else I do. Before I leave, I ask him if he would possibly have a few moments when I get back to talk about Southside. He says he would be available.

The funeral is held across town and about eight teachers and the principal attend. I drive into the parking lot trying to keep my mind on the questions I will ask Mr. Smith when I return. I find a seat in the back of the church and begin to look around for familiar faces. All of the sudden I see a second grade black student sitting with his mom across the aisle. He sits so solemn as the service begins. Two months into school and he has lost his teacher. Two months into school and we have lost a friend.

I arrive back at school as the dismissal bell rings. Students pack the hallways rushing for the doorways. Maybe it's my imagination but noise and chaos seem just a little less important this afternoon. I walk into the room as Mr. Smith sits down probably for the first time all afternoon. He says all has gone well in my absence even though he and the room seem a little disheveled. I thank him for his time this afternoon and see if he wants to schedule our talk for another time. He says the rest and talk would probably do him good.

He has lived in this community most of his life except when he attended college and for a brief time lived across town where he worked for a prominent church as a maintenance person. Having lived here for fifty years, he felt a strong sense of belonging to this community. Due to health problems he can no longer do physical labor and has come to devote his life to young people. For the previous



two years he had served as PTA president but now just volunteers when needed.

I tell him about my concerns about Southside School probably vocalizing them for the first time to anyone. Why are the parents so hostile and angry? Why are they so cold and unfriendly? I can't seem to penetrate the exterior of the community as a whole. He smiled and began to relate the history behind Southside for me. He began with the merger of the two schools which took place four years ago. At that time the boundaries were changed. An apartment complex located within two and a half miles of here was refused enrollment forcing those students to be bussed to a distant school while black students living further away were encouraged to enroll in the school.

During the merger process, the principal of the school that was closed was moved across town instead of placed, as the community requested, at Southside. Instead, the central office moved an inexperienced white principal here who had been having trouble getting along with the patrons of another black school. The community was further antagonized by the low number of black teachers working here as they felt there were not enough black role models for the children.

Mr. Smith stated that there was presently a white teacher at Southside that belittled black children, but the parents refused to come to the school to complain because they felt the principal would just side with the teacher. I asked him at this point why they didn't come and talk to the black counselor and voice their

complaints. Regretfully, he says the counselor was married to a black lady whom he divorced to marry a white woman several years ago. Now the community felt he preferred whites, and they wouldn't bother with him either.

Before leaving, he remarks that at least two of the black teachers on the staff spend most of their time in the community attacking the principal and teachers new to the school. He tells me he would like to see things change, but he doesn't know how to offset the negative outlook the community holds for the school. We agree to meet again to try to come up with ideas for uniting this community and the school. Where do we go from here? What can one teacher do to change the perspective of a community? All I can remember is the quote:

The place to improve the world is first in one's own heart and head, work outward from there (Pirsig, 1984).

December 1990

#### Prejudice and Placement in L.D.

Many times when teachers have problems in teaching every child in their classroom they begin to look to the child for answers to the situation. In these cases, the parents have been called in for conferences about the lack of progress their child has made. At this time usually a referral for testing is signed as well as a parent and teacher checklist of the child's behavioral characteristics including his medical and academic history. The teacher must show that s/he has been unsuccessful in providing a learning environment

which meets the needs of this individual child. Within a few weeks a visiting psychometrist reviews the referral and gives the child a battery of individualized tests to assess his or her abilities.

While the pschometrist's report may reach the school within two weeks, the whole process takes approximately six weeks. The psychological report is then reviewed usually by the principal and counselor who forward it to the special education teacher who is expected to provide the most appropriate program for the child. Many times this year conflicts arose between the teacher of the Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH) and myself. Usually when a child displays an Intelligence Quotient (I.Q.) of 75 or below, he qualifies for the EMH program. I, however, do not feel the I.Q. is sufficient reason to label a child mentally handicapped since the bias of the test culturally and the verbal abilities of his environment can effect a child's score. The black EMH teacher and I could not seem to meet on mutual ground on this issue.

In December, Brian, a black second grade non-reader, was referred for testing. His psychological report came back with I.Q. scores in the 70's, but I was given the psychological report to review. His homelife had been disrupted when he was in kindergarten and first grade with his mother leaving the home abruptly. Such information led me to believe his emotional security had interfered more with his learning rather than his actual intellectual abilities assessed on any test. I further believed it was better to first place a child with any learning problems in small group instruction

which was designed to provide him with continuous success. So I asked the classroom teacher to set up the conference with the parent, requesting the principal, regular teacher, EMH teacher, and counselor to attend.

The morning of the conference I am called to the counselor's office where everyone was seated. I asked if the parents would like me to review the psychological report with them. At this time the EMH teacher stated she had already reviewed the tests with the parents at their home the previous evening which took us all by surprise. She further indicated that they had discussed his individualized educational program (IEP) and would sign it at this time with no need for further discussion. Before the parents signed, I asked if they knew what EMH meant. My question, of course, put the specialist on the defensive, but I saw no other choice.

Being black and sensing the EMH teacher's irritation, the parents stated that the teacher had assured them this was the best placement for their child. It was so hard for me to believe that this teacher would place a child in her classroom without concern for his best interest and self esteem in the future. I felt she was competing for children instead of advocating the best possible environment needed for the child. Never again this year would I see a black person take advantage of another to this degree. Black prejudice against whites is every bit as damaging to both sides of the barrier as is white animosity to blacks.

January 1991

### Covering Classes

Ms. Stephens had called in sick and her fourth grade class was with a substitute when I arrived in her room about 8:50 this morning. I heard a moan from across the room as I entered the door and moved to the back. Mrs. Boyd, the substitute, was a hefty tall black woman whose imposing presence could not go unnoticed. She was discussing the lesson plan entry of journal writing with the class who had chosen to argue over its importance in the daily schedule when their teacher was absent. She paused and looked over to me; I stated that we would begin their daily routine with journal writing just as their teacher had planned. After ten minutes of sustained silent writing, I offered opportunities for them to share their individual writing with one another, which I was promptly told was not done in their classroom by their teacher. Nevertheless, I had three students volunteer to share their thoughts on paper. As the second author was reading, I began to notice the restlessness erupting like a tidal wave around the room as Michael, sitting in the back, frowned and mimicked Joanne's attempts to communicate her ideas on babysitting to the class. Maurice, accepting Michael's challenge to steal the show, asked Joanne why she babysits? She immediately replied, "For the money, of course!" To which Jason inquired, "How much do you get?" "Sometimes a dollar, sometimes two," answered Joanne. Each time the class was subdued waiting for the next volley of questions and answers after which they turned and shared comments with their peers. As the last presenter went to his

seat, I began to review the development of personalized books each of the students had been working on for the last week.

Each child was given a plan of action (or so I had hoped) as we discussed completing the story, editing with a peer, editing then with Mrs. Boyd or myself, completing the final draft on formal paper, illustrating, drafting an author's page (information about themselves), compiling book with title page and cover sheet. I listed the steps on the board, asked for any questions and proceeded confidently back to my seat at the back of the room envisioning success just around the corner.

The whole class, restless from the beginning, seemed to erupt in complaining: soul wrenching whines of "I don't want to rewrite this story on good paper;" "I can't illustrate, my drawings stink;" "Why do I have to write about myself?" In the background, others began to argue with one another about who wanted a book and who didn't with, of course, the proverbial why did they have to rewrite. I, by this time, was willing to pay Mrs. Boyd my salary too in order to escape the maddening crowd. But I gathered my reserve and fell prey to the old standby, "Nine weeks' grades are coming out on Thursday, so each of you need this for a project grade." (How I rely on my past when times get uncomfortable.)

Mrs. Boyd by this time was catering to their cajoling by sympathizing with them. At one point I turned and said to her that Ms. Stevens' students can do the assignment as we had been working on the project all week. Strangely, she remarks, "They're just angry at the world," and she proceeds to return to patronizing them. But

for the next few minutes the partiality of her sentiments calm the group. The stillness ebbs away all too quickly, but for those precious moments I realized this black woman could see past the facade or veneer of toughness, which each of these children exhibit day to day, and into their hungry souls. I left Ms. Stephen's room that day having gained more than I gave her substitute.

### Culture Shock

I, as many new teachers in this building did, came into this school with the altruistic view of "color blindness". With this perspective, I envisioned that interracial education was an opportunity to give all children a fair chance for lifelong learning which would be necessary for success. For "one of America's most cherished myths is that we have only one class, namely the middle class" which is engrained in our everyday values taken for granted no matter what our situation (Hanna, 1988).

But, as time progressed, I realized that my discomfort with discipline procedures, parent's lack of communication, and the prejudicial attitudes from the community and students were part of a much wider problem facing the school and me as a whole. The animosity toward me began to challenge my values personally. The honeymoon was over and my cultural insulation was deteriorating daily. The disintegration of my support led to confusion since my cultural support no longer remained. Some of the students began to intrude on my growing loss of self-esteem when feelings of inadequacy and loneliness began to creep in. Each day seemed like

endless discipline and confrontation, and I was no longer in the leadership role I had occupied for so long. Where this would all end was probably the most confusing of all. Why does cultural reality have to be so brutal as it peels away the facade we want to envision?

Slowly, I began to grow suspicious of the teachers who graced the office doors for strokes of approval. For the first three or four months, the euphoria of self-righteousness overwhelmed any sense of instability. Somehow in the course of daily life, I had not anticipated missing the thousand and one ways in which unconsciously I previously had come to accept my existence. Little by little, I started to become upset with the principal's lack of interaction with me. I needed the strokes of approval which I saw others get through continuous personal interaction with the principal. I had in the past never thought that behavior was necessary to validate myself; now I had begun to wonder.

#### Hall Passes and Hall Walkers

Second semester the problems of the school became more apparent. Although students were to always have a pass to be out of the classrooms, there was a handful of students who seemed to appear in the halls and restrooms at all times of the morning and afternoon. Of course, these students tended to be behavioral problems in the classroom and supposedly were never missed when you would escort them back to their respective classes. I was always amazed that these particular students wouldn't be observed leaving



the classroom since they would monopolize at least 60% of the teacher's time due to their inappropriate behavior and attitude in class.

A few teachers, on the other hand, attempted to take responsibility for all the individuals in their classrooms which meant leaving students in the classroom unattended.

. . . since there was a minor accident during the 5th grade's time. The girls attempted to do something that I always do while I was out corralling Candice and Mindy who were wandering the halls. It was partly my fault and I felt terrible that it happened (Entry Level Teacher).

It became a "catch 22": damned if you do damned if you don't. Of course, the students walking the halls seemed to always have excuses for the occurrences which were against the discipline policy established at the first faculty meeting. In this meeting office and bathroom passes were handed out to all the teachers, and direct instructions were given not to let one student out of the classrooms without a pass, thereby, indicating the students whom you had given permission to be out of the classroom.

February 1991

#### Counselor and Referrals

The counselor's role at Southside was that of disciplinarian for the school. He was the only black male on the staff and definitely was held in high esteem by the students.

I walk a precarious line as counselor. I need to be a friend to the kids, and yet the staff's expectations are that I discipline the 'unruly'

as if I'm the old man of the house (Wait till your father gets home).

His days began with students waiting outside his door before he arrived. His philosophy was one of being the haven during the storm. Students were welcome any time during the day to stop in his office with no questions asked. He felt that if children had a place to be themselves especially when things weren't going well; they would be able to put things in perspective, pick up the pieces and continue on their way. He wanted to be their resting place, accepting and supportive without solving their problems for them.

Big, burly, and affectionate, the counselor gave each child ready conversation as well as hugs when they appeared whether in the hall, office, cafeteria or classroom. His genuine affection for all led to a Pied Piper syndrome. He commiserated with the teachers but, . . . As all good ideas seem to go, reality has a way of sabotaging the heart of a situation. After Christmas break, the lack of discipline seemed to escalate and the teachers began to complain about the lack of discretion the students used in visiting the counselor's office. It was a growing problem in that students would disappear from class or the playground and be found sitting in the counselor's office. Many times he would be unaware that they were there if he was somewhere else in the building. Eventually, the principal had to step in and require the student have a referral from the classroom teacher before seeing the counselor.

Frustrated in his position as disciplinarian, later in the year, the counselor set up a schedule of classroom guidance removing himself from arbitration. No longer did he put himself in the role

of rescuer due to the less compromising role he had to assume to get along with the faculty as well as the students. He maintained his warmth with the students but seemed to be somewhat removed in dealing with minor discipline referrals from the teachers.

March 1991

### The Turning Point

In January the central office issued the directive that only the third and fifth grades would be tested in March due to the state mandates. Preparation for testing included a meeting early in the fall where the consultants for the district came in to discuss test format and skills in taking tests. As test time drew near, it was the topic of many discussions in faculty meetings, team meetings, in the lounge and in teacher's rooms. Because Southside was referred to as a low achieving school, all of us grew more apprehensive as the dreaded week approached.

Test booklets were guarded and locked in the principal's office. Teachers were not to see the booklets until the morning the tests began. Monitors were to be in the rooms at all times when tests were being given. The pressure the teachers felt made them question philosophically all the teaching they had done throughout the year using literature instead of a published series that correlated the skills covered on standardized tests. The week during which tests were given, the PTA officers and day care director who were so critical of the teachers came in to monitor the classrooms. The tests were given each morning from 9:00 - 11:30 for

a week. The most astounding phenomenon occurred when the parents reached the lounge at the end of the long mornings: comments on how hard the work was, what good teachers they had worked with, and how tired they were seemed to reverberate everywhere. The teachers would comment later at lunch how a parent would ask if they could take over for a few minutes so the teacher could take a break. Suddenly the two camps began to talk and enjoy each other for the first time this year.

I was responsible for giving make-up tests on the very last afternoon of that week. I had three students to administer the tests to, two black and one white fifth graders. The monitor assigned to me was James' mother. James was the only student in the whole school who went out of his way to confront me on every issue. His usual comments ended with how prejudiced I was and why did I come to this school if I hated blacks so much. When I had tried talking to the mother in the past, she had seemed so negative and she seemed to foster this behavior in him as well.

When I began testing, I told her that I would need her to help when they raised their hands with questions and to walk around checking informally to make sure that they didn't lose their place in the booklets. From that moment on she spent every minute with the students. She was very concerned about one of the black students who gave up about five minutes into the test and started marking any answer without reading the material. She talked to him several times and then came to me appalled at his attitude. I assured her that the student's teacher had already told me he couldn't handle

the frustration. The teacher had hoped that a small group situation would help him. I talked with him for a few minutes also but to no avail.

Later I found her suggesting to the other black student that he needed to check his answers on a couple of questions. At no time did she make an effort to help correct the white student's answers. I had to caution her to not prompt the students but just ask them to check their work in general. She took the suggestion in good faith and did not read the test itself again.

When the test was over, she stayed in my room wanting to talk about the boy who was so negative. I explained that I hoped to be able to place him in my room as soon as possible for he needed more specialized attention. She was surprised that the teachers were trying to plan already for a new student who had only been here a couple of weeks. In the course of the conversation, I asked her about parent apathy.

Jimmy's mother felt that most parents wanted good things for their children, but she felt most of the parents were caught up in their own problems of drugs and alcohol. She said the reason she spent so much time in the school was to keep from taking cocaine during the day. She said that many members of her family were taking cocaine and encouraged her when she was home during the day. From that day forward, I viewed the situation of Jimmy and his mother with different eyes. How little we know about the world of children and the culture we propose to teach. Communication and personal interaction are the key to unlocking the door of mistrust.

It was tragic to realize it was the end of March before the gateway to trust could begin to open.

April 1991

Teacher in Charge

When the principal and counselor are out of the building, the faculty and office staff want the teacher in charge to make any decisions which effect students, parents, or teachers. On several occasions, I was given this responsibility. Usually in this role you mediate problems of discipline or meet with parents who come in for various reasons.

In April I was called to the office to take care of a fourth grader at three o'clock who was belligerent and disrespectful in the hall leaving school. I entered the office and found the boy sitting in the chair by the office door surrounded by three teachers and a secretary. I began talking with him asking him to relate what had happened. He was very defensive saying that the teachers started "ragging" on him as he was leaving. He did go down the wrong hall but was going to leave out another door with his friend, James, that the teachers did not stop. No sooner had he said this when I noticed James entering the office through a door about six feet away on a tirade, telling the teachers to leave him alone that he was just going to see someone down the hall.

I then gave the teacher directly involved the opportunity to relate her version of the incident. She stated that the fifth grader was going down the hall to the front door when he bypassed

the door and headed down the first grade hall. She as well as a couple of other teachers asked him to stop, but he continued and then accused them of putting their hands on him. He became irate at the teacher's statement, refuting her story until I asked him to give her the same opportunity I had given him. I then asked each of them to write down what had happened and how we could solve the problem.

I went to the telephone to call his mother and let her know that he would be a few minutes late and to explain the reasons for his tardiness. No one was home so I called the grandfather who was listed as an emergency number. I gave him the information and asked him to talk with his daughter about our conversation to also ask her to come in the morning for a conference. I ask the boy to relate the information in his note to mom, leaving a place for her response and signature. He leaves with his little brother telling me his mom would be furious with me. About 3:30 p.m. I left the office to attend a team meeting which had been moved to the next room since most of the teachers were already close by (having been involved in the incident).

At approximately 3:45 p.m. the secretary frantically interrupted the team meeting to ask me to come to the office again because the parent was furiously waiting for me in the office. As I enter the door, I asked the parent to step into the principal's private office. I asked her to have a seat. She began to tell me I had no right to make her son late coming home. I told her my position was not to punish her son but to mediate problems and

gather information. I asked her son to tell his side of the problems which led to him being late, and then I went to get the teacher involved so she could relate her story as well.

When I return to the office the team leader, Mrs. Brown, was entering the principal's office ahead of us. I came into the room as she began to tell the parent how belligerent and disrespectful her son had been this week. I interrupted her immediately saying we were not here to discuss her problems with the boy, and perhaps she would like to set an appointment with the parent for another time. About this time the boy told his mother that he wasn't guilty of any of these problems. At that moment Mrs. Brown called him a "bold faced liar," and I immediately asked her to leave saying we were not there to be judge and jury.

I asked the other teacher to leave too as I tried to recover some guise of credibility for the situation. Of course, by this time the parent was up, cussing, screaming at me about how she would take this up with the principal in the morning, as well as the central office, since I had no authority to keep her child after school.

I don't believe any conference has affected me as much as the one held that day. I was embarrassed and furious with a system of people so tied up in being right instead of salvaging self respect for everyone involved. When I returned to the team meeting, the team leader was relating the incident in her most favorable light. I came in silent and sat there wondering why she had taken it upon herself to enter that office uninvited. I didn't have to wait long



as she told the group she had wanted to help validate the poor teacher who had to go in and face this crazy parent and her lying son who was the scourge of the school. I was so disappointed. At that point school did not matter anymore, just children and their parents.

May 1991

### Pen Pal Trip

Since October my class had sent letters to the students of my previous school. Ms. Torres, the black teacher I team taught with at my previous assignment, and I had agreed to plan a field trip for the students who corresponded all year. At the end of the year we each had twenty of our students who qualified for the trip. We decided to take them to the city zoo the third week in May. As the date grew closer, their letters to each other became very specific asking for details of this person with whom they were going to spend the day. Most of my children began asking, "Are you white or black?" I would ask if that was important, and they would all answer "Yes!" Interesting enough, Ms. Torres class of white children were mostly concerned if they wore glasses or had a girl/boyfriend. (Different cultural experiences to say the least.)

On the day of the trip I requested the bus pick us up first as the other class was having an assembly that morning. We arrived on the other side of town about ten o'clock with my students expecting twenty little white rich kids to skip out of the three story "rich" school we drove up to. As her class filed out of the building, I

could hear snickers and laughter out of my kids sitting on the bus. I held my breath as my former students entered the bus. All of the sudden I was hugging, laughing, and talking to students I had taught for the last four years. For a few minutes I had completely forgotten about my current class as Ms. Torres went to them and began asking their names and telling them all about the cute things they had said in their letters.

By the time I had come up for air, Ms. Torres and I were hugging and laughing. To say the least my present class was stunned and silent. I don't believe I had ever had that much silence from them all year. We began introducing them to their pen pals which forced them to speak to each other, but that was about the extent of the peer conversation on the way to the zoo. As we left the bus in the parking lot, both of us wondered if this was going to work at all. Suddenly we noticed one of my boys go up to a beautiful girl from Ms. Torres' class and introduce himself. He asked her where she was from and she said "Puerto Rico." The ice was broken, and all at once everyone began talking to everyone. This turned out to be one of the most exciting experiences I have ever had teaching.

On the way home, the bus was instructed to take us home first. And as the bus began to approach the neighborhood, I heard some of my students tell the others that our school wasn't nearly as nice as theirs. To this remark I heard her student say what does that matter. Children have a way of equaling things out. Even street-wise kids with chips on their shoulder can and do relate if given interpersonal experiences with others. When we got back in class,

they wrote their last letter to their pen pal, and lots of the boys wrote an extra letter to that little girl from Puerto Rico who stole their hearts for a day.

### Graduation

Traditionally, the fifth graders each year graduate in a ceremony on the last day of school. The students were to plan the ceremony which included music, food, and decorations. As the time grew near, the fifth grade sponsor, a black teacher who had been at the school throughout her career, discussed plans with the students in her math classes. She began rehearsals the last two weeks of school requesting no help from the rest of the staff. The fifth grade homeroom teachers, two white teachers new to the building, were upset not to be included in the planning and rehearsals. They voiced concern which went unheeded.

The day of graduation parents turned out in mass, lining the walls of the gym dressed in their finest. Grandmothers, grandfathers, parents, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles, and cousins created a network of affection supporting the accomplishments of children whom we had assumed were left on their own to make it through life. Smiles and tears greeted the graduates as they filed into the auditorium. Families cheered as their child came up on stage to receive recognition for his or her achievements. The sense of pride was electrifying. It made no difference if the child was the top of the class or from the lower quartile of the class, the families were elated.

The chasm of cultural difference was gone for the first time. In that small gym that muggy morning in May the parents and teachers were all united in our support of children. We wanted the same thing and probably always had, but for some reason the reality of school all these months had alienated us from our true essence of being. There within those four walls came the brief glimpse of possibility that keeps us striving for more. I was finally glad to be here enjoying the edge of hope.

Context derived from the Latin *contexere*, to weave together, is the unifying element in a study of school. This weaving together of planning, organizing, and teaching during the school year is a natural phenomenon of education. Just as the school term has space and time focusing on a boundary which is self generated by all who experience it, the context or milieu of the experience is personally defined by the meaning each involved person derives from the experiences. In weaving together a tapestry of events called the school year, the phenomenon of personal meaning directs the panorama of the cloth with which the weaver works. Of course, this is but a tiny view of those situations in which I perceive teachers daily live their existence.

## CHAPTER VI

### OTHER REFLECTIVE LENSES

#### Reflection in Action

Education in the true sense, is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole existence is gathered. Enlightened teachers and parents transcend ourselves and our emancipation of mind through education. The true teacher is inwardly rich and, therefore, asks nothing for himself; he is not ambitious and seeks no power in any form; he does not use teaching as a means of acquiring position or authority (Kristamurti, 1953).

#### Introduction

In order to transform Southside curriculum from bureaucratization to personalization, from system-bound to child-centered the ideology of transformation is necessary to ground in the concept of personal knowledge, a process of personalizing the outer world through the inner potential of human beings as they interact with outer reality. In this groundedness of personal meaning we designate the experience of relatedness which enhances and makes more vivid each of the events and persons it joins. Consequently, meaning addresses an underlying unity among persons, things and the world. Underlying unity is the process of interaction, the underlying ground of feeling that binds all beings together: a cosmological point of view

long espoused by Alfred Whitehead and rekindled by Donald Oliver in Education, Modernity and Fractured Meaning (1990).

Process, or interactive dance, is an effort to integrate reflection, a broad historical philosophical perspective with personal commitment, meaning and prudent action. Process of immanent creation--the creation of oneself in an interrelated universe of which we are part, becomes most perplexing in trying to bridge the gap between culture and the universe. Our constant aspiration of active participation is presently being addressed by empirical research through the study of reflection, the core of process thought.

When humans live within the confines of a single culture, their behavior is determined by reflexive unreflective custom. People do not think in terms of moral alternatives; one's life is mapped out by traditional solution to life's problems, whether they be black students in public school or white teachers in a black community.

School is were people learne and get a education to get a job. And they do not go around being a bum. And school is real good it teaches us that sex is not good for us and smoking is not good for us and don't go around taking drugs all are lives. And it teaches us how to take care of are body's and stuff. And school ante just a hang out place (4th grade girl).

Through the use of journal writing this year, several teachers had hoped to discover "a record of growth, thinking, and daydreaming" that the Southside faculty and students experienced throughout the year" (Wilson, 1980). Since the writing is risk-free and non-punitive, it provided them a chance to explore meaningfully the worlds they created metaphorically.

In the use of written language, often there is some identifying tone that makes us conscious of the author's presence. Consciousness of the author's presence is referred to as "natural" or "authentic" voice, which lets us hear that author. Many of the elements in journals which help to create voice are: their context-bound references, informal language, and punctuation. Published voices, on the other hand, clearly change according to their audience, carefully constructing, composing, revising and editing to present self in a particular way with public tone carefully orchestrated. Journals are identifiably private never straying very far away from self (Fulweiler, 1988).

School is a place where you learn how to read and how do spelling and how to get a good education and you meet good friends sometime. Work might be hard but you can do it and follow the rules because if you don't you get in trubel (3rd grade boy).

Reflective thinking is not a new idea, John Dewey (1933) referred to it in his early works, with Schon revising the term fifty years later. Renewed interest in reflective thinking may be an outcry against the narrow view Newtonian science held for so long concerning personal meaning and its relevance in today's society. Perceiving the complexity and unpredictable reliability of this paradigm in meeting the needs of education, the field has begun to investigate the "teacher/student as researcher" phenomenon. In valuing teachers' and students' interpretations of their philosophies and values in the everydayness of their world called school, the educational communities are seeking a voice into the cognitive, critical and narrative inquiry required in order to make

sense of their world.

The three elements of reflective thinking (cognitive, critical and narrative) are used in focusing on the meaning the Southside culture revealed in journal writing. With the cognitive element, teachers and students describe how they process information and make decisions. The critical element focuses on the substance that drives the thinking--experiences, goals, values and social implications. The narrative element refers to the teachers' and students' own interpretations of the events that occur within their particular contexts.

The cognitive strand of reflection concentrates on how teachers use knowledge in their planning and decision making.

According to Shulman (1987) teachers categorize "pedagogical content knowledge" into six classifications: (1) content/subject; (2) pedagogical methods and theory; (3) curriculum; (4) characteristics of learners; (5) teaching contexts; and (6) educational purposes, ends, and aims. These individual elements are interwoven throughout the vignettes shared by students and teachers.

School is a place to learn. But some of the teacher's are not fun to know. I want to get a good education and I know everyone want one to. Some of the teacher's make me sick. I like school (4th grade girl).

Children can learn to read and write just as normally, naturally and inevitably as they learn to speak (Teacher).

The critical approach to reflection stresses the essence that motivates the thinking, experiences, beliefs, values, and goals of teachers. To understand this orientation, reflection must take on



the stance of problem setting (Schon, 1986).

I'd like to see more classes set up like a developmental kindergarten class - more hands on more experimental, then group time to discuss (Teacher).

This system includes the teacher's repertoire of theories, practices, knowledge and values, which influence how situations are defined, described, and the kinds of questions and decisions teachers will make. McLaren (1989) viewed knowledge as socially constructed, constructed symbolically by the mind through social interaction with others. Knowledge is determined by the surrounding culture, context, customs, and historical era.

School is fun. some time school is not fun some time you can get a education. if you do not no have (how) to read then you can not get a education (2nd grade boy).

The teacher is a creator and arranger of educational environments. At least four educational environments intermingle in the classroom: an interpersonal milieu that has political connotations,

I like school because it is fun. You can do your work and go to college and get a job (4th grade boy).

I like Mrs. \_\_\_ becuse she make us do work. She cares so much about what hapens in the world today. She just love everybody (4th grade boy).

an environment of planned learning experiences that has a technological nature,

In school I like to learn a computer. I like to learn how read and how to spell (2nd grade girl).

I like my freinds. I like going to (computer) lab (4th grade boy).

an environment of each person's perception built upon  
phenomenological inquiry,

I like the way we have Spring fling every year and  
we do fun stuff like we make things sometimes. I like  
speech class the best because I like to act and say  
things that I write on a pecie of paper (4th grade  
girl).

and an environment of feeling that is artistic in its effect.

I like the teachers they are nice. and my friends  
are nice to me. and I have a cousin that go here. and  
I like this school (2nd grade boy).

As a choreographer, the teacher structures, integrates, and aligns  
the events within the political, technological and  
phenomenological environments, encouraging an overall harmonious  
effect that is felt aesthetically by the child. (Seaberg, 1974)

I like this school because i like to learn and i want  
a education because that's important and i want to  
have good grades too (4th grade girl).

#### Categorization

People acquire new information to meet the demands that face  
them daily. The manner in which that is done differs from culture  
to culture. Since people cannot react to every bit of information  
to which they are exposed they organize it into categories. With  
knowledge as a base, people then use it to make sense of their  
world. A basic feature of this sense-making is attribution, making  
judgments about the causes of the behavior people observe both in  
themselves and others. Since appropriate knowledge differs, so too  
do the attributions that follow from that knowledge.

The process of categorization and categories are woven into every facet of life. They help to shape the values, beliefs, norms, roles and attitudes of a society. According to Triandis (1983) "the category is probably the most important element in the analysis of subjective culture" (Brislin, Cushner, Cherrie, Yong, 1986).

#### Categories of Content

##### Student Autonomy vs. Teacher Control

The only actions the teacher can really control are his own; the effects, if he creates any, are indirect and are produced through his own behavior. If a teacher behaves as a master, the pupil will respond as a slave; if he behaves as a guide, the student will respond as a follower; if he behaves as a stimulus, the child will respond as a free agent. How the teacher behaves depends on his point of view, on his system of belief. (Seaberg, 1974)

I have finally made my first month of teaching. It is so challenging and sometimes also totally frustrating. I have been struggling with discipline. I want to have a free and creative environment but some of these classes cannot handle freedom and need very close boundaries. My worst struggle is in the morning, getting the 4-7's to come in and sit quietly waiting to do announcements and positive action. I have tried activities on the board but that worked for about 2 days and then fell dead (Entry Level Teacher)!

The classroom contains an organization of individuals that inherently involves a power structure. In this environment, actions take place and limits are set that control individuals and groups. In many social structures there is an authority to cement the organization together and to keep it moving toward its goals. The

teacher, through assumed leadership, is the authority figure of the classroom. Some teachers reign with very tight control, but if children do not meet their status needs, they will vie for power within the socio-dynamics of the classroom, either with the teacher or with other children. (Seaberg, 1974) In the struggle to balance these two radical forces of control and autonomy, the entry level teacher fights a continual battle.

Things went bad from the beginning. Control was totally lost and another teacher had to step in and help me. Part of me is grateful and part of me is embarrassed. I am a new teacher, but I feel very inadequate in my control of my room and being the leader in that room. Now I'm asking anyone for any ideas (03-12-91).

Assigned tables were greatly enforced and I also started using tickets for a drawing on Fridays. . . . It went smoother today, . . . The math teacher came over and said, 'Wow, what a difference!' But I know that this was not a cure all and there will still be bad days (03-13-91).

Classroom management is my big struggle right now. I know that I am too easy on them and I allow too much to go on. I am going to try and implement the after school policy. I also need to make my assigned seats rule stick! No more moving around unless it is earned (04-03-91).

My classroom management techniques are improving but many, many times I am at a loss as to what I should do and what to say to these children to get them to understand it as I see the situation (04-5-91).

In Sarason's book, The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change, he was overwhelmed to discover that many teachers thought about children in precisely the same way that teachers say school administrators think about teachers; that is, administrators do not discuss matters with teachers, they do not act as if the opinions of

teachers were important. The leadership of the teacher may work to either free the children or close them off.

I like to read and write and do work. All most all of the teacher's are nice and frend's are nice to. And the game's we play when it is inside day are fun. I like the teachers becaus they care about me getting a good education (4th grade girl).

What i dont like hear at Southside is the teachers. And I dont like the way that some students act. I dont like the way the teachers fuss and scream. And I dont like the way the teachers are in front of are face. And I dont like the hard work (4th grade girl).

The leader's role is primarily that of a facilitator of growth.

In the case of the entry level teacher, s/he needs a clear sense of self, free from defensive attitudes, that may help to muddle her personal perceptions of the classroom. With a true respect and belief in children, a rational authority will lead the child to expanding levels of freedom and independence.

Just as Carl Roger's "unconditional love" or "unconditional acceptance" of the person creates the atmosphere for emergence of the individual in psychology, the teacher creates this relationship through establishing trust. The student is then not dependent on the teacher for a sense of self through praise given for conforming. Rather, the teacher helps the child to discover and trust his uniqueness. Respect and love of the teacher is not earned by behavior conforming to the teacher's wishes; rather, the behavior of the student becomes constructive as he finds his place as a person of worth. Children who are made to feel comfortable with themselves- just as they are-have a basis for confidence that will enable them to become independent as well as interdependent beings, who trust

their own judgments and are able to proceed in their unique ways while also valuing their neighbors.

### Disruptive Behavior

According to Judith Hanna, Disruptive School Behavior, there has been a community estrangement from public schools. With the erosion of high status of the teaching profession along with the decline of respect for authority figures, the school culture tends to develop distinctive subcultures or countercultures due to youngsters separated from integrated family life. The added pressure to keep kids in school longer leads some of them to perceive themselves as prisoners and become troublemakers.

Black children have a need to clarify their identity and achieve a sense of dignity. This heightened consciousness has caused many Blacks to reject the norm of society and search for power and intensified racial pride which children learn out of a need for acceptance from the significant others in their lives. Schools are obviously limited in what they can do to change parents' racial attitudes. (Banks and Grambs, 1972)

The time that discipline takes is awful-compared to actual teaching time-sometimes I wish I'd majored in law enforcing (Kindergarten teacher).

Today was a crappy day at school. I felt like I had no control whatsoever. I felt like we had all gone back to square one. There was very little academic work done today. Most of the time was spent putting out small fires and stopping behavior problems . . . I also had a problem with Mark again. He drew on my piano keys with an ink pen. Then he just laughed about it so wrote a note to the principal to request that he be taken out of my class tomorrow--whether he is with the counselor or someone else (05-06-91 Entry).

Today is the absolute worst day I've had in a long while. Our Positive Action assembly was a total disaster. The kids are so rude that it is hard for me to like them. The saddest part is that the nice kids have to suffer. I'm sick of punishing everyone, but it's so hard to understand why they treat each other and the teachers so poorly. I know that I was not in the right frame of mind & I blame myself for that (05-17-91 Tenured).

I did have a struggle with the fourth grade section this afternoon. Joan and several of the girls had a slight attitude problem. But they went and cooled off and I was much better after some time and we resolved our differences (03-19-91 Entry).

The last hour class--I tried to have them play a simple rudimentary game to work them toward getting ready for track and I ended up separating three disputes and almost everyone was sitting in a different part of the gym for the last ten minutes. I felt good about the morning progress but felt terrible about the afternoon. But tomorrow is a different day and I will do my best to make it a positive one and also enjoy it (04-04-91 Entry).

Within a school culture, as well as in a lot of places, problem behavior is wrongfully viewed as a characteristic of an individual rather than an interaction of an individual and a particular setting. In trying to determine children's success or lack of it, the school must take into account the child's search for dignity and the teacher's role in awarding it (Hanna, 1988).

Children's level of maturity affects their social interaction. Children develop patterns of behavior through emotional involvement with peers that can be generalized. Thinking, shaped by home and school helps them interpret personal experiences. With maturity children may be able to evoke change in overcoming egocentrism, the tendency to believe that whatever they are thinking, feeling, or seeing is also thought, felt or seen by everybody else, and ethnocentrism, the tendency to evaluate other cultures less

favorably than one's own (Hanna, 1988).

### Intergroup Relations

According to the theory of symbolic interaction, human beings' behavior toward each other is based upon the meanings they construct (Bandura, 1977); these meanings emerge through social interaction. A basic fact about human nature is that people need to surround themselves with others who provide social acceptance and help in times of need. One consequence of this basic fact is that large amounts of time and energy are invested in learning the norms of the groups to which people want to belong, as well as learning proper ways of behaving in large numbers of social settings (Bandura, 1977).

People come to believe that the behaviors they practice are good and that behavior practiced by others are not as good. People's judgments about the behavior of outgroups are based on learned concepts of good and bad derived from ethnocentrism and prejudice (Allport, 1954). Ethnocentrism refers to making judgments based on one's own standards and applying those standards in judging others who may be from very different cultural backgrounds (Schofield, 1989).

. . . The 4th grade is so rude and they expect you to give them everything. They are too lazy to stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance and it goes downhill from there. They are low because they won't work nor will anyone work with them. I am not their mother nor do I hope to ever be any one's. Yesterday was report card day and they really expected to make A's & B's. Why? I have no idea why they can't figure it out except that they don't want to (02-01-91 Tenured).



Wade Nobles (1975) pointed out in the book Black Culture by Janet Schofield that the task of the black family has been to prepare its children to live and be among white people without becoming white people.

Today is absolutely awful. I hope I never become the kind of teacher that doesn't care, but it would be easy to do this year. The Southside kids take NO responsibility for their actions or their learning. They are never prepared for class, i.e. pencils, paper, homework--of course, they expect you to give them these things as if they come from the heavens. "Please" and "Thank you" are dirty words and rarely said. I never imagined it would be this bad in public schools and I can't figure out why. I do know that it must begin at home, and that parent respect for teachers is close to zero here. I was highly regarded by parents and teachers at my former school, and at least my work was acknowledged. I am a professional and unfortunately expected to be treated as such. I have grown this year but have also become disillusioned with the system and hierarchy. Teachers here are jealous of each other and never share. They are too busy trying to make it to the top--of what, I don't know. I guess that atmosphere permeates throughout this building (01-17-91 Tenured).

The 4-8's have made one big leap--they are nicer to each other and can sit quietly and work. There is something very special about them and I'm glad to be their teacher (03-19-91 Tenured).

We spent about 40 minutes reading silently today. I took about eight students by themselves and talked about the story and let them read to me. They always enjoy that - but I forget to take the time (04-01-91 Tenured).

The contact between two previously isolated and hostile groups per se may do little or nothing to improve relations between them. Indeed, such contact may exacerbate. Educators must realize from a practical standpoint that decisions they make in classroom structure and process are not neutral in their impact on children but rather set a context that molds intergroup relations.

### Interpersonal Relations

Although a teacher's mission is to teach content, we know that children's academic progress intertwines with their feelings about themselves and their peers. Student's perceptions about the world affect their success. Many parents and teachers underestimated the complexity and subtlety of the social knowledge a child needs to interact successfully among peers, asserting that kids pick up the common sense principles of social performance. Many of the rules middle class whites and blacks take for granted are tacit; therefore, learning may be imprecise, inconsistent, and indeterminate when rules are not made explicit. Similarly cultural rules may be more implicit than explicit.

Since some children handle problems physically, it may be important to establish rules and handle quarrels in calm settings with lessons of compromise, tolerance and self control. Social interaction seems to be the key to solving so many problems in schools today. So little time and effort has gone into the skills of communication and interpersonal skills.

Children's emotional needs are met within the context of interpersonal relationships in the classroom. One of the problems of beginning teachers is that they, too, often feel insecure and anxious about being liked. However, if they shift their focus to liking the children and providing an involving environment for them, their own need to be liked will be met in the process.

It was nice to talk to several students about their Spring Break. It helped me to readjust to getting back into the swing of things. Most classes were well-behaved (04-01-91 Entry).

. . . Maybe people or parents don't realize the effect their children have on us. We need kids as much if not more, than they need us. They fill a large space in our lives. There is a difference in being detached, and being unfeeling. It is easy to get caught up in all the problems that kids are facing, but that seems self-defeating (03-19-91 Tenured).

Critics of urban schools often fail to recognize that children have an effect on teachers who must adjust to them. The shared experiences, interests, reciprocity, communicative style, and empathy lead to positive interactions. The greater the overlap in these areas, the easier it is for harmonious relations to take place or vice versa.

I ruined Michael by rescuing him all year & we are both paying the consequences for it. I really want each child to do their absolute best and think that my genuine care & concern for them will turn them around. Only, I have forgotten that some people aren't ready and may never be ready for it. I guess I'm imposing my hopes & beliefs on them. In some ways that is no different from what I accuse some other teachers of doing - by thinking only their ways are the best. Damn, it is so hard to keep everything in perspective and have 1/2 of an idea of what is right (05-17-91 Tenured).

So the teacher across the hall came in and helped to talk to me and told me that she had also had a bad day at school today (05-06-91 Entry).

. . . she is the nicest teacher in the school. And she never send you to the office she just say get out in the hallway. She never say bad thing's to people are techer's. And she care for us. she really care for me. I care for her class to and for her (04-16-91 4th grade girl).

. . . she teach me to read bttr. She give me alot of work to make me smarer. she will be nice to you if you be to her (04-17-91 3rd grade girl).

I like Mr. \_\_\_ he is very very nice he helps me with problms and with a good addatud he is sweet and so so so nice nice nice (14-16-91 3rd grade girl).

### Expectations

A spider's web is stronger than it looks. Although it is made of thin, delicate strands, the web is not easily broken. (E. B. White, Charlotte's Web).

Teachers develop certain expectations as a result of their past experiences. These expectations play a vital role in the satisfaction a teacher or the student might experience due to most individual's desire to live up to their own expectations. The image a person holds of self serves as a guide for one's behavior (Dobson, Dobson, Koetting, 1985).

Today was an okay day. I am going to get a handle on the 4-7's if it kills me, or I die trying. They did even work on their work after we split for Chapter One (03-18-91).

Today went surprisingly well . . . Many of them surprised me and I was very happy to have that happen. I am going to stop on the theory aspect and now concentrate on the programs which will be rapidly approaching. But I think that they will both be excellent programs once we are finished (03-22-91).

The kids are calmer than I expected, but possibly because they are sleepy. The 4th graders were excited about having new English books that they can take home. I'm sure the novelty will soon wear off--but I'm enjoying it while I can. After much thought over the holidays, along with the NOTAWL conference, I surmised that we should be doing much more writing. Today was the beginning. It is hard for me to be patient, but I have confidence that they can produce (04-01-91 Tenured).

Journal writing goes great with the 5th grade, but the 4th graders have trouble settling down. Maybe we should start with something else. Once again I'm confused about our library time. It is more of a hassle than it's worth.

### Personal Satisfaction

In fulfilling personal expectations, the teacher or student experiences a further awareness of self. This sensitivity of self establishes the trust base necessary for students and teachers to share the "living experiences of school" (Dobson, Dobson, Koetting, 1985).

Today was a great day! All of the classes had a good time. I taught each class a new game and they were very simple games but the children loved it. I had lots of fun and enjoyed playing with each of the classes. Things went along so good--I hope that tomorrow goes as well as today did (03-21-91 Entry).

### Personal Dissatisfaction

Self being or the essence of being is in constant conflict with extrinsic forces outside ourselves which try to force us to seek dignity and satisfaction from the exterior world. By ignoring the inner dimensions of self many spend their lives searching for meaning outside. This lack of biographic reflection is in the "telling" of one's story not just the periods of despair and excitement but in its depiction of the "in-between" of life, where most of us live. "Without the anchoring of being in and from oneself, one is, indeed, shipwrecked or hollowed images on stage" (Pinar, 1974)?

I miss Maurice and just hope he is doing well. It's frustrating when I feel that I've failed a student or that I could have done more. I'm not sure what, but it takes so long to build that trust with each other usually 3 or 4 months. . . . I guess the one thing that cannot be given to a child or adult is happiness.

Unfortunately we take life too seriously and forget to walk barefoot, sing in the shower, and enjoy life (03-19-91 Tenured).

This morning was terrible. Everything that could go wrong went wrong. Everyone was grouchy and complained about everything I tried to do in class. I also did not feel well myself and so I'm sure that contributed to my lousy mood which the students probably picked up on and just ran with it (03-20-91 Entry).

I really dislike being at Southside . . . (02-01-91 Tenured).

Today at 2:40, we switch classes again. I'm sure that I'll forget and the 5th graders will have to remind me. Sometimes I have so much to do that I feel lost and frustrated. I spend at least 2 hours after school daily, work at home at least 1 hour and still have plenty to do (11-06-91 Tenured).

Today is the absolute worst day I've had in a long while. Our Positive Action assembly was a total disaster. The kids are so rude that it is hard for me to like them. The saddest part is that the nice kids always have to suffer. I'm sick of punishing everyone, but it's so hard to understand why they treat each other and the teachers so poorly. I know that I was not in the right frame of mind & I do blame myself for that (05-17-91 Tenured).

### Personal Philosophy

Personal philosophies of education awaken the teachers' awareness of the possibility of being. Its pedagogical task is to waken people who are becoming teachers to their own being, in order to enable them to choose who they will be in their encounters with students, parents, and colleagues. It also enables their students to choose for themselves who they will be.

My personal goal is to set aside more reading and writing time - and to do the same, as a better model. It's also calming for me. I'm also going to introduce a book a day, maybe reading the first chapter to them. Hopefully, they will find something interesting enough to pick up to free read.

Children can learn to read and write as easily and naturally and as surely as they learn to talk.

Children should be given the opportunity to explore and learn at their own pace and in areas of their own interest.

All children can learn something. Self-esteem seems to be a major factor. If we can get students to feel good about themselves they seem much willing to put forth the effort needed to learn. I think teachers should use a child's strengths to build his weakness and always accentuate the positive that every child has.

### Philosophical Questioning

#### The Problematic

John Dewey characterized the nature of reflection as a specialized form of thinking which rises from a directly experienced situation which puzzles or surprises us. It leads to purposeful inquiry. Questions of meaning precede questions of truth (Schon, 1983).

Willa is always angry at herself--which comes off towards others. I haven't been able to make her feel better about herself, but maybe she doesn't know happiness and has nothing to compare it to (03-19-91 Tenured).

Sometimes the questions seem endless and the answers are so few but I know that much of this will come with experience and hard work on my part (03-22-91 Entry).

### Catharsis

"It is far more interesting to understand one man thoroughly than to examine a hundred superficially" (Tornier, Roderick, 1986). Through Interpretation Theory personal meanings are exchanged in nonevaluative settings and where factual knowledge and an answer are not the goal. Reflective writing could function as a context in which the participants see opportunities to experience "peopling" a concept in which persons see others as co-equals who are handled carefully and sensitively. Reciprocity in the peopling relationship is accompanied by the giving of comfort and consolation in an empathetic milieu (Roderick, 1986).

My daddy had a birthday yesterday. We had a cake fight it was fun. My mother was kissing me and my family. All my family was at the park. We had a lot of fun to much fun (04-17-91 4th grade girl).

My auntie died she got shot in the head two tims. she was a swemer and she was a lifeguaud for the park. her name wus Othio. she wus 31 yurs old. her funrl is tomrro. we well be riding in a lemo (02-04-91 4th grade boy).

My name is Jeff. I am in a L.D. calssroom. Some time some kids say the L.D. calss room is for domm kids I dunt like that (03-26-91 4th grade boy).

If students could become aware of their role in creating meanings, in making their own existence known; then they might choose to become questioners and inquirers of the world around them. Understanding rather than knowing the child is a much deeper concept which becomes necessary in developing the posture of process education. For process is an orientation toward the nature of being which is constantly changing for us all. It confronts and relates to



the present in terms of all its past experiences. In order to encourage children we must move with them to an emergence of fulfillment based on the sharing of their world (Oliver, 1989).

This "joint pilgrimage" of fulfillment for both teacher and student can only come through dialogue or the sharing of inner resources with the intent of listening beneath the surface. The hope is that out of the explicit dialogue the creative inner workings of the participants will be freed and fused (Pinar, 1974). With the use of reflective teaching, helping students to build on what they already know, teachers would be listening to children, responding to them, inventing and testing their responses which would help them get over their particular difficulties in understanding. Teaching is a form of reflection-in-action, reflection on phenomena and on one's spontaneous ways of thinking and acting in the midst of action. What is learning, but the same!

## CHAPTER VII

### EDGE OF HOPE

To reduce curriculum making to a set of techniques, to ignore its personal meaning, is to do to it what a spider does to a fly, all the natural juices are removed, leaving only a shell. The shell looks like a curriculum, but it is dead (Arthur W. Foshay).

#### Reflection for Action

##### Introduction

Living on the edge between hope and despair is the only analogy I could give the school year I describe. To understand the acceptance of dominate culture as controlling and unyielding to the prejudice and survivalist instincts of race in resisting complete immersion into American culture is to unmask the grotesque secret of humankind. Because our ways of looking and thinking have not changed . . . or as Van Manen (1986) stated, it is not simply a matter of acquiring and utilizing a different language, but a matter of becoming a different person.

Joseph Schwab (1969) urged us to divert our efforts from curriculum theory toward "the practical" and its pragmatic problems. His direct and harsh impatience with the inability of curriculum theory to make any difference in classroom practice and student learning coincides with Goodlad's (1984) study, A Place Called School. With the technocratic rationale, which is currently

and historically dominate, the only truth found has been in empirically quantifiable and measurable content, largely responsible for the decline in philosophical inquiry during the last two generations.

#### Innovative Erosion

Innovative erosion takes place when culture is assumed. What is presumed to be erosion of innovative ideas and reform in education today, whether it be Southside Elementary or not, appeared to be the lack of dialogue essential to cognitive planning. The interactive communication and collaboration necessary to initiate the "imaginative gateways" Dewey referred to as necessary in reflection and everyday problem solving is vacuous. The critical inquiry associated with the autonomous professional is only an illusionary dream, for without the sharing of worlds how can there be hope in the dialectic for change? The gateways to democracy can only be accessible when the day to day assumptions of emancipation have been critically deliberated.

The "cultural blinders" through which the hidden curriculum of control, prejudice, and expectations are perceived eliminate the questioning of our everydayness in the classroom. The lack of reciprocity of the participants leads to a synoptic view of curriculum innovation. This disparity between rhetoric and reality will remain unexposed as long as self reflection and deliberation are too ominous to initiate. The reproduction of the norm eliminates for most the inescapable enigma of conflict

required in the struggle for voice. This political perspective is urgent in education today for the avoidance of issues creates the illusionary facade that reform can be mandated from outside expertise.

The monetary disparity between schools, "at risk" labeling of the lower economic strata of society, and the lack of philosophic deliberation appear to be problems of simple solution to the public who seem to be unaware of the complexity in understanding the multicultural communities who search for meaning in their lives. Couching curriculum deliberation in meaning may be an appropriate way to view future vision in schooling. Without the anchoring of dialogue in school culture, no meaningful possibility in curriculum can overthrow the safer world of traditional schooling, which perceives no need for deliberation. The upholding of the antidemocratic tendencies in schools can and must be exposed through reflection and daily deliberation of individuals involved.

The process of connection through dialogue celebrates the richness of human diversity (Berman, 1990). The personalization of curriculum creates the mileu of growth in meaning that makes life worth living. The risks are worth the challenge.

#### Curriculum Encounter

The patchwork of vague philosophical assumptions about man and society, which is virtually absent in theoretical curriculum positions today, has led to a lack of vision and leadership, such as was present in the days of John Dewey and Alfred Whitehead. There

has been no comprehensive theory to guide the preceptive investigation necessary to integrate human and natural phenomena into a meaningful whole. Once we have seen and experienced, we naturally reflect on what we have seen by seeing it again in the imagination, which is where our world takes shape. Perhaps more awakening in the realm of reflection could hold possibilities in the underlying significance of daily experience. This study has not been a search for a new paradigm but a resurrection or rebirth of the "phoenix" of dialectic meaning from the ashes of positivism.

The characteristics of an emergent human paradigm, which recognized the complementarity of physical and spiritual experiences, were addressed almost twenty years ago by William Pinar (1974) when he and his colleagues related humane values, once thought of as luxuries to the "real" business of living, as prerequisites to life itself. According to Pinar, "We must be human in order to survive" (p. 36). David Purpel (1986) and James Macdonald before his death in 1983 were addressing the lack of curriculum's sensitivity to cultural diversity and its lack of focus on the moral and ethical critique of human relationships. Technical curriculum planning, the Tyler (1949) rationale, does not respond to human potential due to its lack of affirmation to basic beliefs, no reverence for life, no concern for compassion or justice. It has no vision in terms of nourishing a democratic community, in which people participate in communicative communion.

Curriculum planning as a process must encompass both cultural and spiritual meaning. Curriculum planning is a reflection that

emerges from an orientation or vision of who and what we are, where we come from, and where we are going. We as humans search and yearn for profound meaning in life. That we aspire to freedom and are endowed with the genius to make this possible is our mission for "humanity is a network interconnected by personal meaning and social vision" (Purpel, 1989).

The More Things Change, The  
More They Stay the Same

Since school culture is a distinct unique pattern of roles and relationships within a particular setting, it is implied that the patterning supercedes any one individual and will continue in the absence of the individual. Since we cannot perceive culture in the same way we see an individual, we have trouble grasping and acting in terms of its existence. For it is its very existence which is a barrier to recognition and experimentation of alternative formations to the "living organism" itself (Sarason, 1979).

Due to the "cultural lenses" used to connect all of us to community, we perceive others according to our own cultural code of communication. We may all speak the same verbal language, but cross-cultural communication becomes difficult when we assume that we share the same meanings. In this "sea of uncertainty" called school culture, where the merging of a divergent population of meaning erupts, the dynamics of essence desperately hangs on to the familiar auspices of tradition in order to make sense of the chaos it encounters. Southside School was no different from the huge

number of others who preceded or exist with us; our ways of looking and thinking about school management may vary, but our perceptions and trust in the nature of man and his goodness still seem to be in question. The student and teacher should be the phenomena undergoing the experience of creating themselves with the need for students to be the center of the action.

### The Crisis of Consciousness

Before the possibility of transforming classrooms into centers of personal meaning, students must trust and be trusted in being able to tell one's own story (Giroux, 1986) for process education is the unique dialoguing, the sharing of each other's worlds, the sharing of common worlds. Without trust, the students and parents of Southside can not but question the "whitening of the teaching force" at their school. Ethical action calls for the culture to care enough to address this concern, as well as, the numerous enigmatic situations which arise daily separating the community.

The invisible norm of whiteness can only be exposed through the uncomfortable conflict each of us experienced in the throes of cultural shock. For it is naive to believe that the lack of cultural congruence is unnecessary when one goes from one culture to another. It is not the obvious differences which cause the greatest personal uneasiness, but the underlying everyday life, shared by virtue of constant interaction with others from birth. This invisible bond includes the assumptions, which are so much a part of one's culture, that they are not even consciously cognizant. This

unconscious pattern, enacted implicitly rather than explicitly, is the silent language of the significant.

#### The Meaning of What I Do

In the fragmented milieu of school culture I experienced at Southside Elementary during the year long study, my perception of curriculum became an overwhelming personal dilemma. Through challenging my own personal philosophy of facilitating students' educational growth, I began to grope and claw my way out of the myth of "culturally deprived" which encompassed the existence I had chosen. Recognizing the essential connection each child needed with personal meaning in the educational environment, I experienced the frustration, insecurity, and despair students live day to day in an alien atmosphere.

Though not an uncommon theme in educational research, the lack of personal relevancy for students and educators forces the unraveling of hegemony and its vise-like grip on educators and the bureaucracy that binds its ideals. The hermeneutic undertaking of sharing understanding with others evolves from our cosmological need to make meaning and secure that meaning to the world we know.

In the process of coming to understand others, the emergence of my growth originated. The search I initiated through Southside was, in actuality, an old search for my own "idealized" being I had internalized in the beginning of my career. Without this personal journey through self reflection into my own being, I could never have hoped to perceive the snare that entraps us all.



In the quest for dialogue with others, I was searching for the inquiry I aspired in my own life. The alienation of my profession, with its lack of colloquial deliberation, leaves us exploring unfamiliar terrain without a map of prediction and direction. Due to the uncommunicated anxiety of our uncertainty, we submerge ourselves in the everydayness of our world. With little thought, we become accustomed to react to teaching and children through the habit of the tradition in which we have been immersed.

As I began to unmask the facade of hope and dreams of education in a black school, I began to become personally uncomfortable with my role of investigator. I began to wonder how successful schools have gained their excellence through the elimination of individuals' struggle for meaning in their lives. It became more apparent as the study progressed, that change can only come through self knowledge and the realization of our own created world of meaning.

What is a pupil?

A child of God - not a tool of the state

Who is a teacher?

A guide - not a guard

What is the faculty?

A community of scholars - not a union of mechanics

Who is the principal?

A master of teaching - not a master of teachers

What is learning?

A journey - not a destination

What is discovery?

Questioning the answers - not answering questions

What is the process?

Discovering ideas - not covering content

What is the goal?

Opened minds - not closed issues

What is the test?

Being and becoming-not remembering and reviewing

What is the school?

Whatever we choose to make it (Allan A. Glatthorn).

## REFERENCES

- Allport, Gordon (1974). Nature of Prejudice. New York, New York: Macmillan Company.
- Apple, Michael W. (1979). Ideology and Curriculum. New York, New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, Inc.
- Bandura, Albert (1977). Social Learning Theory. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Banks, James A. and Grambs, Jean (1972). Black Self Concept. New York, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Banks, James A. (1981). Multiethnic Education Theory and Practice. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.
- Berger and Luckman (1966). In Prager, J.; Longshore, D.; Seeman, M. (ed.), School Desegregation Research. New York, New York: Plenum Press.
- Brislin, Richard; Cushner, Kenneth; Cherrie, Craig; Yong, Mahealani (1986). Intercultural Interactions: A Practical Guide. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Brumbaugh, Robert (1989). Some Applications of Process and Reality to Educational Practice. Educational Theory, 39 (4).
- Canning, Cristine (1991). What Teachers Say about Reflection. Educational Leadership, 48 (6).
- Chazan, Barry (1985). Contemporary Approaches to Moral Education. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.
- Clark, Mary (1990). Each Culture Needs a Song, A Theme of Life, From Which Its People Take Their Meaning. Education, 110 (4).
- Cochran-Southand, M., and Lytle, S. (1990). Research on Teaching and Teacher Research: The Issues that Divide. Educational Researcher, 19 (2).
- Combs, Arthur (1968). Self-Concept as an Objective. Paper read at the National Conference on Education Objectives for the Culturally Disadvantaged, sponsored by the South Central Region Educational Laboratory, Little Rock, Arkansas.
- Dewey, John (1922). Democracy and Education. New York, New York: Macmillan Company.

- Dewey, John (1933). How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process. Chicago, Illinois: D.C. Heath.
- Dewey, John (1900). The School and Society. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Dewey, John (1964). My Pedagogic Creed. New York, New York: The Modern Library.
- Dobson, Russell L. and Dobson, Judith E. (1987). Curriculum Theorizing. The Educational Forum, 51 (3).
- Dobson, R., Dobson, J., Koetting, R. (1985). Looking at, Talking About, and Living with Children. New York, New York: University Press of America.
- Dobson, R., Dobson, J., & Koetting, R. (1987). Problematic aspects of school reform. Capstone Journal of Education, 7, 3-13.
- Doll, William E. (1990). Teaching a Post-Modern Curriculum. Teaching and Thinking about Curriculum. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.
- Donmoyer, Robert (1990). Curriculum, Community, and Culture. In J. Sears & J. Marshall (ed.), Teaching and Thinking About Curriculum. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.
- Eisner, Elliot W. (1985). The Educational Imagination On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs New York, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Erickson, R. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In Stainback and Stainback, Understanding & Conducting Qualitative Research. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Erickson, Gaalen and Grimmitt, Peter P., editors (1988). Reflection in Teacher Education. Columbia University: Pacific Educational Press.
- Foshay, Arthur (1986, February). A Humanistic Approach to Curriculum Theory: One Aspect. Paper presented at Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Foshay, Arthur (1990). You and Me and I and Thou. Teaching and Thinking About Curriculum. Columbia University, Teachers College Press.
- Freire, Paulo (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York, New York: Seabury Press.

- Fulweiler, Toby (1990). Looking and Listening for My Voice. College Composition and Communication, 41 (2).
- Furnham, Adrian; Bochner, Stephen (1986). Culture Shock. New York, New York: Methuen & Co.
- Geertz, Clifford (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures. New York, New York: Basic Books.
- Gintis, Herbert; Bowles, Samuel (1976). Schooling in Capitalist America, Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life. New York, New York: Basic Books.
- Giroux, Henry (1985). Education Under Siege, the Conservative, Liberal, and Radical Debate Over Schooling. South Hadley, Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey.
- Giroux, Henry (1981). Ideology, Culture & the Process of Schooling. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Temple University Press.
- Giroux, Henry (1991). Postmodernism, Feminism and Cultural Politics. Albany, New York, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Glasser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. New York, New York: Aldine.
- Glatthorn, Allan (1987). Curriculum Leadership. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company.
- Goetz, J. and Lecompte, M. (1982). Ethnographic research and the problem of data reduction. Anthropology and Education Quarterly, 12, 51-70.
- Goodlad, John (1984). A Place Called School. New York, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co.
- Greene, Maxine (1988). The Dialectic of Freedom. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.
- Greene, Maxine (1986). Reflection and Passion in Teaching. Journal of Curriculum, 2 (1).
- Greene, Maxine (1973). Teacher as Stranger. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc.
- Grimmett, Peter (1988). The Nature of Reflection and Schon's Conception in Perspective. In Grimmett and Erickson (Eds.) Reflection in Teacher Education. Columbia University: Teachers College, pp. 5-15.

- Hale, Janice E. (1982). Black Children Their Roots, Culture, and Learning Styles. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press.
- Hanna, Judith (1988). Disruptive School Behavior. New York, New York: Holmes & Meier.
- Illich, Ivan (1970). Deschooling Society. New York, New York: Seabury Press.
- Jackson, Philip W. (1986). Life in the Classroom. New York, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Jackson, Philip W. (1986). The Practice of Teaching. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kliebard, Herbert M. (1975). Bureaucracy and Curriculum Theory. In William Pinar, Curriculum Theorizing: the Reconceptualists (pp. 51-69). California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.
- Kliebard, Herbert (1986). The Struggle for the American Curriculum 1893-1958. Boston, Massachusetts: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Kohlberg, Lawrence and Mayer, Rochelle (1972). Development as the Aim of Education. Harvard Education Review, 42 (4) 449-497.
- Kristamurti, J. (1953). Education & the Significance of Life. New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Lengrand, Paul (1970). An Introduction to Lifelong Education. Paris, France: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Lieberman, Ann and Miller, Lynne (1984). Teachers, Their World and Their Work. Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Lincoln, Y., and Guba, E. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Longshore, Douglas; Prager, Jeffrey; Seeman, Melvin; editors (1986). School Desegregation Research: New Directions in Situational Analysis. New York, New York: Plenum Press.
- Lortie, Dan C. (1975). Schoolteacher. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Macdonald, James B. (1975). The Quality of Everyday Life in School. In Search of Meaning. Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development.

- Macdonald, James (1974). A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education. In William Pinar (Ed.), Heightened Consciousness, Cultural Revolution, and Curriculum Theory. Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing.
- May, Rollo (1983). The Discovery of Being. New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- McLaren, Peter (1989). Life in Schools. New York, New York: Longman Inc.
- McNeil, Linda M. (1986). Contradictions of Control. New York, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Inc.
- Ogbu, John U. (1986). Structural Constraints in School Desegregation. School Desegregation Research. New York, New York: Plenum Press.
- Oliver, Donald W.; Gershman, Kathleen Waldron (1989). Education, Modernity, and Fractured Meaning Toward a Process Theory of Teaching and Learning. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.
- Oliver, Donald W. (1990). Grounded Knowing: A Postmodern Perspective on Teaching and Learning. Educational Leadership, 47 (9).
- Palonsky, Stuart (1986). 900 Shows A Year. New York, New York: Random House.
- Peshkin, Alan (1986). God's Choice. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Peshkin, Alan (1978). Growing Up American. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.
- Phinney, Jean; Rotheram, Mary Jane (1987). Children's Ethnic Socialization Pluralism and Development. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Pinar, William (1974). Heightened Consciousness, Cultural Revolution, and Curriculum Theory. Berkley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.
- Pirsig, Robert (1984). Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. New York, New York: Bantam Books.
- Postman, Neil and Weingartner, Charles (1969). Teaching as a Subversive Activity. New York, New York: Delacorte Press.
- Purpel, David E. (1989). The Moral & Spiritual Crisis in Education. Granby, Massachusetts: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc.

- Ravitch, Diane (1985). The Schools We Deserve, Reflections on the Educational Crises of our Times. New York, New York: Basic Books.
- Richard, Mary (1974). In W. Pinar (1974) Heightened Consciousness, Cultural Revolution, and Curriculum Theory. California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.
- Roderick, Jessie (1986). Dialogue Writing: Context for Reflection on Self as Teacher and Researcher. Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 2 (1).
- Rogers, Carl (1983, 1969). Freedom to Learn for the 80's. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing.
- Rosenberg, Morris. Self-Esteem Research: A Phenomenological Corrective. In Prager, Longshore, and Seeman (Eds.), School Desegregation Research. New York, New York: Plenum Press.
- Sarason, S. (1979). The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Schofield, Janet (1989). Black and White in School. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.
- Schon, Donald A. (1987). Educating the Reflective Practitioner. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Schutz, Alfred (1986). The Phenomenology of the Social World, translated by George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1967).
- Schwab, J. J. The Practical: A Language for Curriculum. School Review, 78 (4).
- Seaberg, Dorothy (1974). The Four Faces of Teaching. Pacific Palisades, California: Goodyear Publishing Company, Inc.
- Sears, James and Marshall, Dan (1990). Teaching and Thinking About Curriculum. Columbia University: Teachers College Press.
- Sergiovanni, Thomas (1985). Landscapes, Mindsapes and Reflective Practice in Supervision. Journal of Curriculum, 1 (1).
- Sergiovanni, Thomas J. (1981). Symbolism in Leadership (What Great Leaders Know That Ordinary Ones Do Not). Paper Presented for the Institute of Educational Administration, Melbourn Victoria, Australia.

- Sergiovanni, Thomas J. (1991). The Principalship A Reflective Practice Perspective. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Shulman, L. (1986). Those Who Understand Knowledge Growth in Teaching. Educational Researcher, 15 (2).
- Stainback, Susan and Stainback, William (1988). Understanding & Conducting Qualitative Research. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.
- Surbeck, Elaine; Han, Eunhye; and Moyer, Joan (1991). Assessing Reflective Responses in Journals. Educational Leadership, 48 (6).
- Tyler, Ralph (1949). Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Van Manen, Max. The Relation Between Research and Pedagogy. Contemporary Curricular Discourses. Scottsdale, Arizona: Gorsuch Scarsbrick.
- Whitehead, Alfred North (1929, 1965). The Aims of Education. New York, New York: Macmillan Company.
- Wibel, William (1991). Reflection Through Writing. Educational Leadership, 48 (6).
- Wilson, Tom (1989, March). Who Designs What, for Whom, Why and How? Paper prepared for the 1989 Annual Conference American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California.



**APPENDIXES**

APPENDIX A

ENTRY LEVEL TEACHER'S JOURNAL

Monday, March 11, 1991

I have finally made my first month of teaching. It is so challenging and sometimes also totally frustrating. I have been struggling with discipline. I want to have a free and creative environment but some of these classes cannot handle freedom and need very close boundaries.

My worst struggle is in the morning, getting the 4-7's to come in and sit quietly waiting to do the announcements and positive action. I have tried activities on the board but that worked for about 2 days and then fell dead!

Today we are working on some more basic theory. We worked on the note shape and the name of the note. We also had work on the programs to keep it fresh in their minds.

I feel that I understand my students better as time goes on but still at other times I am thrown and do not exactly know what to say. That is definitely something that I will have to work on and find better ways to phrase my answers and be honest with the classes about how their behavior makes me feel.

Tuesday, March 12

Gym days are always a little smoother than music days--of course, there are exceptions to that and today was the exception. Things went bad from the beginning. Control was totally lost and another teacher had to step in and help me. Part of me is grateful and part of me is embarrassed. I am a new teacher, but I feel very inadequate in my control of my room and being the leader in that room. Now I'm asking anyone for any ideas.

A couple of teachers helped me out by encouraging me and also giving me several ideas. Tomorrow I'm going to start like it is my first day again. Change some things like my response to misbehavior. It needs to be immediate and action directed (firm and followed through). I think my biggest problem is that I want to rescue them and help them so much that it gets in my way of being an effective teacher.

I went home saying, tomorrow is going to be another day and I will be able to handle this and hopefully make some headway. It's a good thing I do not drink otherwise--look out!

Wednesday, March 13

What difference! I had a crossword ready for them to do before the bell rings. Assigned tables were greatly enforced and I also started using tickets for a drawing on Fridays. Of course, everyone wanted to know what a red ticket was for and why they were not getting one.

One of the teachers also said that if I needed to I could remove a child from the room and bring them to either her room for an opportunity time suggested by Calarosa. They had to fill out a sheet of paper on what they did to be dismissed from the class and what they are going to do next time to stay in class. It helped to let them know that I would not sacrifice the teaching of those who want to learn for those who are not going to participate.

It went much smoother today, transition times were also easier. The math teacher came over and said, "Wow, what a difference!" But I know that this was not a cure all and there will still be bad days.

Monday, March 18

Today was an okay day. I am going to get a handle the 4-7's if it kills me, or I die trying. They never work on their work after we split for chapter one.

Tomorrow will be somewhat rough. I will have two classes during the 9:25, 10:05, and 10:45 A.M. classes. But at least it is a gym day so we can get them outside to run.

I want to try and arrange for them to be able to see some instruments and be able to look at them up close. I have also thought about having them form like a kazoo band. It would be nice to have something fun.

Tuesday, March 19

WOW! What can I say! Covering for the speech arts teacher made a very interesting morning. I am very tired and also mostly brain-dead.

The 4-7's are good somedays like today and then they totally blow my mind. But somedays they actually perform well at something and feel they were successful.

I did have a struggle with the 4-8's this afternoon. Joanne and several of the girls had a slight attitude problem. But they went and cooled off and I was much better after some time and we resolved our differences.

I still would like to do some kind of gymnastics or physical performance as an assembly so that it would involve some of the children who may not necessarily participate or feel successful otherwise. Any suggestions?

I had a great pump yourself up session with other teachers after school. It helped to talk to them and we also thought of some great ideas for next year...

Anyway today was today and tomorrow is another day!

Wednesday, March 20

This morning was terrible. Everything that could go wrong went wrong. Everyone was grouchy and complained about everything I tried to do in class. I also did not feel well myself and so I'm sure that contributed to my lousy mood which the students probably picked up on and just ran with it.

My afternoon went somewhat better. I had a much better time with those classes. They were not complaining as much and after I took 10 minutes for myself to calm down and regroup to have a better afternoon.

I'm going to go home and run and get ready for a better day tomorrow.

Thursday, March 21

Today was a great day! All of the classes had a good time. I taught each class a new game and they were very simple games but the children loved it.

I had lots of fun and enjoyed playing with each of the classes. Things went along so good--I hope that tomorrow goes as well as today did.

I am very excited about going home to Ohio to see my family and spend some time relaxing.

Friday, March 22

Today went surprisingly well. Each section had a music quiz and it helped to give me a good sampling of what each child knows and understands about the theory.

Many of them surprised me and I was very happy to have that happen. I am going to stop on the theory aspect and now concentrate on the programs which will be rapidly approaching. But I think that they will both be excellent programs once we are finished.

My classroom management techniques are improving but many, many times I am at a loss as to what I should do and what to say to these children to get them to understand it as I see the situation.

I feel that much of my problem is that I am not as consistent as I need to be. I also do not know what kind of consequences to set up so that I can follow through on them. How do you handle those students who are defiant in their mannerisms and speaking when addressing anyone. It is also hard to determine exactly how much work to plan and still not frustrate those other students who are slower?

Sometimes the questions seem endless and the answers are so few but I know that much of this will come with experience and hard work on my part. Anyway--a week off for spring break I will definitely treasure!

Monday, April 1

Today was rather productive. The 4th graders worked on rehearsing their musical for an April 23 evening performance. The fifth graders went over their quiz and reviewed some of their basic theory. It was nice to talk to several students about their Spring Break. It helped me to readjust to getting back into the swing of things. Most classes were well-behaved. The chill was the only problem.

Tuesday, April 2

My day was very enjoyable except for my first hour class--the 4-7's were terrible. I was furious and it was obvious to the children also I am sure. But I had fun playing something different with each class that came to the gym today. The 5-3's also taught me how to dance a little, but it was fun to learn from the children.

Wednesday, April 3

Dr. Lee was here to observe today. I was nervous at first but I did become more relaxed as the day went on. He really did not point out anything that I am not already aware of happening in my classroom. I do not have trouble with my subject matter and I really do not have problems conveying the material to them.

Classroom management is my big struggle right now. I know that I am too easy on them and I allow too much to go on. I am going to try and implement the after school policy. I also need to make my assigned seats rule stick! No more moving around unless it is earned. Also I need to plan more activities to use the class time more wisely. It is better to plan too much and not get finished then have that free time.

Thursday, April 4

This morning went a little better. All of the morning classes cooperated fairly well today. The 4-7's played speedway. The 4-6's got to play with the parachute. The 5-4's and 5-2's had relay races outside. I'm going to start to introduce track so that we could have an informal "track day" for all of the students. I have not run this by the principal yet, but it is my understanding that they had a similar one last year.

The afternoon was a different story since there was a minor accident during the 5-3's time. The girls attempted to do something that I always do while I was out, corralling Kenyatta and Michelle who were wandering the halls. It was partially my fault and I felt terrible after I found out that it happened. The last hour class I tried to have them play a simple rudimentary game to work them toward getting ready for track and I ended up separating three disputes and almost everyone was sitting in a different part of the gym for the last ten minutes. I felt good about the morning progress but felt terrible about the afternoon. But tomorrow is a different day and I will do my best to make it a positive one and also enjoy it.

Friday, April 5

Today went very well up until the next to last class period. Two boys got into a fight but they did go to the opportunity room. I tested all of the classes with worksheets that they have already completed. For the most part I am going to discontinue any theory work. They know most of the basics so we will work hard on their programs and also on graduation for the 5th grade.

I am concentrating on my classroom management techniques. I am trying to catch the misbehavior before it escalates and squelch it right then. That has begun to get better but I know that it will be tough at the end of school. I am also going to try and have a unit on band instruments and orchestra instruments as an introduction unit.

Monday, April 8

This morning we thought that we could rotate the kids around but we then found out that we had to keep them for the entire 2 1/2 hours. So the science and art teachers agreed to let me have the morning off. But at 10 A.M. I went and covered for the speech arts teacher who went to a Shakespeare meeting. So I did accomplish several things before I went to to cover. This afternoon we went outside and they all got to play different games and have some free time. I think that this week of P.E. will be as good for me as it will be for the children. I am somewhat sore because I am out of shape. But more and more I see how out of shape the children are. That's why P.E. should be higher on the priority list.

Tuesday, April 9

This morning I had the 4-6's from 9-11:30 A.M. We did have lots of fun playing with each other and cooperating together. This class seems to work well together, and at times it was strained while we were outside but they usually work it out by themselves. The classes seem to really want to have gym everyday and I think that it releases a lot of their pent-up energy. I have also been having fun and it is helping to get me in shape by having all this happen on one day. As the time draws shorter I hope that the 4th graders are ready for their performance on April 23. I think that I am more nervous than they are about it. But I am sure that they will pull it off.

Wednesday, April 10

Today was a very fun day. This morning the 4-8's were very good-they also cooperated fairly well together. But there has to be a better way to utilize the 2 1/2 hours during the morning than just art, science, or P.E. I also am learning to enjoy having the 4-7 class again. By not having them first thing they are more settled and flow much better into class and we do not clash as much together.

There was an interesting run-in with Ronnie (4th grade) today. He was on the stage, which all of them know is off limits. So he was confronted, and immediately got very defensive. Two other boys were also doing the same thing but they did not have a problem with sitting down and not participating. But Ronnie kept talking back and wanting to go to the office. I told him that he had to deal with me. He then physically got into the corner. He then threatened me that he would hit someone else in the class so that he could go to the office. But I said that he did not want to do it and that he would go to the opportunity room and not go to the counselor's office. So he then backed down and sat quietly and then waited until I let him join the rest of the class.

I had lots of fun playing with the 5th grade during basketball. They decided that I was okay and even wanted to challenge me for another day. So I felt very good about being here today and even felt like I had accomplished something.

Thursday, April 11

Today was also a very good day. This morning I was able to catch up on my journal, change over some decorations, start some plans for next week. All of the classes seemed to flow along quite well. I got to play basketball again this afternoon and it is probably more fun for me than it is for them. I am just tired from not sleeping well as I am playing so much all day long that I am very tired.

Friday, April 12

Today was a good day after we got together and decided what we were doing this morning. We did not know that the science teacher would be out and so that threw a hitch into the whole works. But the 4-8's were pretty good outside. They did not cooperate as well but I think that they were tired like we were also. There were several glitches today with the math teacher being out as well as the science teacher. But we did eventually get everything straightened out. But it has been a long week and it has also been a good week.

Monday, April 15

Today worked out to be a good day. I am letting the 5-4's have gym this week because they did not have any last week. I'm going to call and try and arrange some instruments to be loaned to us, even if only for a few days and let the 5th grade work with them a little.

The 4th grade is rehearsing for their program which will be next Tuesday night. There were some tense moments when I gave out the speaking parts. Several of the children were upset because they were not chosen. But like I said, they are all important but I tried to chose from all classes as equally as possible.

My only tough spot was yesterday when the 4-7's came in the room. They were not ready to handle it so we had to turn off the lights and sit with our heads down and go over the rules so that they understood exactly what I expected. After we worked on that for a while then we were able to go on with class, what little time was left. But the 5th graders did some good discussion and note taking about the instruments.

Tuesday, April 16

Today went fairly well. The 4-6's played hockey in the gym as well as the 4-5's in the afternoon. That was a tough sport to keep the tension down because occasionally someone got hit in the leg by a hockey stick. Even though it was accidental some of the children have a hard time trying to remain calm. I think that I got hit in the leg more than anyone.

The other classes we did some preliminary relay work and I am going to continue with track and field for a while. Many of the children are good runners they just need that consistent daily running to build up endurance. Hopefully, I can incorporate some health education (mainly the heart) during this time of running.



Wednesday, April 17

Today was a good day and also a productive day. I covered for the art teacher in the morning and then went right on into the day. Art was fun this morning. I had several of the children teach me how to do the calligraphy that they are learning.

The 4-6's did have a problem while we were rehearsing. They did not want to cooperate so we sat down and wrote out how we are to act while in class. Then they were dismissed one by one and they calmed down immediately.

This afternoon I was very impressed with Jeremy while we were rehearsing. Even though two others were doing their best to disrupt and distract him. But he sang along and practiced anyway. So that was a bright spot during the day. The 5-2's also did great reports today. Arien, Steve and Norman did a great reading accompanied with music. So it was a pretty good day. Lots of bright moments.

Thursday, April 18

Today was a fun day. I set up an obstacle course in the gym. They had to ride on scooters, run, shoot a ball, flip, jump a rope and walk a balance beam. All of the children enjoyed doing the course. It provided them with some friendly competition that was not so threatening. Things went very well and I also had fun while doing it.

All of the classes cooperated well and they do enjoy it so much that I just believe that a real difference could be made with full time P.E. I worked in the book fair in the evening and also met several parents even though I had no conferences.

Friday, April 19

There is one conference planned for today at 10:30 A.M. I am going to sit in with the speech arts teacher on Marquis' conference. He is the only student I have that is continually defiant and we have somewhat of a personality conflict. But yesterday he was extremely nice because he knows about the conference today. He is a bright child but he only wants to work on his agenda. I also talked to Keith's mom who did not understand the U he got in music. But when you do not participate and turn in only one worksheet, when all the others are done as a group, what can she expect. But she was very nice and she understood and Keith told us he knew he could do the work, he just needs to commit himself.

Monday, April 22

James gave me a hug. I wrote it down so that I could remember it. That really made my day. The principal came down and observed this morning. The 4-6's were so lethargic and just lazy that they just embarrassed themselves. But when the 4-7's and 4-5's came in they did much better. They had good sound and also knew the words.

I know that the children are going to pull this off and have a good performance but I will be so glad when it is over. I am more nervous than the children are. The incident with the destroyed tape almost wanted to make me cry. I was so upset. But the new recording will be better and I am so thankful that Mr. Cesario is able to help me out. Hopefully rehearsal will go well tomorrow.

Tuesday, April 23

What a busy day! I went first thing this morning and got the tape from Mr. Cesario. This recording was very good. It made the practicing much easier today. The rehearsal was very long but they did do a very good job. Having the speakers in the front and letting them talk in the microphone helped out tremendously.

I have been extremely nervous all day. It is more nerveracking for me than for them. All of the help that the teachers gave me was great. The gym looked better and the children also did a great job. They did a very good job and on e that they can also be proud of. I am very glad that it is over. It was a big load off of my shoulders. It also gave me some experience and will help me with future programs. It also gave the children good experience in performing also.

Wednesday, April 24

Today felt hectic. I covered the first hour for the 4th grade teacher while her entry level teacher did Positive Action. They were relatively good, they even went to the library and had time to check out books. Then I allowed the 4-6's to go play kickball outside since they had no gym time yesterday. The 5th grades were talking about the instruments today. I also demonstrated my clarinet for the 5-2's. The other 4th graders watched the video of our performance last night. They had some very positive comments and also enjoyed seeing their peers perform. They also enjoyed laughing at some of the actions of the children but they all laughed together, even the one who was making the funny action on the video. But there was a lot of positive comments which I was glad to hear.

Thursday, April 25

Today the Chapter I teacher and I had made arrangements for her classes to join us for P.E. She brought all of them down and they know that they must complete their work, work hard, and cooperate to be able to join the other part of the class in gym. There wer three different classes that we sat on the floor and had to talk to them. Amazingly one of those sections was the 5-2's. They were incredibly wound up and just could not cooperate.

But the 4-7's shocked both of us. They all particiapated, worked hard and had lots of fun. KeJuan was upset when he got in the gym but he had enough self control to keep it to himself and to stay away from the class in order to cool off.

So hopefully on Thursdays we can have the entire class in gym. The Chapter I teacher had as much fun as did the children. We played three simple cooperation games. Even in some of the classes, there was one team that would try and cheat but that team did not win, only the teams that played correctly. It also helped having an extra set of eyes-the Chapter I teacher-to watch the teams. I think that this will work well and should benefit the children greatly. We had fun working together.

Friday, April 26

I turn 24 years old today. I am relatively proud of the job that I have done so far this year. I know that I have learned more from the children than they have learned from me. The 3rd graders are going to perform for us during the Positive Action assembly. Also the 4th graders are doing the opening number of their musical. So it should be a very interesting P.A. assembly although a long one.

This morning the 4-6's watched the video of their performance. They really enjoyed watching the performance. I enjoyed seeing the pride on their faces. The fifth grade was still talking about the separate instruments and then the 5-3's listened to a sample recording of each one. Today was a good day over all. The P.A. assembly was good. I especially enjoyed the third graders and their singing.

Monday, April 29

The principal came down and observed me again this morning. Then she went over the evaluation with me. She had many positive comments and also many good ideas to use in my room to help with the management. The fifth grade is going to perform their musical on May 20 to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders as an assembly. Then we will have to push to get graduation ready. I am going to work with the 4th graders on singing some patriotic songs. I also want them to record these songs so that we can use them on the announcements in the morning. I get tired of singing the school song and also the Positive action song.

The fifth graders also finished up their notes on instruments and we had a quiz today as a small review of all the notes. I also have about five girls who are going to take piano lessons from me after school so we started that today.

Tuesday, April 30

Today I introduced track and field to the groups. We talked about how and why we should stretch out our muscles. They really surprised me with their enthusiasm about participating in a track team. I am so glad that the fourth grade teacher is going to help me do this. I want the children to be successful and I want to make sure that they get to do that through no fault of mine. I was excited to hear about how well the children did on their Shakespeare performance. I didn't mind covering for the speech arts teacher and I am looking forward to seeing them on Saturday.

There is so much to do and I feel like there is not enough time. Of course, many feel like that.

Wednesday, May 1

Today was a rough day. The children were all very hyper. Normally, the 5-3's are fine but today they were just terrible and I had to sit on them. The fifth graders rehearsed their musical and the 4th graders are working on patriotic songs. We are working on "God Bless America, America, America the Beautiful and the Star Spangled Banner." They are doing well and it is even working with me playing the piano and directing. Hopefully we can record several of these and use them in the morning. I think that the fifth graders will even out shine the fourth graders when they do their musical. We will also have a good crowd since it will be during school. We have to get busy with their graduation plans also because they have almost no time to prepare a new song. But we may be able to adapt one of those from the musical.

Thursday, May 2

Today was a very draining day. I taught the long jump to each separate class. We had fun jumping and seeing how they did compared to each other. By the time that school was over I was so tired that I did not even want to have track practice. It was pretty tough having the Chapter students in without their teacher. The substitute was okay but he saw it as a way to have somewhat of a free day and that made me mad but the day is over. But I think that I have an idea about how I'm going to run each one and what we're going to do. I want the children to do so well, I just hope that I can help them accomplish that.

Friday, May 3

Today was one very hectic day. This morning I had the 4-6's which was the only class that I had all day. Then the 5th graders went to the middle school and I went with them. It was fun to go see a school that I had never seen before. They all behaved very well and made us proud as well as making them proud of themselves.

This afternoon amazed me. I could not believe that there was some semblance of order. I worked the Jupiter Jump. It would be better to have one for the lower grades and another for the upper grades. But it was amazing to me how few problems I saw. If only the weather would have been cooler. I am also excited about seeing the kids perform their Shakespeare plays tomorrow. I know that they will do great. I had a fun day today and I feel like I am accomplishing something. Word is spreading about the fact that I am giving piano lessons. I have about eight people who are interested including the five girls who are presently taking lessons. Anyway I have a busy weekend ahead but it will be fun.

Monday, May 6

Today was a crappy day at school. I felt like I had no control whatsoever. I felt like we had all gone back to square one. There was very little academic work done today. Most of the time was

spent putting out small fires and stopping behavior problems. So the teacher across the hall came in and helped to talk to me and told me that she had also had a bad day at school today.

So we talked about everything that happened and I felt much better. I also had a problem with Maurice again. He drew on my piano keys with an ink pen. Then he just laughed about it so I wrote a note to the principal to request that he be taken out of my class tomorrow--whether he is with the counselor or someone else. But I finished my bulletin boards and also managed to practice the piano for about a half an hour. That made me feel much better so tomorrow is another day. I hope track practice goes well.

Tuesday, May 7

Today was a much better day than yesterday. We (teachers) pulled all of the fourth graders together and talked to them about how they had acted yesterday. We told them about the possibility of a field trip and that we were not going to consider it if the behavior as a group did not improve. I did see much better behavior in my classes today than yesterday. As far as I know Maurice was put in in-house suspension for marking on the piano keys.

I covered for the fourth grade teacher this morning and then went on into my classes. Practice went very well this afternoon also. I got two times for all of the boys and then had them run a practice relay. Thursday--definitely working on hand-offs. I also added some lady shot putters and possibly one or two long jumpers. Anyway that was a bright spot that I definitely will use as a focus.

Wednesday, May 8

Today went fairly well. The kids are very jittery and they've had some minor problems controlling themselves. We only had one minor spat between two girls on the playground. Anyway, the fifth grade is coming along nicely on their rehearsals for their play.

The fourth graders are also doing a bang-up job on the patriotic songs. I am also enjoying it because I get to play the piano and they get to come and sit around the piano. I had more girls show up for piano lessons today. So not I have approximately eight girls taking lessons. Hopefully practice will go as well as it did on Tuesday.

Thursday, May 9

Today went okay. The Chapter I teacher brought her chapter kids to gym again. For the most part the children worked together well. It is nice to see them working together. We played kickball for something different because I feel like I am o.d.ing on track. For most classes this game is fun and also a good chance for them to work on cooperation. Almost every single class succeeded in being able to handle the problem. But the 4-8's decided to start several small squabbles which they could not resolve on their own. So after setting them all down and chatting about it--they wanted another chance. This gives them a good chance to work together as a class and also have some fun and not be stuck to a desk.

Track practice went very well. I had several more children turn in permission slips. I also had the fourth grade teacher help me paint the exchange zones. That helped them to understand exactly how much time they need to pass the baton. They also brought their time down. I also worked with Cato and James on the long jump. Several girls also stayed after to volunteer to help and said they would volunteer to help out Monday and Tuesday night. I think that we will be having a good team with lots of teacher support.

Friday, May 10

Today was a pretty good day. I got two more people to bring in permission slips. During the 5-4's and 5-2's we watched a video of my brother running and it helped to show them that you do not have to be first to win a race. I think that it helped for them to see that. I also had the fourth graders work on their patriotic songs. The best section yet is the 4-5's. They really work at it, and most of them have the other verses memorized to songs like "America, America, the Beautiful, and the Star Spangled Banner." Hopefully this week I can have them record several of them to use on the morning announcements. On Wednesday Rashad threw me a loop. He bought (or so he said) this lapel pin for me. He brought it into class and Ronnie asked if he could pin it on me. Also this afternoon KeJuan came into my class at 2:50 P.M. and told me about he, James and Marquis getting suspended. KeJuan then asked if he could stay in my room and play the piano even though that was not his class time. I allowed him to stay and he was extremely polite, he even helped me clean up my room and get organized. So I guess that some of the students really do identify with me. That did really put a topping on my week. Next week is going to be very busy. Monday and Tuesday nights are track. Wednesday 5-2's go to a high school. Maybe Thursday and Friday will be more sane.

Monday, May 13

Today was an okay day. The fourth grade finished up their patriotic unit. We will be writing about it and also creating some musical patriotic posters to hang up later on this week. I've had several students come up to me and tell me that they are nervous about tonight. I must admit that I am also. I want them to do so well, and I know they will. For the most part the fifth grade seems excited about their performance next Monday. They are rehearsing well and making my speaking part decisions very difficult. I hope that the children do not overheat tonight because it is so hot. I did bring gatorade, water, bananas, and oranges for all of them.

Tuesday, May 14

I was disappointed that I did not have enough girls to have a 4x100 m girls relay team but the coed team did well. Shanira and Kenyatta did great in the 200 m. Jonica even did well in the one mile. The children were very excited about how well they did and I saw lots of cooperation and genuine happiness for the winners and participants.

Gym went fairly well today. I allowed them to choose their own teams for kickball--except the 5-4's. Most of my boys team is in that class and they wanted some extra practice. The girls even raced them to help them with the competitive edge. For the most part kickball is fun and allows everyone to play and participate. It also helps them to cooperate and work together; otherwise their team will not win. Tonight we should do well also because the boys have had more practice and are a little bit more competitive than the girls.

Wednesday, May 15

This morning was lots of fun. The 5-2's I think really enjoyed the production at the high school. I had my part of the class write down what they liked and what they would change. Many of them had very good suggestions, coming from the audience perspective.

The 4-7's and the 4-5's did very well in class. I know that the 4-7 calmness was due in part to the absence of Marquis who has been on suspension. Then the fifth graders were to rehearse for their musical production next Monday. That was a fiasco. They did not cooperate. They just acted like little jerks. I think I am going to perform it with the 24 people who have speaking parts and those 10-15 others who really want to do it. The rest can just miss out. At least the 5th grade cooperated while we rehearsed for their performance. I feel like many of the fifth graders feel that they can check out for the rest of the school year. Then I go back down to my room and the Chapter I teacher has them sitting down working on the assignment on the board but two minutes before the bell, Felisha and Melinda decide to start the pushing and shoving bit. So they got to spend time with me after school. But after the bell, some other children come back in the room and try to get them started. Anyway the teacher across the hall helped me get them out and then the counselor came and talked to the two girls. My day started great and ended terrible.

The boys did great last night. The relay finished first, as did Teran in the 60m and David in the 400m. I was very proud of all who participated. Again they showed great enthusiasm for their teammates and also helped them and worked together great. It was so nice to see them working together and having fun while also being successful even in the rain.

Thursday, May 16

Today was a pretty good day in gym. The Chapter I teacher brought down her children. We did a relay race and then we played a game similar to dodgeball but it required listening skills. They had to pay attention to know which number I was going to call. We had trouble with the 5-2's and 5-3's, so we had them sit down and spend some time thinking about their actions and what they should do. After Tuesday's disaster, I had absolutely no patience for the fifth grade. But I have felt better about management skills this week. I have been trying to work hard and be more consistent. I am glad that we finally got to settle what we are doing for the 5th grade appreciation.

Friday, May 17

Today has been a very good day. We have been watching the track video. Everyone has really enjoyed it. It has been nice to see those who did run and participate in the track meet enjoy watching themselves. It has been nice seeing the other classmates congratulate those who did run and participate. I tried another rehearsal of only a select group of 5th graders. I had approximately 35-40 students who paid attention and really gave me a good rehearsal. They cooperated and they had good sound also. So I think that this small group will be able to put on a show that they can be proud of and be able to strut their stuff. My afternoon was also quite enjoyable . I had fun watching the children see their peers and friends succeeding. That really made my day.



APPENDIX B

TENURED TEACHER'S JOURNAL

10-23-91

Today is Tuesday and I am very disappointed with the 4th graders. I stayed at school until 8:00 last night preparing and trying to make life more pleasant for my students. I'm not complaining because it is my joy and I have chosen this career because I love children and want to make a difference in their life. I know that naturally some kids will be irresponsible, but I don't and won't understand rudeness to teachers and each other.

Twenty-five children who want your attention constantly is understandable, but I do expect them to respond in a different way. I have high expectations of kids, usually higher than they have of themselves, but that's ok.

Maybe I need to change my teaching and give them no freedom. I could have them come in and open their books to assignments every 20 minutes. I wanted to be a different and more personal teacher than the ones I ever had. My major frustration about public schools is that kids don't care--but expect you to do everything. Oh well, another day!

11-06-91

Today at 2:40, we switch classes again. I'm sure that I'll forget and the 5th graders will have to remind me. Sometimes I have so much to do that I feel lost and frustrated. I spend at least 2 hours after school daily, work at home at least 1 hour and still have plenty to do. I miss Courtney and LaShawn who were my paper graders. I hope my mother stays long enough to help the afternoon on Thursday. She is working the Book Fair for us. I feel like I'm losing my voice. That might be a blessing to some!

11-07-91

Journal writing goes great with the 5th grade, but the 4th graders have trouble settling down. Maybe we should start with something else. Once again I'm confused about our library time. It is more of a hassle than it's worth.

11-12-91

Today is Monday. We are setting up centers and starting the pottery. I have a meeting at 4:00, and one every night this week. It is going to be busy!

11-13-91

Yesterday the second grade teacher died of a heart attack. She was a wonderful teacher. Her class will miss her and so will the other teachers. It's hard to remain calm and teach when you want to cry.

01-17-91

Today is absolutely awful. I hope I never become the kind of teacher that doesn't care, but it would be easy to do this year. The Southside kids take NO responsibility for their actions or their learning. They are never prepared for class, i.e. pencils, paper, homework--of course, they expect you to give them these things as if

they come from the heavens. "Thank you" and "please" are dirty words and rarely said. I never imagined it would be this bad in public schools and I can't seem to figure out why.

I do know that it must begin at home, and that parent respect for teachers is close to zero here. I was highly regarded by parents and teachers at my former school, and at least my work was acknowledged. I am a professional and unfortunately expected to be treated as such.

I have grown this year, but have also become disillusioned with the system and hierarchy. Teachers here are jealous of each other and never share. They are too busy trying to make it to the top--of what, I don't know. I guess that atmosphere permeates throughout the building.

02-01-91

I really dislike being at Southside. The 4th grade is so rude and they expect you to give them everything. They are too lazy to stand up for the Pledge of Allegiance and it goes downhill from there. They are low because they won't work nor will anyone work with them. I am not their mother nor do I hope to ever be any one's. Yesterday was report card day and they really expected to make A's & B's. Why? I have no idea why they can't figure it out except that they don't want to.

02-26-91

Today I am happy because the 4th graders are really starting to work. If they would just quit talking - we could move through the work faster.

03-19-91

Things are going pretty well at school. I'm constantly busy, but that's just me. I miss Maurice and just hope he is doing well. It's frustrating when I feel that I've failed a student or that I could have done more. I'm not sure what, but it takes so long to build that trust with each other usually 3 or 4 months.

It was interesting talking to Linda last night. Maybe people or parents don't realize the effect their children have on us. We need kids as much if not more, than they need us. They fill a large space in our lives. There is a difference in being detached, and being unfeeling. It is easy to get caught up in all the problems that kids are facing, but that seems self-defeating. I've discovered that my best days are my calmest, that doesn't mean no fun, just peaceful inside.

I guess the one thing that cannot be given to a child or adult is happiness. Unfortunately, we take life too seriously and forget to walk barefoot, sing in the shower and enjoy life more.

Wileakqua is always angry at herself--which comes off towards others. I haven't been able to make her feel better about herself, but maybe she doesn't know happiness and has nothing to compare it to.

The 4-8's have made one big leap--they are nicer to each other and can sit quietly and work. There is something very special about them and I'm glad to be their teacher.

04-01-91

Today is our first day back after Spring Break. The kids are calmer than I expected, but possibly because they are sleepy. The 4th graders were excited about having new English books that they can take home. I'm sure the novelty will soon wear off--but I'm enjoying it while I can.

After much thought over the holidays, along with NOTAWL conference, I surmised that we should be doing much more writing. Today was the beginning. It is hard for me to be patient, but I have confidence that they can produce.

We spent about 40 minutes reading silently today. I took about eight students by themselves and talked about the story and let them read to me. They always enjoy that - but I forget to take the time.

My personal goal is to set aside more reading and writing time - and to do the same, as a better model. It's also calming for me. I'm also going to introduce a book a day, maybe reading the first chapter. Hopefully, they will find something interesting enough to free read.

05-17-91

Today is the absolute worst day I've had in a long while. Our Positive Action Assembly was a total disaster. The kids are so rude that it is hard for me to like them. The saddest part is that the nice kids always have to suffer. I'm sick of punishing everyone, but it's so hard to understand why they treat each other and the teachers so poorly. I know that I was not in the right frame of mind & I do blame myself for that. I thought my recovery at the end was positive, but obviously not enough.

I ruined Michael by rescuing him all year & we are both paying the consequences for it. I really want each child to do their absolute best and think that my genuine care & concern for them will turn them around. Only, I have forgotten that some people aren't ready and may never be ready for it. I guess I am imposing my hopes & beliefs on them. In some ways that is no different from what I accuse some other teachers of doing - by thinking only their ways are the best.

Damn, it is so hard to keep everything in perspective and have 1/2 of an idea of what is right.

VITA

Diane M. Hensley

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

**Thesis:** EXPLORING INNER MEANING THROUGH REFLECTIVE DIALOGUE:  
A CURRICULAR PERSPECTIVE

**Major Field:** Curriculum and Instruction

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Bronx, New York, August 4, 1945 the daughter of Clifford J. and Ann Phillips.

**Education:** Graduated from Bishop Kelley High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma, in May, 1963; received Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and Mental Retardation from University of Tulsa in December 1980; Master of Science degrees in Learning Disabilities (1983) and Reading Specialist (1986) Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma in 1984; Completed requirements for Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1991.

**Professional Experience:** Learning Disabilities teacher, Marshall Elementary, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1979-1989; Wright Elementary, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1989-1990; Burroughs Elementary, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1990-; Adjunct Professor of Reading, University Center of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1988-1990.

**Professional Organizations:** Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, International Reading Association, Oklahoma Teachers Applying Whole Language, Northeastern Oklahoma Teachers Applying Whole Language, Oklahoma Education Association, Tulsa Classroom Teachers Association, National Education Association.