TEACHERS AND ALTERNATIVE

CURRICULUM MEANINGS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> The curriculum of a society's schools is an integral part of the culture of that society. To understand the meaning of any set of curriculum practices, they must be seen as both arising out of a set of historical circumstances and as being a reflection of a particular social milieu (Grundy, 1987, p. 6).

Background

Since its earliest beginnings, America has struggled with the idea of achieving a truly democratic society (Miller, 1990). The nation has consistently chosen to utilize its educational system as one of the major agents toward achieving this ultimate goal. James Bryant Conant accurately interpreted this situation when he wrote

> The free tax-supported schools are the sinews of our society: they are the product of our special history, a concrete manifestation of our unique ideals, and the vehicle by which the American concept of democracy may be transmitted to our future citizens. The strength of this republic is therefore intimately connected with the success or failure of our system of public education (Ragan, 1953, p. 2).

Because of the above perception, societal leaders, rather than those within the educational milieu, have assumed authority for determining the curriculum used towards achieving the goal of an educated citizenry (Miller, 1990). Zais (1976, 1986) has asserted that given this charge, leadership during the colonial period proposed two purposes for schooling that defined the limits of the curriculum and which were consistent with the identified needs of

the general society: (1) to form and, then, control a "common" society, and (2) to differently educate the sons of the wealthy for leadership and the sons of the common majority for followership. Washington and Jefferson openly advocated the use of schools to develop and maintain a national character. Washington declared that education was essential to construct a homogeneous citizenry. Jefferson argued that schooling was necessary to "educate all men to manners, morals, and habits perfectly homogeneous with those of the country" (Tyack, 1967). Synthesizing his attitude toward striated schooling, Thomas Jefferson devised a formal plan for an educational system in which

> every citizen in it should receive an education proportional to the condition and pursuits of his life. The mass of our citizens may be divided into two classes--the laboring and the learned. The laboring will need the first grade of education to qualify them for their pursuits and duties; the learned will need it as a foundation for further acquirements. . . . The learned class may still be subdivided into two sections: (1) Those who are destined for learned professions, as means of livelihood; and (2) The wealthy, who possessing independent fortunes, may aspire to share in conducting the affairs of the nation, or to live with usefulness and respect in the private ranks of life (Padover, 1943, p. 1064).

To such ends, colonial fathers, guild masters and teachers conveyed to the majority "practical techniques along with a clearly defined, high set of values. Knowledge was transmitted . . . through the family, religious institutions, and apprenticeships" (Toffler, 1970, p. 345).

These prescriptions have been continuously supported by subsequent leaders because the beliefs in the need for a common society and the legitimacy of the leadership of the few have

remained as prevalent, albeit many times unspoken, basic assumptions (Miller, 1990). The prevailing attitude of the early nineteen hundreds, with its upheavals aggravated by the diverse immigrant surges from Europe, "pushed educators to resume with renewed vigor the language of social control and homogenization that had dominated educational rhetoric from the earliest colonial period" (Vallance, 1973/74, p. 15). This agenda was supported and enhanced by such men as William Torrey Harris, Charles Eliot, Franklin Bobbitt and W. W. Charters (Eisner, 1985). These men advanced the belief that the major purpose of schooling for the majority was to offer them adequate training (Kleibard, 1986). Within this training, Harris, then Commissioner of Education, stressed punctuality, regularity, attention, silence, and subservience for authority as the necessary curriculum (Tyack, 1967; Vallance, 1973/74). Charles Eliot, President of Harvard University, advocated a striated curriculum for high school students whereby students should "be sorted according to their probable destinies" (Preskill, 1989, p. 351). Eliot posited that curriculum for such workers would avoid any "culture" and would draw from the instructional examples of industry. Enamored with Fredrick Taylor's industrial "human engineering" model, Franklin Bobbitt and W. W. Charters borrowed from the scientific management movement and established a theory of curriculum that was based on the differentiation of educational objectives in terms of the particular and narrow functions of adult life (Apple, 1979).

> The inner life of the school thus became an anticipatory mirror, a perfect introduction to the industrial society . . .Young people passing through this educational machine emerged into an

> adult society whose structure of jobs, roles, and institutions resembled that of the school itself (Toffler, 1970, p. 355).

Prominent American psychologists also sought to support Jefferson's premises for education and society. They translated Taylor's human engineering principles into curriculum practices in a form different from that of Eliot, Bobbitt and Charters. Instead of enhancing the "probable destinies of students," John B. Watson boasted

> Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own special world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take anyone at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select--doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggerman and thief, regardless of their talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors (cited in Bugelski, 1964, p. 4).

Like Eliot, Bobbitt and Charters, B. F. Skinner (1948, 1971) proposed that schools be used to train citizens to become "productive, adjusted and happy" within the constructs of an ordered society. Skinner further posited that there is no place for freedom in the human community; instead he proposed that, "The intentional design of a culture and the control of human behavior it implies are essential if the human species is to continue to develop" (Skinner, 1971, p. 167). According to Skinner's theory, those with the most political power should dictate and control the policies and decisions of society, including schooling, while those with the least political power serve to implement the decisions of the powerful.

This dominant perspective, this need for a stratified, controlled "common" society with leadership by the few, has become

so deeply ingrained and pervasive that the institutions of society (schools, home, workplaces) are designed to support and maintain it and the interactions and communications within these institutions are evaluated by it. Raymond Williams' definition of hegemony expresses the effects this perspective has had on our society in saying that

> [hegemony, which is] a set of meanings and values which, as they are experienced as practices, appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in society, a sense of absolute becaused experienced (as a) reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of a society to move in most areas of their lives. The institutions within American society [school, the family, work] have not only distributed these meanings and values, but also served as agencies of social and cultural control for the politically dominant, enabling these dominant individuals and groups to control without having to resort to overt methods of domination (Apple, 1979, p. 10).

In each generation, groups have been directed into their given roles for the good of a common society. Whenever there has been a change in the needs of society, the agendas have been modified to meet those needs. But they have remained so intact that three hundred years after schooling was first instituted in America, Ralph Tyler concluded, "One of the limiting factors requiring attention in many curriculum projects is the conscious or unconscious assumption on the part of the school that it is fully as much a sorting institution as it is an educational one" (Giroux, 1981, p. 21).

"The school and the life of the child," Dewey (1959b) remarked of traditional education

> is all made "for listening" - - for simply studying lessons out of a book is only another kind of listening; but marks the dependency of one mind upon another. The attitude of listening means, comparatively speaking, passivity, absorption; that there are certain ready-made materials which are there, which have been prepared . . . and of which the child is to take in as much as possible in the least possible time (p. 51).

John Goodlad (1983) and his associates have provided extensive, broad-based documentation of how this controlling purpose is accomplished in the domain of schooling. Teachers as authorities stand in front of classes transmitting socially approved knowledge. Student activities are marked by passivity -- written work, listening, and preparing for assignments. Except in the areas of gifted, vocational and arts education, students are rarely asked to participate in the educational process by drawing upon their own resources and experiences. Schools implicitly teach dependence on authority, linear thinking, and social apathy.

In such an arena, teachers are not afforded opportunities for meaningful participation; rather, they are expected to act only as training and delivery systems. Teachers are inserted into environments where they are conditioned to function within established parameters and expected to train children to do likewise. Within this design, teachers' time and resources are so completely consumed in training and delivery tasks that there is no time to question the meaningfulness of what they are doing. Eventually, the security of status quo allows teachers to become so comfortable that they fear any interruption of it. They learn to "prefer the security of conformity with their state of unfreedom to the creative communion produced by freedom and even the pursuit of

freedom" (Freire, 1972/1968, p. 32). As a result, "many teachers experience loss of identity and alienation from self" (Dobson, Dobson, Koetting, 1985). They become confined by their "roles" as teachers and it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to escape from them (Pritzkau, 1970, p. 2). This condition, called encapsulation, is considered by some as endemic to the human experience (Pritzkau, 1970; Zais, 1976, 1986). When it occurs within the context of teaching, teachers believe they have a reasonably accurate picture of reality when in fact, because of various limitations, they have only a partial and, sometimes, quite distorted image of what is real (Zais, 1976, 1986).

Subsequent to the encapsulation of teachers in "teacher roles," students become entrapped in "appropriate students' roles." The fields of vision for teachers and the students become increasingly constricted until only the parameters of the established system are recognized. Within such confining arrangements like their teachers, students lose their senses of who they are as persons (Bullough, Goldstein and Holt, 1992). Knowledge becomes a set of statements from a particular perception of reality and learning is only the ability to recognize these statements. Measurement, prediction, control, efficiency and governance are accepted unconditionally.

In 1969 Goldhammer's research confirmed the effects of control and prevalence of teacher and student alienation in finding that in schools the following was true: (1) an absence of reasons is accepted as a normal condition, (2) students are docile and do as

they are told, (3) authority intimidates and abuses students and site-based staff members, (4) there are strong dependencies on authority, (5) students and teachers depend heavily on other people's evaluations of their behavior, (6) students and teachers require considerable structure in order to operate in comfort, (7) students and teachers exhibit little self-confidence and feel worthless, and (8) they [students and teachers] take as unquestionable truth what authorities say.

Social control has also been documented at the administrative levels of the majority of school districts (Silver, 1983; Hoy & Miskel, 1991). In these districts, interactions within the central offices and between the central offices and the schools follow the basic pyramidal structure of Max Weber's bureaucracy. Entire school districts are driven by authority over persons: hierarchies of offices, specialization of tasks, rules and regulations, impersonality, written records of all transactions, and control of resources. The person or persons at the top of a power pyramid dictate policy and "vision;" the responsibility of implementing directives is distributed to those at the lower "levels." Persons at each "level" are expected to be obedient to those who supervise them, from teachers to superintendent.

Purpose of the Study

There are those who argue that continuation, albeit reformed continuation, of this persistent design for public education with its basic purposes intact can accommodate the dramatic shifts that

are occurring in American society and in the world. Other less politically powerful voices argue that world changes have been so radical that the entire structure of education must be changed if America is to survive as a partner in the new world order (Toffler, 1970). The realization of the potential of each individual is intrinsic to this survival, but has not been a priority for American education in the past (Toffler, 1990). If the potential of each individual is to be met, control must be shifted away from federal and state agencies and assumed by local communities, individual schools and individual classrooms. It has been the purpose of this study to dialogue with and interpret the voices of teachers who are sensitive to the inherent restraints and challenges in society and education and who have chosen to develop alternatives to the predominant curriculum model.

To accomplish this task, the inquirer established a dialogical relationship through narrative and phenomenological inquiry with each of five teachers. These dialogical relationships were critical if there was to be any real interpretation of the teachers' voices. "Dialogue is that address between persons in which there is a flow of meaning between them . . . [It] is that interaction between persons in which one of them seeks to give himself as he is to the other, and seeks also to know the other as the other is. This means he will not attempt to impose his own truth and view on the other" (Howe, 1963). Greene (1988) described this dialogical relationship in the context of "coming into being" when individuals come together in such way that "they are authentically presented to

one another (without masks, pretenses, badges or office)" (p. 16). The relationship that, thus, becomes established between the inquired and the inquirer is parallel to what Noddings (1986, p. 502) has described for the teacher and the learner, "we approach our goal by living with those whom we teach in a caring community, through modeling, dialogue, practice and confirmation." Through such sharing and living together meanings evolve.

Assumptions

It is within such dialogical contexts that the interpretations of the pedagogical lives of teachers in this study will be found. Consonant with the assertion that dialogical contexts are required for meaningful interpretations, this study is grounded in the belief that teachers can create authentic curriculum alternatives through continuing dialogical relationships with their students and each other. Further, these alternative curriculums can offer meanings and validity to the lives of those involved that have been lost from and can no longer be derived from traditional curriculums.

Underscoring these beliefs, this study has been based on the following assumptions:

1. There has been a predominant social agenda that created and sustained a differentiated educational system and stratified, but culturally homogenized, society. This agenda supported the past goals of the American culture as well as its economic and political systems.

2. Technological and media advances have allowed for rapid and unexpected shifts in the world's political and economic systems. These shifts require that new environments now be designed to educate the many rather than the few.

3. The source of necessary changes that must be made to accommodate these shifts can be found only within the contexts of the impacted environments and with those who are functioning within those contexts. Specific to this study, viable and necessary changes that must be made in education must be found within real educational settings with the actual participants in those settings.

4. The appropriate method of inquiry into those settings and with those participants must be interactional rather than detached. Detached inquiry could provide only the surface features of these teachers' lives. Thoughts, beliefs, goals, and needs are reflected in the behaviors and discourses that emerge in indigenous social contexts. Thus, deep structural meanings can only emerge through repeated interactions and authentic dialogues in which participants share and continually redefine their understandings with each other.

Rationale for the Study

The outcomes of earlier understandings of the purposes of education have become antagonistic to their original intent of supporting a vital and growing democracy. They are now seen by some as (1) being diametrically opposed to the deepest ideals of a democracy (Apple, 1979; Kozol, 1991) and (2) unable to meet the needs of current society (Toffler, 1990). It has been argued that

differential education of citizens to meet the specified work roles that society has required has ultimately meant that some persons, especially those in lower status jobs, have been denied equal access to the rights of a free democracy. Indeed, there are those who argue eloquently that the result of this division of labor and concurrent differential education has led to two separate cultures with different systems of schooling, medical care, and justice (Kozol, 1991). Beyer (1988) has even posited that "our very conception of democracy has become so withered at its roots as to make doubtful the possibility that schools can assist in promoting the development of democracy" (p. 221).

Each day 100,000 children in America are homeless and one in six children between the ages of 12-17 live below the poverty line. Each year over 2.4 million children are abused or neglected, 450,700 children run away from home and 127,100 children are thrown away (abandoned, deserted, forced from the home) like last night's newspaper. Over 500,000 children are gang members. Homicide is the second leading cause of death among all male adolescents; and suicide is the second leading cause of death among young white men, ages 15 to 24. Research shows that more than one fourth of teenagers between ages 12 and 17 have used alcohol; more than 15% of 18-25 year olds have used marijuana; 4.5% of 18-25 year olds have used cocaine. Indepth studies by the Children's Defense Fund (1991) found that almost 29% of the students who entered ninth grade in 1984 failed to graduate. Similarly, only 27% of American high school graduates can find specific information in a lengthy news

article, and only 5% can estimate the cost of an item using a grocery unit price label (Children's Defense Fund [CDF], 1991).

The continuation of two cultures not only threatens America's future as a democracy, it also threatens American's present and future ability to participate as a partner in a world economy (Toffler, 1990). The entirety of the world's societies have been abruptly transformed in unexpected ways in the last two decades (Toffler, 1970, 1981, 1990; Capra, 1975/1983, 1982; Ferguson, 1987). Technological and multimedia advances have allowed global political and economic concerns to impact each individual personally and professionally as much as have the local concerns of the fracturing of the nuclear family, the rise of nomadism as a way of life, and the development of a throw-away society (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). World interdependence has created an environment that no longer allows for local or national isolation (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). Key to the resolution of these global, national and local concerns will be education (Toffler, 1990). Individuals must have knowledge, problem-solving abilities, decision-making skills, abilities to analyze, synthesize and abstract information, risk-taking skills, creativity, and intuition to meet the demands of today as well as the twenty-first century. But the curriculum this implies cannot be restricted to the few. Rather, because today's "environment is convulsing with surprise, upsets, reversals and generalized turbulence, it is impossible to know precisely and in advance who in any organization will need what information" or skill (Toffler, 1990, p. 178).

Yet neither society's leaders nor the American educational system at-large have grasped the implications of these changes.

> One's future is almost wholly dependent upon education. Yet for all their rhetoric about the future, our schools face backward toward a dying system, rather than forward to the emerging new society. Their [education's] vast energies are applied to cranking out Industrial Men--people tooled for survival in a system that will be dead before they are (Toffler, 1970, p. 354).

The politically powerful still demand authority over schools in general and more control over the lives of teachers and students in particular, as they contrive new ways to repair a structure that needs new premises. For their part, most schools are caught in inertia and persist in using a sorting and controlling model.

Examples of lack of understanding for the need of deep structural reform and persistence in the demand of control can be found in such reports as Becoming a Nation of Readers (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkinson, 1985) and A Nation at Risk: Imperative for Educational Reform (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). These reports identify a plethora of causes and recommend superficial solutions, i.e., longer school days, more content, more phonics in reading instruction, minimum competency testing, schools of choice, national standards and tests, and "time on task" (Pearson, 1989; Rothman, 1990; Finn, 1991, Wheatly, 1991).

The solutions endorsed and advocated by the National Governors Association and the Education Commission of the States have been equally superficial and controlling. The governor's goals include minimum competency testing for graduation, "academic bankruptcy" sanctions, and parental choice plans (Miller, 1990; J. Miller,

1991). The Education Commission of the States' recommendations, which came from governmental policy makers and business leaders, are directed toward voucher programs, standardized learner outcomes, student testing and retention and the elimination of funding for teacher education (*Education Week*, 1990).

The United States Department of Education and its supporters have avoided confronting the issue of reform by suggesting consideration be given to eliminating "public schools" and interjecting private enterprise into what has been public schooling (U. S. Department of Education, 1991). Former Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, has been particularly vocal in advocating the awarding of research money for innovative schools designed by private corporations that would be run by business executives (Miller, 1991).

When these and other reports on the American education dilemma have addressed the function of teachers in the educational process, it has been toward claiming that incompetent teaching is the greatest single source of identified problems and advocating ways of "correcting" inept teaching. To show support for these allegations and facilitate "identifying ineffective schools and incompetent teaching" the Bush administration created the "Wall Chart of Student Performance" (*Education Week*, 1991).

Recommendations for "correcting of teachers' roles" have included the development of performance-based teacher incentives, alternative certification for teachers, and teacher certification examinations (Miller, 1990; J. Miller, 1991). One of the most

explicit documents related to correcting teachers' "roles" has come from the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). It has recommended focusing on "retooling" the teaching force to encourage teachers to become "better" teachers. The NASBE (Bradley, 1990) has advised state policy makers to develop policies regulating teacher preparation, tiered teacher licensure systems and certification, professional development and pay. It further recommended that state education boards appoint advisory committees comprised of persons outside of the educational field to make recommendations on licensure and certification and to develop assessments to evaluate teachers' classroom performances rather than allowing the creation of independent professional-practice peer review boards to perform these activities.

These reports have overlooked the significant levels of control that have been maintained over teachers and schools by federal, state and local agencies. They condemn teachers and schools for doing what has been forced on them, yet these agencies seek to force more of the same on schools and teachers. Although Goldhammer (1969) was addressing the effects of control on students, with minor substitutions his words reflect what has happened to teachers as a result of these reports, "The treachery involved is that while the school [agencies] contributes to foster the children's [and teacher's] dependency, having gotten them that way or having kept them that way, it rarely keeps its half of the bargain by being decent to them" (p. 44).

Yet, beyond the clamor, there are studies that have reached different conclusions. The RAND Corporation conducted longitudinal studies into conditions necessary for effective schools. It found that effective schools are the results of teachers and principals creating the conditions for change rather than relying on external strategies such as "schools of choice" (Rothman, 1990). Similarly, in spite of their position on private enterprise in public schools, Chubb and Moe (1989) concluded that in the effective schools they studied the single greatest denominator was autonomy within the school.

The RAND report chose to look for a different solution to the immense problems in education. It sought to restructure schools by changing the underlying premises. Echoing Dewey (1938) and Schwab (1983) it suggested that the actual participants within the schools be given voices. The remedies offered by the NASBE, Governor's conference, and federal agencies chose to leave the present structure of schools intact.

If the recommendations of RAND, Dewey, and Schwab are correct, inquiry into the actions, thoughts and words of teachers who have chosen other ways is essential. They have the potential of offering alternatives to the present, non-functioning structure of schools. There are teachers who are doing what Chubb and Moe and the RAND studies advocated. They are empowering themselves and taking responsibility for constructing different educational milieus. They are creating their own understandings and are taking responsibility for determining the direction of their own lives and the educational

lives of their students so as not to allow loss of personal autonomy. They are constructing environments that do not depend on the traditional or the dominant social/educational agenda. Their actions, thoughts and words are worthy of recording, not just as an historical record, but also to assist other teachers with similar pressures as they make decisions about what goes on in their classrooms.

Organization of the Study

This study is comprised of five chapters. Chapter I presented an historical overview, the purpose for the study, basic assumptions, and a rationale for the study. Chapter II is a review of the literature which relates to the major concerns of the study: (1) schooling, (2) curriculum, and (3) teacher voice. Chapter III focuses on a description of the research process. Chapter IV provides a description of the contexts of the study, narratives about each of the teachers involved in the study, and a narrative about the interactions of four of those teachers. Finally, Chapter V provides a discussion of the research as it relates to currently available literature and the research questions, and reflections about the study.

Summary

Schooling in American has consisted primarily of an externally controlled, striated educational system teaching an homogenized conceptualization of society. So long as the demands of

society were consistent with the products of the striated system of schooling, Americans accepted the system as the right and necessary reality.

The demands of American society have changed so significantly that neither the system nor its premises remain valid (Toffler, 1990; Kozol, 1991; Hughes, 1992). Although there are many who seek to repair the irreparable by "reforming" schools (Bereiter, 1973; Adler, 1982; Bloom, 1987), others are beginning to recognize the reality that no repair is possible. Rather, an entirely new structure of schooling is necessary (Shannon, 1992).

This structure must be based on the insights and judgements of those within the educational milieu (Macdonald, Wolfson & Zaret, 1973). Teachers, students, parents, principals, and those in higher education all must be participants in the restructuring. But at the heart, it must begin with hearing what teachers who have already had the courage to stand outside the traditional educational milieu have to say.

> What will it mean to prepare ourselves to truly improve schools? I say truly because schools will not improve until those people closest to students--teachers--are given the choice and responsibility to make collective informed decisions about teaching practice . . .
>
> Teachers are the heart of teaching. Without choice and responsibility, they will comply, subvert, or flee; and motivation, growth and collective purpose will remain absent. What motivates people to work harder and smarter is not money but a work environment that lets professionals make decisions and nurtures a free exchange of ideas and information (Glickman, 1989, p. 8).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> Philosophies which emerge at distinctive periods define the larger patterns of continuity which are woven in effecting the enduring junctions of a stubborn past and an insistent future (Dewey, 1931, p. 7).

In Chapter I a rationale for seeking redefinition and alternatives to the predominant model of American education was presented. It was argued from a position that underlying society and education has been an agenda of control. It was posited that this control has been imposed on the educational system for the purposes of homogenizing society and for sorting and training the citizenry for different roles. A major premise of this rationale was that classroom teachers should be active participants in creating the agenda for school reform as well as major players in the dialogue of that reform.

It was also argued in Chapter I that society is irreversibly changing; the predominant model no longer fulfills its original purpose of coalescing a society, nor is it able to respond to the crises of the present day. Spasms of questioning and doubt have rippled through all of society. They have been brought on by a number of factors. Among those factors have been the recognition of the extent of humankind's savagery. Inhumanity has generated

race riots, ethnic conflicts and world wars; the discovery of the atomic bomb has brought forth the possibility of the imminent destruction of the entire planet. Finally, there has been a realization that the Gordian knot of Newtonian physics that has bound society has been severed with the discovery of Quantum physics and Chaos Theory.

Because society is a living, open system, all of its parts are interconnected. As a result, the inhumanities which ethnic, racial and cultural groups perpetrate against each other, the threat of global destruction and loss of deeply imbedded boundaries have burrowed as deeply into each individual's sense of being as they have into society's consciousness (Capra, 1982). Realization of these aberrations calls the meaning of each individual and each aspect of society into question. It is as Abraham Maslow describes:

> When the philosophy of man (his nature, his goals, his potentialities, his fulfillment) changes, then everything changes. Not only the philosophy of politics, of economics, of ethics and values, of interpersonal relations and of history itself change, but also the philosophy of education, the theory of how to help men become what they can and deeply need to become (1965, p. 307).

Because education, too, is organic and interconnected, the meanings of three aspects/dimensions (the purpose of schooling, curriculum, and teacher voice) must be addressed when considering the alternative directions for education that the teachers selected for this study have taken. It is, therefore, the purpose of this chapter to review alternatives to the predominant perceptions of these three aspects. A discussion of purposes of schooling other

than sorting and training can provide new definition for what schooling can be. A discussion of curriculum derived from sources other than skills lists and institutional attitudes and roles can provide insight into what and how teachers and students can share, focus on, and develop. And finally, a discussion of teacher voice will look at how teachers can construct meanings in their professional lives and share those meanings with others.

What Are Schools For?

"Schooling, to be effective, must be concerned with man's tangle with himself in his rendezvous in time and space" (Berman, 1968, p. 1).

School, the individual, and society are among those entities whose standard definitions have been called into question in recent decades. Bereiter (1973) was one of the first to posit that schools, reflective of society at the time, suffered from confusion of purpose. He questioned whether schools could or should have as their aim the purpose of educating. He argued that the fragmentation of the common society meant that the traditional imperative of schools toward the cause of educating for a common society was no longer possible.

Bereiter's question of whether schools should educate placed him outside of the culturally imposed meaning of the word "school." Educators and educational writers since Jefferson have spoken and written about education and schooling as if they were synonymous terms. As quoted in Chapter I, Conant (Regan, 1953) identified

the schools as the "sinews of society" and the place where society educated its children. In his work, " My Pedagogical Creed," Dewey (1959a) writes:

> I believe that the school is primarily a social institution. Education being a societal process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends (p. 22).

And, later in the same essay, he writes, "I believe that it is the business of everyone interested in education to insist upon the school as the primary and most effective interest" (p. 31). Still later in his essay, "The School and Society" he reiterates his belief in the purpose of schools to educate when he (1959b) writes "All that society has accomplished for itself is put through the agency of the school" (p. 34). In their volume on language and schooling, Dobson and Dobson (1981) enjoin, "The school is obligated to meet the educational needs of children" (p. 1). Schubert (1988) asserts that the only defensible reason for having schools is to provide educational experiences. "The justification for their [school's] existence is usually that they enable certain kinds and qualities of learning to occur that would not occur (or would occur less effectively or efficiently) outside of the educative setting provided by the institution in question (p. 4). Miller (1990) argues that *because* of the declining state of our culture and the fragmentation of society, "school may be the only place in the present culture where the developmental needs of young

people can be given the highest priority and the attention and care they need" (p. 154).

A Matter of Definitions

Twenty years later, within the context of a chaotic society Bereiter's question and concomitant concerns have been both answered and restated by Glasser (1992). He argues that school is the place for education, but it is the definition for the term "education" that must be reexamined. He states:

> If our school systems are to be improved, . . . first we must make an effort to define, with precision, the purpose of the system we are trying to improve. For example, if the *purpose of a school system is to educate students* [my italics], the word that needs to be precisely defined is education . . . nothing can be improved until it is accurately defined (p. 38).

Glasser sites, for example, the lack of consistent definition for education when educational issues are addressed in either the news media or professional journals. He offers that the cause for the lack of definition is, ironically, the assumption on the part of writers that there is a tacit understanding of what the term "education" implies. He suggests that "they all talk about education as if education is anything that any educator does" (pp. 38-39).

Glasser presents what he sees to be the two most important problems: (1) the problem of language in culture, and (2) the lack of an agreed on definition for education/schooling. The problem of language--words and their meanings--is that it is bound together with culture. Through common cultural experiences, exemplars, words

take on specific meanings (Geertz, 1988; Kuhn, 1970). Words and their culturally attached meanings, then, act as screens through which information is filtered and other meanings derived (Frye, 1982; Piaget, 1973). Frye (1982) posited that "transformation of consciousness and a transformation of language can never be separated" (p. 226). If some way is not found to transform the language, then no new meanings, no transformation of consciousness, can become established. Giroux (1981) states it thusly, "We will have to develop a new language and new forms of rationality to accomplish such a task" (p. 105).

Miller (1990) reaches a similar conclusion in arguing for a reprocessing of the definition of the word "education." Miller argues that the meaning behind the word "education" has become so heavily ladened with the culturally imposed definition of training and instruction for social ends that its meaning must be redetermined by society before any large-scale changes in schooling can occur. Miller asserts that without redefinition, there will continue to be an inherent tendency to fall back on the training/ instruction meaning.

Purposes of Schooling

In order to redefine schooling/education and remove its meaning of training and sorting, an examination of the two possible extremes of purpose may prove useful. Throughout the history of American education, a struggle between two extreme purposes has existed: education primarily for the good of society and education

primarily for the development of the individual (Kliebard, 1986). Each purpose, while noble, is also necrotic if assumed alone. In searching for resolution to the dilemma of the purpose for schooling/education, these two extremes, if examined with a Hegelian thesis-antithesis-synthesis format, may provide insight. Following this format, if the original and dominant purpose, that of education for the needs of society, can be considered as our thesis and the contrapuntal purpose of education, that of the development of the individual, can be considered as its antithesis, then purposing education for what Zais (1976) describes as developing "individual integrity within a community context" (p. 72) becomes the synthetical element of this equation.

Yet, the synthetical solution of addressing the needs of both the individual and society are, without further definition, misleading. Inextricably bound into the meanings given to the relationship between the individual, society and education must be the ideal of freedom, and in the case of many educators, democracy. The synthesis arrived at between the individual and society in education, can not imply that two separate purposes are each infused within the process of schooling. It is not to be implied that the synthesis described permits either the egotistical development of the individual so that society can be ignored or the continuation of an impersonal, alienating relationship between the individual and society which is dependent on his/her skills and abilities to support the status quo. Society, under such conditions, functions apart from its members. It becomes like a piece of machinery that,

once set into motion, continues on its own. Under this premise, individuals still only function as the maintainers of such a machine. Rather, implicit in the idea that schooling should meet the development of the child *and* the needs of the society, there must be an understanding that educating the child to fulfill his/her own destiny must include empowerment to create or re-create and participate in the society in which he/she chooses to live. Towards this ideal, Miller suggests that the word "education" be reassociated with the Latin word, "educere," meaning the process by which "to draw forth the latent intellectual, moral, social and spiritual qualities that lie within the human personality" (p. 3).

Dewey (1959a) chooses to define the purpose of education to have two ends: (1) to stimulate and interpret "the child's powers" and (2) to help the individual develop his/her abilities to "participate in the social consciousness."

> I believe that the only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situation in which he finds himself. Through these demands he is stimulated to act as a member of a unity, to emerge from his original narrowness of action and feeling, and to conceive of himself from the standpoint of the welfare of the group to which he belongs. Through the response which others make to his own activities, he comes to know what these mean in social terms. The value which they have is reflected back into them. For instance, through the response which is made to the child's instinctive babblings, the child comes to know what those babblings mean; they are transformed into articulate language and thus the child is introduced into the consolidated wealth of ideas and emotions which are now summed up in language (p. 20).

Dewey (1959a) presents a salient argument for why both conditions/purposes are necessary. He argues that the personal

("psychological") and the social ("sociological") are "organically related and that education cannot be regarded as a compromise between the two, or a superimposition of one upon the other" (p. 21). He posits that the personal without the social is "selfish," "barren and formal," and "it gives us only the idea of a development of all the mental powers without giving us any idea of the use to which these powers are put" (p. 21). He is equally adamant about the cultivation of the social without the personal, declaring that "it is urged that the social definition of education, as getting adjusted to civilization, makes of it a forced and external process, and results in subordinating the freedom of the individual to a preconceived social and political status" (p. 21) .

Dewey's words are echoed in Schaull's (Freire, 1972/1968) description of Paulo Freire's basic assumption "that man's ontological vocation is to be a Subject who acts upon and transforms his world, and in so doing moves towards ever new possibilities for fuller and richer life individually and collectively" (p. 13). Like Dewey, Freire (1972/1968) also stresses the need of both the personal and the social aspects of education.

He describes them as a unity within the word "conscientization," meaning inquiry (personal learning and reflection) and praxis (taking action in the world). He posits that "apart from inquiry, apart from praxis, men cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, hopeful inquiry men pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p. 58). Freire further describes:

> [Education] as the practice of freedom . . . [that] denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from men. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without men, but men in their relations with the world (p. 69).

Habermas (1972), too, perceives interaction of knowledge and action as necessary for the continuation of a meaningful existence. He suggests that there are several possible fundamental orientations towards life and knowledge. He asserts that the way in which each orientation works itself out both in individual lives and different societies will determine what will be counted as knowledge. He identifies three orientations or "interests" that shape knowledge and determine how we organize and respond to it. He identifies these as technical, practical and emancipatory. The technical is concerned with rules-based empirical knowledge and is fundamentally concerned with prediction and control. The practical interest is concerned with "understanding the environment through interaction based upon a consensual interpretation of meaning" (Grundy, 1987, p. 14). His third orientation, emancipatory, has its concerns in "emancipation and empowerment to engage in autonomous action arising out of authentic, critical insights into the social construction of human society" (Grundy, p. 19). It is this last orientation that is particularly consistent with those interests that Dewey and Freire address. It is within this orientation that participants in learning (teachers and learners) create and redefine their own "curriculum" through a reciprocal relationship between self-reflection and action while cognizant of their memberships in a

culture or community.

More than just an identity for schooling, Greene (1988) asserts that it is important to keep "in mind the idea that the person--that center of choice--develops in his/her fullness to the degree he/she is a member of a live community" (p. 43.) Further, she describes her vision for such persons within education, in saying

> It is through and by means of education, many of us believe, that individuals can be provoked to reach beyond themselves in their intersubjective space. It is through and by means of education that they may become empowered to think about what they are doing, to become mindful, to share meanings, to conceptualize, to make varied sense of their lived worlds. It is through education that preferences may be released, languages learned, intelligences developed, perspectives opened, possibilities disclosed (p. 12).

Wood (1988) provides definition to what this empowerment of freedom means within a democratic society.

Gaining a sense of democratic empowerment involves the following cognitive, personal, and communal skills and understandings:

1. believing in the individual's rights and responsibility to participate publicly;
2. having a sense of political efficacy; that is, the knowledge that one's contribution is important;
3. coming to value the principles of democratic life--equality, community and liberty;
4. knowing that alternative social arrangements to the status quo exist and are worthwhile; and
5. gaining the requisite intellectual skills to participate in public debate (p. 176).

In his book about the phenomena of the Highlander schools, Frank Adams (1975) found people, most of them rural and without formal education, who shared a vision of schooling that would allow them to participate fully in democracy. The vision of participation

included those individual's abilities Wood describes and a clear "understanding of the world in which we live and an idea of the kind of world we would like to have" (p. 35). Over time, Adams came to share in their vision. In the preface to his book, he writes what he had come to understand and believe about education.

> I believe that education should foster individual growth and social change and nourish the fundamental value of complete personal liberty while encouraging thoughtful citizenship in community. I believe that education must be born of the creative tension between how life is lived and how life might be lived in a free society. Such education is suited for the young and for the older.

This theme of the re-construction of democracy through the re-empowering of the individual also runs deeply though Giroux's (1992) definition of schooling. Giroux, posits that democracies require citizens capable of thinking and exhibiting "civic courage." Consequently, like Dewey, he believes that public schools are charged with the civic responsibility of educating students to become critically thinking citizens. By this, he means that public schools must become places that provide "literate occasions" in which students are provided opportunities to share life experiences, to work in social situations that "emphasize care and concern for others, and to be introduced to forms of knowledge that provide them with the opportunity to take risks and fight for a quality of life in which all human beings benefit" (p. 20)

If the question, "What are schools for?" can be tentatively answered by saying that schools are for educating children to fulfill their potentialities and for empowering them to create and participate in the society in which they chose to live, then,

according to Sarason (1982), a second question must follow.

> [There is] a question to be asked with a sharpness of focus ordinarily not associated with it, 'How shall we live together?' That question, too, of course, had [has] to be asked about where we live and work. 'What are schools for?' and 'How shall we live together?' are obviously related (p. 261).

Curriculum: How Shall We Live Together?

"Curriculum is a metaphor for the kind of world where we want to live and the kinds of people we want to be" (Harste, 1993).

Giroux (1988) and Apple (1990) argue against the traditional view of the classroom and learning as a neutral process. They challenge the assumption that schools function to develop democratic and egalitarian social order. They suggest that the "excellence" movement is an attempt to camouflage a retreat into the traditional basic social agenda and curriculum of control that has existed since Thomas Jefferson proposed an educational system.

Freire (1972/68) also analyzes the condition of the traditional classroom and finds the relationship between the teacher and the students is based on the hidden curriculum of control. Communication is unidirectional, coming only from the teacher, thus reinforcing the idea that only teacher knowledge is valuable. Freire believes that "analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside of school, reveals its fundamentally narrative character" (p. 57). This interaction consists of a narrator (the teacher) and patient, passive objects (students). The contents of the narration, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, become lifeless and petrified. Education suffers from the

malady of "narration sickness." Students become vessels to be filled with words that are devoid of meaning, "detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance." This narrative echoes a "hollow alienated verbosity" (Freire, p. 57).

An alternative to the compartmentalized, predictable experiences students are subjected to in a disconnected reality should be considered. That alternative agenda's purposes could be to educate children (1) so that they may develop to their full individual potentials, and (2) so that they can recreate, create and participate in a society. This is a refinement of purposes, not an elimination of the traditional concerns for forming an educational system to strengthen society. This refinement acknowledges that concern, but recognizes that there is no single basic social agenda (Vallance, 1973/74; Kliebard, 1986; Miller, 1990). Schools would, then, be challenged to develop in students (as Wood suggested) a sense of democratic empowerment, a belief in the individual's rights and responsibility to participate publicly, a sense of political efficacy, a valuing of the principles of democratic life, an acceptance of alternative social arrangements and a gaining of the requisite intellectual skills to participate in public debate.

Curriculum Meanings

The combined, synthesized, purpose of schooling implies dialectical and dialogical processes. It is dialectical because the individual and society cannot be maximized at the same time.

Instead, a constant state of tension exists between society and the individual. This tension is a creative potential where actions and thoughts can come together in shared meanings that are beyond what either can create independently. Following Hegel, this shared ground, this synthesis, is never static but itself is subject to constant tensions. Thus, the process is in a constant state of evolution created by ever evolving tensions.

While individuals and society may be considered dialectically antithetical to one another in some senses of reality, they are also dialogically embedded in each other. Consistent with Whitehead's (1941) doctrine of internal relationships in which it is acknowledged that entities are constituted by relationships, not by individual essences or substances, individuals and society derive their meanings through interactions with each other. The knower and the known "dance" with one another, modifying and shaping each other. The responses and influences between them can be both creative and destructive. Like partners in a pas du deux, if they are sensitive to and respond to each other in a give-and-take, what is created is meaningful and exquisite. But should one partner choose to usurp the dance and begin to dance solo, or worse, both partners decide to perform solos, the dance becomes discordant and disconnected. Only in recognizing and responding to their interrelatedness can they each go on.

Curriculum arises from not only the dialectical and dialogical "dance" between the society and the individual, but also the "dances" created within the school environment. The physical

setting of the school as well as the various individuals within the school come together in different ways, creating and recreating multiple realities, learning and sharing.

Grumet (1981) calls for the reconceptualization of curriculum, "to turn back the conceptual structures that support our actions in order to renew the rich and abundant experiences they conceal" (p. 139). She grounds this call in the belief that curriculum and culture exist within a dialogical relationship.

> Curriculum is the child of culture, and their relationship is complex and reciprocal as are any that bond the generations. Curriculum transmits culture, as it is formed by it. Curriculum modifies culture, even as it transmits it. Similarly, as with culture, we live curriculum before we describe it . . . Curriculum as lived and curriculum as described amble along, their paths sometimes parallel--often not--occasionally, in moments of insight, intersecting (p. 140).

In searching for curricular meaning, Grumet posits that it can be accomplished autobiographically, by inviting students to bring their lives into the classroom and reflect on them. Through reflection on their lived experiences, those experiences are "reclaimed" within the curriculum content as they intersect in a dialogue of meanings.

Giroux (1981), too, concludes that a new dialogical perspective on education must evolve. This new perspective must acknowledge that "schools are part of a wider societal process" and that curriculum must be selected from the larger culture (p. 103). He discusses curriculum as the very texture of day-to-day classroom relationships that generates different meanings. "We must develop a mode of curriculum that cultivates critical theoretical discourse

about the quality and purpose of schooling and human life. We need to develop broader perspectives that enrich rather than dominate the field" (p. 105). Students must be encouraged to "generate their own meanings, to act on their own lived histories, or to develop an attentiveness to critical thought" (p. 103). Within the day-to-day relationships, he posits that an awareness of cultural restraints and values, social relationships, how teachers and students each perceive their classroom experiences and students, and how particular classroom materials mediate meanings between teachers and students must be addressed.

Giroux and Penna (1981) present the thesis that educators must develop a content and pedagogy which links theory and practice and restores to students and teachers an awareness of the social and personal importance of active participation and critical thinking (p. 221).

> Every effort should be made to give students an awareness of the necessity of developing choices of their own and to act on those choices with an understanding of situational restraint. The educational process itself will be open to examination in relation to its links to the larger society (p. 222).

Like Grumet, they foresee that one way of linking theory and practice with content and pedagogy and restoring awareness of participation and critical thinking is to view and evaluate each learning experience, whenever possible, with respect to its connections with the larger social-economic totality. But, they assert, these learning experiences cannot occur within large group settings. Instead, what they call for are dialogues in small groups or between two individuals. Giroux and Penna posit that small

groups are most effective because they provide "students with the experiences that they need in order to realize that they can learn from one another" (p. 225). These small groups also serve the additional function of providing the emotionally supportive environment that Rogers (1969) considers essential for self-discovery. For it is in these groups, and through the process of dialogue and self-discovery that students and teachers can take the risks of developing choices of their own and acting on those choices.

Personal choices, actions and reflections are the linkages between the contexts of the larger society and the curriculum as meanings in individual lives are created. Schubert (1986), in his discourses on curriculum, uses the term *ecological embeddedness* to embody these relationships. His term implies the organic processes "between teachers, learners, other curriculum developers, and the culture of the classroom life as they interact with and influence the contexts of the larger society" (p. 9) described elsewhere by Grumet, Giroux, Penna and Freire.

Teachers and Learners

Such curriculum as described above is not static. It is continuously changing because the participants and their personal and shared contexts are constantly changing. Even after experiences are brought into the classroom and they are reflected on, even after explorations are made to find those places where the experiences and content intersect, even then, the very acts of reflection and

searching change the experiences and create new, additional experiences. As such, the environment becomes what Freire (1972/68) calls "co-intentional educational." By this phrase he meant that

> Teachers and students, co-intent on reality, are both Subjects, not only in the task of unveiling that reality, and thereby coming to know it critically, but in the task of re-creating that knowledge. As they attain this knowledge of reality through common reflection and action, they discover themselves as its permanent re-creators (p. 56).

Similarly, Hunt (1991), describes this co-intentionality in terms of unique prior knowledge and multiple realities that teachers and students bring into each potential learning experience. He asserts that it is this prior knowledge, the schemas and understandings that each has developed that will determine the validity and usefulness of each new experience for themselves and for those in dialogue with them.

This co-intentionality is similar to what Piaget (Bringuier, 1980/1977) refers to as "constructivism." Although he is describing the dialogical relationships between the learner and the environment, the same descriptor can also be used when referring to the dialogical relationship between teachers and learners and their constructions and reconstructions of meanings. Their interactions are consistent with Kamii's (1982b, 1984) assumptions of constructivism: (1) knowledge and meanings are constantly in the process of being personally and collectively constructed and reconstructed; (2) knowledge and meanings are arrived at within, as Schubert phrased it, ecological contexts; and, (3) knowledge and

meanings are constructed and reconstructed through the dialectical/ dialogical schemas of assimilation and accommodation.

For new experiences to be comprehended and meanings derived, teachers and students must actively work either to adapt (assimilate) what is new into their own knowledge bases or schemas, reconstruct their knowledge bases to accommodate what is new, or replace former understandings and meanings because they are no longer congruent with new interpretations.

It is Kamii's last assumption regarding the schemas of assimilation and accommodation that Huebner (1981) finds to be especially consistent with Freire's call for active interchange with the environment and open honest relationships between persons to re-create knowledge.

> From the onset, his [the teacher's] efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in men and their creative power. To achieve this, he must be a partner of the students in his relations with them (Freire, p. 62).

Freire calls for an emotionally open, as well as an intellectually honest, relationship between the learners and teachers and deems it as an essential condition in the educative process as the acquisition of knowledge. Students and teachers learn how to communicate authentically and "humanize" each other. Freire (1972/68) underscores this condition by saying that

> one must seek to live with others in solidarity. One cannot impose oneself, nor even merely co-exist with one's students. Solidarity requires true communication . . . only through communication can human life hold meaning. The teacher's thinking is authenticated only by the authenticity of the

> student's thinking. The teacher cannot think for his students nor can he impose his thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication. If it is true that thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world, the subordination of students to teachers becomes impossible (pp. 63-64).

Grundy (1987) posits that "curriculum, however, is not a concept; it is a cultural construction" (p. 5). She describes curriculum in terms of the experiences people have as a consequence of the milieu in which they live. She declares that schools must be recognized as a part of the culture of the greater society. Therefore, "they must be seen as both arising out of a set of historical circumstances and as being a reflection of a particular social milieu" (p. 6). According to Grundy,

> no curriculum has an a priori existence. If we are to understand the meaning of the curriculum practices engaged in by people in society, we need to know about the social context of the school. But we not only need to know about the composition of the organization of the society; we also need to understand the fundamental premises upon which it is constructed (p. 7).

In addition to the societal context of curriculum, Grundy also discusses the relevancy of the relationships among the classroom participants. "No matter how sophisticated the plans might be, it is through the transactions of the classroom that the real curriculum is developed" (p. 42). It is through these transactions that meanings are explored and created.

Schools as Communities

To participate in unveiling and re-creating knowledge are words that Jantsch (1975) could have used in describing one of the applications of his stream metaphors. Jantsch uses four states of being to describe the possible relationships between the individuals and the environment, suggesting "four separate applications, portrays multiple realities available to curriculum theorists, teachers and students" (Dobson & Smiley, 1992, p. 7). One of these applications deals with participating in and being one with the stream. Teachers and students who bring to the learning environment multiple realities and share them, who immerse themselves in the present (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Green, 1978) are participating in the stream and subsequently creating a community. Greene (1975) posits that persons develop to their fullest *only* (my italics) to the degree that they participate in a live community. Greene (1978) suggests that we all learn to become human within this live community.

> The more fully engaged we are, the more we can look through each others' eyes, the more richly individual we become. The activities that compose learning not only engage us in our quests for answers and for meanings; they also serve to initiate us into the communities of scholarship and (if our perspectives are large enough) into the human community, in its largest and richest sense (p. 3).

Like Jantsch's stream, Langer and Applebee (1986) describe a community that is fluid, shaped by the needs of learners and teachers, not by external structures and organization. They assert that it is within such communities that authentic personal learning

experiences can occur as a result of the mutual shapings and reciprocity between the teachers and learners.

Bellah et al. (1985) envision a community of learners as a vehicle which can carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those closest to us with the aspirations of a larger whole and see our own efforts as being, in part, contributions to the common good.

Dewey (1938) centers schooling on the human search for meaning and understanding that enriches groups and individuals as they continuously refine their sense of values and direction. Central to his view is a belief in a milieu of ethical commitment, where individuals contribute good and worthwhile decisions so that those involved and those who are affected can grow in increasingly human ways. This ethical commitment, these good and worthwhile decisions he sees as occurring within the environment called school. He (1959b) argues that schools must recreate genuine forms of active community life: where motive, spirit and an atmosphere of "interchange of thought and growing unity of sympathetic feelings" could flourish (p. 39); where helping others is an "aid in setting free the powers and furthering the impulse of the one helped;" (p. 40) and a "spirit of free communication, of interchange of ideas, suggestions, results, both successes and failures of previous experiences, become the dominating note" (p. 40).

This idea of a community of learners is being widely discussed by educators. Barth (1990) concludes that schools must evolve into communities.

> I see in these kinds of endeavors the concept of the school as a community of learners, a place where all participants--teachers, principals, parents, and students--engage in learning and teaching. School is not a place for important people who do not need to learn and unimportant people who do. Instead, school is a place where students discover, and adults rediscover, the joys, the difficulties, and the satisfactions of learning. In a community of learners, adults and children learn simultaneously and in the same place to think critically and analytically and to solve problems that are important to them. In a community of learners, learning is endemic and mutually visible. Everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner. In many ways, schools resemble cultures (Barth, p. 43).

He writes further, "Communities of learners seem to be committed above all to discovering conditions that elicit and support human learning and to providing these conditions" (p. 45). Barth is committed to the belief that within communities adults and children learn, energize each other and contribute to each other's learning. Adults and youngsters are expected to pose their own questions and enlist each other as resources (p. 47). He concludes that the current problems in schools have not truly been addressed. "What needs to be improved about schools is their culture, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and the nature and quality of learning experiences" (p. 45).

Grumet (1981) extends the number of persons necessary to create meaning and a community. In her call for a community she finds that it must include not just the teachers and students, but also those elements of Schubert's "ecology," parents, colleagues, and community members at large. Schwab (1971) too, expands the sense of community within the schools to include the citizenry of the larger community. He asserts that schools should be places where dialogical encounters

can occur among the various members of the larger community; where groups of citizens, rather than an elite few, would gather frequently to address the issues critical to the health and growth of the schools. Consonant with Barth's conclusion, Schubert (1986) identifies four assumptions which support Schwab's assertion: (1) the source of problems is found in the state of affairs within the educational setting--not in the abstractions of researchers; (2) the method of inquiry is interaction within the educational situation that is being studied; (3) the subject matter sought in the process is situational insight and understanding; and (4) the end of inquiry is the increased ability to act morally and effectively (p. 289).

Curriculum, then, is comprised of the dialogues between teachers and learners that create meanings through reflecting on their lived lives and searching for ways to interpret these meanings in actions. The past must be included in the dialogues, for the past frames thinking and responding. The present must, also, be included because it is the impact of and response to present people and events that construct and reconstruct meanings. But the curriculum cannot be just of the past and present of the community of individuals within a given classroom, it must also include the larger community beyond the classroom. The larger community is necessary for additional realities and insights that add richness to the curriculum.

Teacher Voice

> The focal point of the school experience is the person, and what happens or does not happen to the person is a matter of aesthetic and ethical consideration. Teaching is, first and foremost, a moral enterprise because educators intervene in people's lives (Dobson, Dobson, & Koetting, 1985, p. 11).

Considerations for the alternative views of schooling and curriculum that have been expressed require that individuals, adults and children, engage in dialogical processes in their searches for personal answers and meanings and help initiate each other into greater humanity. From this perspective, educational activities are viewed as encounters between human beings.

> The student is not viewed as an object, an *it*; but as a fellow human Being, another subject, a *thou*, who is to be lived with in the fullness of the present moment or the eternal present. From the ethical stance the educator meets the student, not as an embodied role, as a lesser category, but as a fellow human being who demands to be accepted on the basis of fraternity not simply on the basis of equality. The fullness of the educational activity, as students encounter each other, the world around them, and the teacher, is all there is. The educational activity is life--and life's meanings are witnessed and lived in the classroom (Huebner, 1975, pp. 229-230).

The pivotal point of such an endeavor must be the teacher. To be able to facilitate students' encounters with the places where curriculum intersects in their lives, to help them reflect on and articulate the themes of their existence "until they know themselves to be in the world and can name what has been up to then obscure" (Greene, 1978, p. 18) requires teachers who have had and are having those experiences and reflections and are searching for meanings in their own lives. Teachers must be persons who live and share their

lives authentically, not within roles, not as accumulators and actors of teaching strategies, not as technicians transmitting sets of predetermined purposes. It becomes, therefore, critical to look at teachers as persons: how they find personal meanings and how they can share their lived lives.

Newman (1991) describes the movement away from traditional teaching in terms of shifting from a "transmission view of teaching to a transactional perspective" (p. 14). She asserts that there must be recognition that learning and teaching are distinct ventures that may or may not intersect. She posits that: learning is a personal process of constructing sense out of experiences and teaching is a process that involves helping another to extend personal knowledge. According to Newman, these two ventures may or may not connect or, if they do connect, the learning may not be of the kind intended by the teacher. In a traditional "transmission" view of teaching, there is little recognition of the personal experiences that each participant brings to the process and little, if any, attempt is made to help the learner construct meaning. Therefore, what transpires is limited only to the memorization of prescribed information or the tacit understanding that the only "knowledge" that is worthwhile is that which those in authority possess. In a "transactional" view, personal experiences and the multiple realities that are present are the basis of extensions. To "teach" within the context of Newman's transactional view is to step outside of predetermined, encapsulated roles, and authentically respond to the humanity of one's students and oneself. To "teach"

within this transactional view is to make less distinguishable teaching and learning as separate actions; it is to see "teaching" and "learning" as reciprocal processes.

DeVries and Kolhberg (1987) and DeVries (1988) theorize that it is difficult for teachers to move away from self-alienation, role encapsulation and, for some, the security that the "roles" provide in traditionally established educational settings. They contend that when teachers search for alternative ways of being, they are confronted with the necessity of constructing and reconstructing their personal meanings for teaching, learning and curriculum. Teachers moving away from alienation find themselves moving into uncharted places where new questions and concerns will emerge that must be worked out in the course of teaching, dialogue with colleagues and students, and self-reflection.

Becoming

"The individual who infuses his or her life with the quest to discover what is most worthwhile may be well on the road to self-education or self-realization" (Schubert, 1988, p. 6)

The process of moving into uncharted places, Greene (1978) envisions as a transcendence from passivity into "emancipation and wide-awakeness" (p. 2). She proposes that this "transcendence has to be chosen; it can be neither given nor imposed" (p. 2). She asserts that "persons are more likely to ask their own questions and seek their own transcendence when they feel themselves to be grounded in their personal histories, their lived lives" (p. 2).

She views this "grounding" to require each person to be in touch with one's own present, to be conscious of one's own evolving experiences, and to be aware of the ways in which we encounter the world" (p. 2).

Greene (1978) observes that for one to be present to oneself is to remain in touch with one's own original perceptions (p. 2), to know the who and why's of oneself. She observes that human beings hold a particular vantage point on the world. This vantage point is constructed and reconstructed based on what has been perceived, introduced through social intercourse, and interpreted. To be in touch with one's own perceptions is, therefore, to have a level of awareness of how these constructions and interpretations affect "the way we look at things and talk about things and structure our realities" (p. 2).

To reach a level of awareness, one must be willing to accept confusion and risk asking questions about those realities that one has already constructed. It is necessary, then, to risk tentative answers and to accept mistakes as a part of growth. To reach awareness, one must have, as Rogers (1961) expresses, the quality of courage which enables an individual to step into the uncertainty of the unknown as he chooses himself.

Greene (1973) challenges teachers to take the risk of the "uncertainty of the unknown" in thinking about who they are and what they mean when they talk about enabling others to learn, to become progressively more self-conscious about choices and commitments, and to look at presuppositions and examine them critically (preface).

Duckworth (1987) relates it this way,

> We encourage teachers to take their own knowledge seriously, to be willing to pay attention to their confusion, to make an effort to understand each other's ways of understanding the phenomena, to take the risk of offering ideas of which they were not sure (p. 85).

Bullough, Goldstein and Holt (1992) describe this willingness to question and face uncertainty as an attitude of "critical mindedness." "Critical mindedness," they posit, requires that teachers maintain questioning attitudes, discuss issues, communicate, respect those with whom they work and remain open to discoveries of that which is hidden from view.

In addition to questioning, individuals must also be willing to frequently reflect on and reconsider the experiences and meanings that they have constructed in their own lives. Piaget (Bringuier, 1980/1987) utilizes the term "taking consciousness" to explain this process of deriving meaning from what has happened by mentally reconstituting the actions that have occurred and reflecting on them. In the process of reflecting, new meanings are derived and new actions are conceived because reflection allows one to be open to new possibilities (Duckworth, 1987).

Schon (1983) enlarges the process of taking consciousness to include the "reflection-in-action" that occurs when teachers address puzzles and uncertainties dialectically, rather than logically. Reflection-in-action happens when teachers "reframe" uncertainties differently, within the context of the solution rather than relying on outside "professional knowledge" (Kamii, 1981, 1982a; Schon, 1983; Adler, 1990).

This kind of reflection creates in teachers "a sense of agency" whereby they empower themselves to take responsibility for constructing their own understandings and ultimately for determining the directions of their own lives (O'Laughlin, 1990). O'Laughlin found that teacher reflection and growth are enhanced through the process of journal writing. Although this process is used extensively with primary children in language arts, the process of journal keeping also allows teachers to record and repeatedly reflect on their own experiences and interpretations.

What Greene calls "conscious of one's own evolving experiences, and being aware of the ways in which we encounter the world," Csikszentmihalyi (1990) refers to as "living fully within the present." He envisions living fully in the present as risking allowing primary goals to emerge from personal experiences, becoming immersed--personally and deeply committed--to whatever one is doing, assuming personal responsibility for one's own actions, developing and depending on the ability to personally evaluate one's own behavior and continually searching for personal meaning to one's own existence. Teachers, then, who live fully within the present that Csikszentmihalyi describes, must be willing to risk allowing goals to emerge from their personal experiences and also those of their students; must be willing to become personally committed to teaching and learning and enable students to become so committed; must be willing to develop the ability to evaluate their own behavior and guide students to develop the ability to evaluate their own behaviors and learning; and, must be willing to embrace life as

a continual search for meaning and assist students to have the same courage.

Frye (1990) advances that the active pursuit of being on a journey through life in which

> It is conceivable that a journey might have a value in itself [rather than just the end point]. If so, obviously there would have to be something inside the traveller to resonate against the experience, so the theme of journeying for the sake of the experiencing of journeying would often be at the same time a journey into oneself. Such a journey implies not a progress along a straight path leading to a destination, as in Bunyan, but a meandering journey. Instead of going from point A to point B, the journey might have a moving series of point B's, a further B appearing in the distance as soon as one reaches the nearest one (p. 221).

Sharing Lives

> We are a teaching species. Human beings need to teach, not only for the sake of those who need to be taught but for the fulfillment of our identities, and because facts are kept alive by being told, truths by being professed" (Erikson, cited in Calkins, 1983, p. v).

Traditionally, teaching has been both a lonely and isolated profession and one that has been bound tightly by normative behaviors. Teachers have spent the greatest part of their days in separate rooms, behind closed doors. When they have talked together, although they may have used the same terms, each teacher may have had different meanings for them. Yet, they have continued to use the same words because many have chosen, or been pressured, into following content driven teacher's manuals and curriculum guides that have prescribed the same words and activities for all students (Hunt, 1991).

Schooling, curriculum and teaching alternatives must include opportunities to end the isolation and alienation that confront teachers daily. Teachers must be afforded forums and support groups where they can come together and discuss their individual meanings so that they can see from each other's eyes and, in so doing, understand the content, emotions and meanings behind each other's words. From such dialogues teachers extend their realities and their avenues of growth.

Short and Pierce (1990) describe the possibilities for growth that can occur not only in classrooms between adults and children, but also within teacher forums and discussion groups. Although teachers' stories predominate, Pierce also offers a chapter describing teacher forums and discussion groups as alternatives to traditional teacher in-service programs. In this chapter, she stresses the need for relevance in teachers' lives as well as in students' lives and finds teacher discussion groups as valid opportunities to explore personal meaning and relevance. She offers careful reexamination and critical questioning of the "canned curriculum" available through basal texts and teachers' manuals as the medium for these discussions.

The publication of teacher journals and stories and publications about their stories have become more prevalent. For those teachers at the threshold of moving away from alienation, the stories have become avenues of support. For those already moving along Frye's journey, the stories become at times validations, at other times openings to new possibilities (N. Haas, personal

communication, February 29, 1993). Some of the teachers' stories appear as single books, others appear as edited publications and still others appear in summarized forms.

Writing autobiographically is not necessarily a new endeavor for teachers. In 1963, Ashton-Warner wrote of her teaching experiences and her reflections on them during her first years teaching with the Maoris. What differs from past teacher written books and the current genre of books by teachers is the amount of personal detail and the honesty of their sharings. Teachers are now seeking to share intimately with the readers, as Schubert & Ayers (1992) would say, as if they were stealing minutes to share their "lore" amongst the mimeograph machines or in the teacher's lounge over a hurried lunch.

Among the current books written by teachers about themselves, much of the detail comes from the teachers' decision to expand their stories from personal journals they have kept. Calkins (1983) chose biographical and autobiographical journal entries as the basis of her story that was ostensibly about a child with whom she worked. Yet, the book, is self-revealing of Calkin's own journey through that particular teaching experience. She describes the work by saying,

> At its heart, Lessons from a Child is autobiographical. Although it is a research chronicle, it is also a personal narrative. It has grown not only from two years of research and three years of drafting and revision, but also from thirty-one years of teaching and learning in the classrooms (p. v).

Calkins acknowledges her "present," and the experiences that have created that vantage point. Teaching is for Calkins, "a way to make

meaning out of my own life while helping others do the same" (p. v). Her book is an open dialogue between the writer and the reader, sharing experiences and reflecting on the insights to her teaching, the learning process and herself as a person that those moments with "Susie" have created. She shares the connections she has made between the processes of learning, teaching and being.

Short and Burke (1991) employ the technique of "thinking aloud" within the pages and placing personal notes along the margins to provide readers with additional reflections on what they have written. The use of the margins draws the reader into the lore as if they were private notes left in the author's personal journals. Similar to Calkin's book, they also employ anecdotal entries and reproduce direct quotations from students about whom they are writing. Throughout their book they emphasize the importance of creating curriculum within a community of learners. They offer their definition of curriculum as "a purposeful intent to empower ourselves and others" (p. 69). They entreat the readers to become risktakers and collaborators and underscore the importance of becoming reflective individuals. They share insights into their own growth and challenge readers to find their own ways of growing in teaching, learning and being.

Newman (1991) also uses transcriptions of conversations in her autobiographical book. But, uniquely, she also uses a dialogical approach to journal writing in her story. Her journal entries are followed and interspersed with her own reflections about what she has written as well as notes of response from a colleague as he

reads what she has written. The effect of the response notes from the colleague is to organize and focus the data as if in research coding (Charmaz, 1983). Newman, too, challenges the reader to become a more reflective practitioner. She stresses the importance of teaching and learning as reciprocal collaborative processes.

In Wiggington's (1985) autobiographical book, he reveals himself honestly as a teacher who accepted that he has struggled and, sometimes, failed in teaching. He asks, too, the readers to accept their own failures, "stumblings," as a part of growth.

> We'll never do everything right, God knows. We're human, and we're fallible. Every week we'll make mistakes we'll regret and say THINGS we'll wish we could recall. But each of us, no matter what our age or experience, has the capacity for self-examination and for growth. Each of us can do the job better. Each of us can work within the system to create space and let in air and light. I've met thousands of you out there who *want* to (p. 193).

He describes, in detail, his decisions to transform his own teaching disasters from unidirectional methodology into dialogues with students. In the process of the dialogues between teacher and students, the students rediscovered their own "presences," and those of the people in the community. He stresses the importance of doing what Dewey described, realizing that school is not a preparation for life, it is life. Like Grumet, he posits that curriculum is helping students find the connections between their own lives and content. Then, he asks the readers to understand the "hunger all young people have to do important, significant work; to make a difference in the community; to begin to feel that the future really does consist of opportunity rather than denial" (p. 237).

Among the edited books of teachers' stories, it is Schubert and Ayers (1992) who give the publication forum for teachers a name, "teacher lore." They "provide teachers with perspectives on teaching drawn from other teachers" (p. vii). They offer these written perspectives as alternative to the oral traditions that exist among teachers who "exchange and reconstruct perspectives together" (p. vii). They offer it as part of the stream of inquiry that provides teachers with insight into their own and other teachers' experiences. They invite their readers to participate in the gathering of teacher lore while defining the space it must fill as "not an end in itself; instead, it is a basis for teacher reflection" (p. x).

Witherell & Noddings (1991) have edited a book of teacher narratives and dialogues that bring together three themes:

> that story and narrative are primary tools in the work that educators and counselors do; that education means taking seriously both the quest for life's meaning and the call to care for persons; and that the use of narrative and dialogue can serve as a model for teaching and learning across the boundaries of disciplines, professions, and cultures (p. 2).

Their book is far-reaching and extends beyond the majority of books of teachers' stories. Through narratives and stories the authors plumb the depths of caring, authentic responding and reflective awareness. The authors use narrative as "an epistemological tool--as a way of knowing about ourselves and other knowers" (p. 9).

Branscombe, Goswami, and Schwartz (1992) have also edited a book of teachers' stories. It is intense and complex with its diversity. Teacher stories include not only the stories by the

teachers, but reflections and responses from additional authors, often in a point-counterpoint format. Both the individual stories and the responses, counterpoint discussions, stress the importance of teacher reflection and dialogue.

> More important than the actual processes studied are the reflections--through talking and writing--on what it means to raise dynamic questions, to risk change, to negotiate with one or more other people. This is teacher research extended beyond the lonely office of the solitary instructor (p. 3).

Easy answers and foolproof methods are not suggested in these writings. Rather, they "raise messy questions about what happens when students and teacher share authority in and out of schools and when they become excited together about the kind of authentic learning that can't be measured on standardized tests" (p. 3). The stories focus on collaboration, student/teacher inquiry, and establishing shared communities of learners. They stress the importance of personal relevance and intrinsic motivation in the process of learning. The authors of several stories emphasize the inclusion of both parents and the larger community as partners in the educational dialogue.

Rather than recording separately the stories of teachers who have or are moving away from self-alienation and role encapsulation, Bullough, Goldstein and Holt (1992) have observed and summarized common beliefs of those with whom they shared conversations. Bullough, et al. found that those teachers who are moving into a self-awareness viewed: learning and teaching as dynamic and interactive processes, students as co-participants in establishing goals as they emerge, curriculum as a tool to solve human problems,

and education as an end in itself rather than a means to something else. These teachers envision teaching as a moral enterprise. Human differences are valued and are seen as enriching life. Classrooms are perceived as places where human curiosity and creativity in its many manifestations are recognized and honored. And finally, relationships with other teachers are enjoyed and appreciated and other teachers' problems are viewed with understanding and empathy.

Although Connelly and Clandinin (1991) caution against summarizing and generalizations, Bullough, et al's findings enjoy the same general parameters that Rogers (1961) suggests about persons whom he identifies as being directed toward life-enhancement. Like the teachers in Bullough, et al's studies, Roger's "self-actualizers" were: realistically oriented, accepting of themselves and others for what they are, spontaneous, problem-centered rather than self-centered. These individuals expressed a need of time for reflection and privacy, are autonomous and tend to appreciate people and things in fresh rather than stereotypical ways. Importantly, they understand the importance lies in participating in processes rather than concentrating on possible products that may result (Rogers, 1951).

Summary

Because education, like all systems, is organic and interconnected, the meanings of three aspects/dimensions (the purpose of schooling, curriculum, and teacher voice) must be

addressed when considering the alternative directions for education that the teachers selected for this study have taken. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter has been to review alternatives to the predominant perceptions of these three aspects of education. A discussion of purposes of schooling provided a revised definition for what schooling can be. This definition provides that schools are places where individuals can evoke and nurture in each other their potentialities. In doing so, they empower each other to create and participate in a society of their own choosing. A discussion of the curriculum in the places called school provided insight into ways teachers and students can develop open dialogues and learning experiences that connect their lives with content, engage them in personal questioning, assist them in their searches for meanings and initiate them into communities of scholarship and (hopefully) into the human community. And finally, a discussion of teacher voices looked at possibilities for teachers to find their voices through reconstructing the meanings in their personal/ professional lives and how they are sharing those meanings with others.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will present a description of the research methodology. The chapter is divided into the following sections: nature of the study; data sources; participant selection; questions that were investigated; data collection procedures; data organization and interpretation; scope and limitations of the study.

Nature of the Study

Narrative inquiry was selected as this study's primary methodology because it focuses on human experiences through the stories people tell about themselves and the narrative presentations that result from their stories. Stories help make sense out of individual lives and give them meaning. Meanings, in turn, provide a way of belonging, of connecting individuals to others and reconnecting them with our own histories. It is a form particularly appropriate for describing the pedagogical lives of teachers. Connelly and Claudinin (Short, 1991) offer that teachers' narratives are metaphors for teaching-learning relationships. "In understanding ourselves and our students educationally, we need an understanding of people with a narrative of life experiences.

Life's narratives are the context for making meaning of school situations" (Short, 1991, p. 124).

It is the meanings of teachers' lives that give purpose to their narratives in this study. Through their own narratives about pedagogical choices, the meanings and subsequent curriculum alternatives created by these teachers will be examined. Other teachers have also begun to tell their stories as efforts to contribute to the understanding of changing educational environments. As mentioned in Chapter II, Wigginton (1972, 1986), Calkins (1983, 1991), Short and Pierce (1990), and Ashton-Warner (1963) are a few examples of the growing number of teachers who have written about themselves. Several authors, such as Schubert and Ayers (1992) and Jalongo (1991), have chosen instead to capture the multiple realities that develop when the inquirer is a different person from, but who participates in a dialogue with, teachers. Both kinds of narratives, the autobiographical and the biographical, offer unique opportunities because each comes from a different perspective. It is from the same perspective as Schubert and Ayers that this study has emerged.

Narrative inquiry implies several assumptions. First, the inquirer must use himself/herself as well as those to be known as a primary data-gathering instrument. As a result, multiple realities are constructed through the telling, retelling, living and reliving of stories as they emerge and develop through the course of the inquiry. Through open dialogue the perceptions and stories of the person to be known and the inquirer become distinct

but inseparable because they will interact and shape one another. Secondly, it is assumed that the setting for the inquiry must be within the natural teaching-learning environment. This is important because realities as wholes cannot be understood if removed from their contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 39). Realities take their meanings as much from their contexts as they do from themselves. Third, under such conditions no hypothesis can be constructed a priori; rather, the theory must be allowed to emerge from (be "grounded in") the data. Lastly, those whose stories are being told must be invited to scrutinize and respond to the data and interpretations that will ultimately find their way into a final report (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Dialogue between the inquirer and teachers is a critical element in the inquiry. It must be mutual and must proceed from both sides. Dialogue requires addressing and responding to the being and truth of each other. It is not easy or always comfortable but both parties must be willing to persist at it relentlessly. It is, as Buber (1967/1961) proposes, the "experiencing of the other side" and the entering into what Buber calls an "I-Thou" relationship. Depth and an accurate sense of the concerns and meanings of those who are studied are possible only through a prolonged dialogical relationship (Emerson, 1983). In an inquiry setting, Greene (1988) posits that the dialogical relationship is enhanced because both participants have a project they can mutually pursue as "they are authentically presented to one another (without masks, pretenses, badges or office)" (p. 16).

Since this narrative inquiry seeks to look at the experiences of and the meanings ascribed to teachers' lives as well as the stories they tell, it can also be considered both phenomenological and hermeneutical. Willis (1991) contends that phenomenological inquiry can include both intuitive scanning of one's own life-world and naturalistic gatherings of evidence about the life- worlds of others (p. 178). "Considering what one's own experience does and does not have in common with the experiences of others provides the grounds for understanding and for a pedagogic competence which results in actions maximizing the possibilities of human autonomy" (Willis, p. 181). Pinar and Grumet (1976) utilize phenomenological and hermeneutical inquiry approaches in their study into curriculum. Consonant with the goals of this study, they consider curriculum in terms of what happens within the individual's experiences and what meanings can be derived from those experiences. van Manen (1978/79) also utilizes phenomenological and hermeneutical approaches to encounter the life-worlds of others. He offers that through such sources as literature, poetry, novels, diaries, interviews, observations and art reasoned inferences can be made about other's lives. Additionally, Witherell and Noddings (1991) found that a phenomenological perspective provides narratives with a way to weave together the threads of time, place, and character to form a more coherent and complete story. Thus, these forms, narrative, phenomenology and hermeneutics, complement each other because each acknowledges the inseparability of knowledge and human relationships and the necessity for a continuous search for

meaning. They imply the necessity for continuous construction in our endeavors to find meaning.

Narrative inquiry has only recently become more familiar to the educational community. Traditionally, quantifiable data has predominated in the area of educational research. Quantifiable research has been based on a set of beliefs consistent with the world view that: reality is singular, tangible and fragmentable; the knower and the known are, and can remain, independent of one another; it is possible to extrapolate and generalize from one situation to the next; there are real identifiable causes that either precede or are simultaneous with their effects; and inquiry is value-free (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 37).

The advent of Quantum Mechanics and Chaos Theory has altered the unshakeable acceptance of this world view. Einstein's "Theory of Relativity" anticipated the advent by positing that there is no absolute time and space. Instead, time and space are interactive dimensions. What is seen is contingent on the position of the observer. Heisenberg's "uncertainty principle" further disrupted the world of absolutes by asserting that it is impossible to observe an event or action without interacting with it and changing it in some way. The research of Bell and Bohm supported and extended Heisenberg's principle. "Bell's Theorem" proposes that the supposedly separate parts of the universe are connected in intimate and immediate ways. David Bohm asserts that there is a fundamental level of unbroken wholeness in the universe (Gleick, 1987; Prigogine and Stengers, 1984; Capra, 1982; Ferguson, 1987).

Provided this new perspective, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose a "naturalistic paradigm" for research. They offer broad parameters to serve as its framework:

1. There are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically; inquiry into these multiple realities will inevitably raise more questions than it answers, making prediction and control unlikely outcomes. This does not exclude, however, the achievement of some level of understanding.

2. The inquirer and the "object" of inquiry are inseparable because they interact and influence one another.

3. The aim of inquiry is to develop a concrete body of knowledge in the form of "working hypotheses" that describe the case under study.

4. All entities continuously and simultaneously shape each other so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.

5. The inquiry is value-bound because the inquirer's values influence the choice, the framing, and the focusing of the problem; the paradigm chosen guides the direction of the inquiry; the substantive theory influences the collection and analysis and interpretation of the data; and the context of the inquiry has inherent values.

Data Sources

Primary Sources

The study included conversations and periodic observations of, as well as journal recordings and written messages from, four elementary classroom teachers who are working in a multiage teaching situation and an elementary art teacher/facilitator who works weekly with these teachers.

To increase the likelihood of accurately capturing the multiple realities and local mutual shapings between the inquirer and the subjects of the inquiry as they evolved, the inquirer maintained a journal of interactions and participated in limited letter/note writing with the identified teachers.

Secondary Sources

Conversational notes and written responses from a variety of teachers with similar philosophical bases (including participants in another multiage elementary enrichment/art project and several secondary teachers) were examined.

The literature connected with teachers' stories and voices and published accounts of teachers' journals were also utilized as secondary sources. O'Laughlin's interpretations of his own journal accounts as well as accounts from reflective teachers, Schon's (1983) case studies into reflective practitioning, and Schubert and Ayers' (1992) book about teacher lore were among the materials reviewed and interpreted along with the journal entries and

letters/notes of the teachers in this study.

Participant Selection

Purposive sampling was utilized in this study. The teachers who were chosen for the study were selected through a three step process.

1. Each of the teachers was originally a member of a voluntary district task force on "Educational Alternatives." Throughout a year-long task force self-selected teachers and administrators brought together articles and books for discussion. The educators took turns presenting information and leading discussions about the ideas that evolved. Through the discussions, the inquirer became aware that each of the teachers who were eventually studied espoused the beliefs that:

   A. There are problems within the current educational system.

   B. It is possible to find the solutions to the current educational problems within individual educational settings (both schools and classrooms).

   C. Knowledge is not just a matter of transmission. It develops in the human mind through interactions with the environment.

2. The members of the task force were observed periodically during that school year in their schools and classrooms to determine whether the beliefs were being implemented by the teachers and administrators. All of the teachers who were eventually invited to participate in the study demonstrated through

their work with children the beliefs they espoused.

3. The teachers were given copies of the dissertation proposal to review and decide independently if they wished to participate.

From the original number of forty-two individuals in the district task force, six teachers consented to participate in the study. One teacher later withdrew her name when she was made chairman of her department. She felt that she would not be able to have time to keep the journal as requested.

Questions That Were Investigated

Connelly and Claudinin (1991) suggest that the exploration of contexts, events and meanings are necessary to provide the data that is critical to the construction and interpretation of narratives. Following these authors' suggestion, these three domains were explored through conversations, observations, journal writing, letter/note writing, and literature. Interpreting these considerations into this study the following questions were derived:

1. What significance, value and meanings do the teachers place on the events they choose to describe in their stories?

2. How do the teachers and the inquirer describe and interpret the "contexts" within which the teachers are working ?

3. What are the meanings that the teachers and the inquirer ascribe to what the teachers are doing?

Procedures for Collecting the Data

The following procedures were utilized to obtain information about the questions upon which this study was based:

1. Both scheduled and spontaneous conversations between the teachers and the inquirer were recorded. Within the context of the conversations, queries were made, and lines of thought pursued, that would allow the teachers to reflect on their purposes of education, their life experiences as they intersect with their teaching, significant professional experiences that have impacted on their beliefs and practices, and professional choices they have made.

2. Each teacher and the inquirer kept a journal of observations, reflections and interpretations. The notes from the journals were used to augment and/or interpret the information from the conversations and observations.

3. The teachers were encouraged to participate in letter and note writing throughout the six week period as an extended form of dialogue.

4. After the preliminary drafts were written, the teachers were given copies of the drafts about which they could reflect and comment. Consideration for the inclusion of reflections and comments that the teachers made was negotiated between the teachers and the inquirer. The final report also reflects their scrutiny.

Data Organization and Interpretation

As the data was collected it was organized to enhance the process orientation and dialogical aspects of the inquiry.

Consistent with Charmaz' (1985) methodology, the data gathering and tentative analysis were viewed as simultaneous processes, the data gathering and analysis were shaped by the data rather than being derived from a preconceived theoretical framework, and systematic comparisons were continuously made between the data and the concepts and ideas as they emerged. Adapting Charmaz' coding procedures, the data was organized initially by the similarities within each individual's verbal and written statements and the inquirer's observations of that individual. These similarities were identified by simple "coded" statements. Later, these codes evolved into more abstract conceptual categories. Brief memos were then developed from and attached to these conceptual categories. These memos allowed the inquirer to further organize and analyze the data and served to direct further exploration. The memos, sorted and integrated by the relationships that became apparent, were used as the foundation for each of the subsequent narratives.

As the memos were interpreted the narratives were constructed to reflect and describe the individual and collective milieus of the participants. To provide parameters for the narratives, the structure for narratives suggested by Connelly and Claudinin (1991) and Millies' (1992) framework for teacher narratives were adapted and incorporated.

Narrative explanation derives from a wholeness, thus, individual narratives were formed by weaving together the elements of each life to create a relevant and meaningful story (Connelly & Claudinin, 1991; Witherell & Noddings, 1991). Connelly

and Claudinin suggest that in constructing narrative stories three elements must be included: place, time and restorations of experiences. Time and place are seen to "work together to create the experiential quality of the narrative" (p. 136). Place commonly refers to an inclusive environment consisting of the physical, the emotional and/or the intellectual domains. Yet, place can only be perceived as an environment for particular experiences within discrete time-frames. Place, therefore, cannot exist independent of time. Physical environments change from one moment to the next. Thus, time and place are interdependent elements and, as such, are used together to describe the contexts of this study's narratives.

Given contexts for the narratives, the remaining of Connelly and Claudinin's elements, restorations of experiences, must be considered. Restorations of experiences are complex, and in dealing with this complexity, Millies (1992) three domains were considered. Narratives about teachers' professional lives, she offers, can best be viewed within a framework that includes each individual's: pedagogical personality, pedagogical assumptions and pedagogical repertoire. The first domain, pedagogical personality, is the embodiment of a range of qualities related to the teacher's practice that includes self-concept, motifs, uncertainties, ambivalences, concerns, and biases. The domain of pedagogical assumptions consists of those values, beliefs, principles and strategies that guide an individual's practice. The third domain, pedagogical repertoire, includes the images, experiences, routines and strategies that a teacher draws on to facilitate learning in his/her

classroom. Millies dealt with each domain separately in her retelling of teachers' stories. The inquirer found that the teachers' personalities as expressed by their stories were interwoven with their values, beliefs and guiding principles and it was impossible to separate the pedagogical personality from the assumptions. As such, the personalities and assumptions are used together in this study to form the basis of the restoration of experiences. As with Millies' studies, however, the domain of the pedagogical repertoire, is considered separately in this study. The pedagogical repertoire provides examples of how each individual's pedagogical personality and concomitant assumptions, as reflected within the current milieu, create actual strategies, images and routines for learning. As a result, each narrative is comprised of three sections: the context; the pedagogical personality, including values and beliefs; and the pedagogical repertoire.

Following Connelly and Claudinin's suggestion, caution was employed while interpreting and constructing the narratives so that the explanations were not caught in minutiae and abstracted from the realities of the individuals. A second caution was also taken. A careful checking and rechecking of data and stories was employed, so as to avoid "smoothing away incongruities and ambiguities." The stories of the participants were left with contradictions intact. There was not an attempt made to "fit" the elements neatly into the story (Connelly & Claudinin, 1991).

Scope and Limitations

Because narrative inquiry is intersubjective and qualitative, three issues must be acknowledged here. First, narrative inquiry is intersubjective, there is a danger of the researcher's misinterpreting the data. It is argued that the inquirer's values and perceptions will unduly influence the interpretation of the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that all inquiry, whether considered quantitative or qualitative, is value-laden because the inquirer's values determine the choice and framing of the problem, the choice of the paradigm and theory used to guide the investigation, and the context chosen for the inquiry. Consistent with this argument, through the use of multiple oral and written records, the values and perceptions of both the inquirer and the subjects of the inquiry are openly acknowledged as a legitimate part of the inquiry. Further, the teachers were asked to review and critique the interpretations of the researcher. These critiques were discussed between the teachers and the inquirer. The outcomes that appear in the resulting report have been negotiated between the inquirer and the teachers.

A second criticism leveled at qualitative studies is that they are not replicable. This criticism is based on the understanding that with traditional research methodologies it is possible to replicate (duplicate) research. This replication is possible because the research is artificially constructed by the researcher. There is no attempt to artificially contrive the context or manipulate the participants in this study. Additionally,

Prigogine and Stengers (1984) posit that time is irreversible and it is, therefore, impossible to duplicate a point in time. People and situations change. For that reason, even within the most carefully contrived and manipulated research, "anomolies" appear and are disregarded. This study describes and interprets some of the beliefs, actions and changes that occur to the people and their environments during a short time period without a priori theories that would require the disregarding of data as "anomolies." It is also hoped that this narrative will invite others to look at and explore similar situations at other times. It is through the continuing inquiries of others that the information and possible theories that emerge from this inquiry will be refined and its "trustworthiness" determined.

Third, qualitative information cannot be extrapolated to other teachers and other situations. This study is not and cannot be an attempt to identify a list of common characteristics or "traits" between these teachers. The most this information can do is offer several individuals' insights and experiences that may assist other teachers and give them support in their own personal/professional journeys.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to interpret the voices of teachers who perceive inherent restraints in society and education, yet who respond to teaching in personal and authentic ways. Through the course of conversations, interviews, observations, journal writings and letter/note writing between the selected teachers and the inquirer, the meanings given to teaching and learning and the life changes that have occurred within the educational process have been explored and recorded. The current chapter presents the stories and interpretations the teachers have given.

The first section describes the general setting of the study, the community and the school, so that the reader may gain understanding of the broader contexts within which these teachers live and work. Connelly and Claudinin (1991) posit that places/settings are reference points where cultural and social context play constraining and enabling roles in the lives of characters. Places both imprint and are imprinted by the lives and interactions of all those who come within their boundaries.

Sections two through six of the chapter contain narratives about, and selected dialogues from, each of the five teachers. These narratives include descriptions of the teachers' personal contexts,

their interpretations of the events that have changed their lives and interpretations of their feelings and perceptions as they reflected on and explained their lives in their educational milieus.

In telling about the events that have been significant in these teachers' lives no attempts have been made to provide chronologies. Instead, the events are woven into narratives by looking through what Millies (1991, p. 28) calls the "domains of the teachers' mental lives." Unlike Millies, the pedagogical personality and pedagogical assumptions have not been separated in each of the narratives. The inquirer found it quite impossible to separate the teachers' personalities from their values, beliefs and guiding principles. Teachers' pedagogical repertoires are included as examples on how they have interpreted their pedagogical personalities and values in their educational milieus.

The seventh section of the chapter contains a narrative, about and selected dialogues from, four of the teachers as they worked together as a multiage team. Apart from each of their own stories there is a unique story of their interactions together as they struggle to bring to fruition a vision they hold for a different approach to schooling.

General Contexts

The Community

The teachers of this study work within a suburban school district. The community in which it is located is adjacent to one of the largest cities in the state. Characteristic of many small

cities, its main street is part of the interstate highway system. Additionally, this street serves as an expressway connecting the suburban community with its urban neighbor. A combination of small farms and rambling acreages with large homes surround three sides of the community, while large expensive homes extend to the limits of the large metropolitan city on the fourth side.

Automobile dealerships, fast food restaurants, strip shopping centers, and a variety of small family owned shops line the expressway as it leads towards the downtown area. The downtown area contains the original business center. This area serves as a crossroads between the expressway and the state university that is located in the town. Anchoring this original downtown area is a locally owned and produced newspaper that carries a large computerized message sign on its roof. This sign, serving the function of a town crier, provides travelers along the main thoroughfares with information interspersed with literary quotes. The information extends from single sentence entries on international, national and state news to scores from local schools' sports events and birthday notices for local residents. The remainder of this business area is comprised of such small shops as a hardware store, a beauty shop, a family owned cafe and a bank that has existed for several generations with fashionable coffee shops, tea rooms, antique stores and upscale clothiers interjected among them. This business area is housed in three city blocks. The first block of shops is still housed in sand stone buildings built by the WPA. During the holiday season this area is highlighted with

decorations that are set off by reproductions of antique lights that line either side of the street. The area also serves as the location of the city's street festivals and the endpoint of the several local parades. The city offices, the police station, the newest post office and several large churches are located nearby. Although several larger shopping centers can be found in the city, this downtown area still serves as one of the hearts of community life.

The third largest and one of the oldest universities in the state is located less than a quarter of a mile from the downtown business area. Begun as the first state normal school to train teachers, it has expanded to provide a full range of educational programs to students, including 23 master's degree programs. It boasts of the highest enrollment in night classes among the degree-granting institutions in the state (City Directory, 1991).

A second heart of the community, a large rolling park lies in a wooded area several miles east of the original business area. This park is the sight of Shakespearean plays, concerts, and festivals where local artists provide enrichment experiences for the city's younger residents. The city contains fifteen other parks. At the east parameter of the city boundaries is a lake with another park and campgrounds.

Because high levels of community participation are desired, residents are kept informed about events through the newspaper sign, a local newspaper and a community events calendar that is published and distributed by the city offices. Agencies and community organizations advertise events in the calendar. The events are

colorfully set off by pictures of local residents involved in the activities.

The community places a high value on the arts. The city has its own historical opera company, a theater company, a local dance company that performs nationwide, a Shakespearean company, a music society and a community choral. Other recreation includes two golf courses that have been the sites for PGA tournaments and a U. S. Amateur Open, a tennis center, an aquatic center and a soccer club.

As with many suburban communities located close to a large city this once small and rural community of 10,000 in 1960 has seen its demographics change with the forced busing requirements mandated by the federal government on its large metropolitan neighbor. A second, and in many ways distinctly separate, community has become established within the city limits. Beginning in 1970, wealthy, upper middle class white families purchased property and began to build homes where once family farms existed. In the intervening years the children of "white flight" have grown-up and become highly paid professionals who continued to build large, expensive homes on the perimeters of the city limits. By 1990 the population of the city had burgeoned to 52,315 residents with a median age of 30.7 years (Oklahoma State Department of Commerce, 1990). Differences between the two cultures arise periodically.

According to the State Department of Commerce, in 1990 over 90% of the residents were white; minorities accounted for less than ten percent of the population. Of the 18,756 households that year over, 64 percent were married couple families. Families headed by single

parents accounted for less than ten percent of the households. The local university is the largest single employer. The school district is the second largest employer. The majority of employed residents commute to and work in the greater metropolitan area.

Housing in the community ranges from small older single family dwellings and farm houses characteristic of many rural communities to large expensive homes in enclosed housing developments. Of the 11,524 owner-occupied housing units, two-thirds are valued at $99,000.00 or less. The remaining third are valued from $100,000.00 to well above $300,000.00.

The religious life of the city includes places of worship for the Assemblies of God, Baha'i Faith, Baptist (both Freewill and Southern), Catholic, Disciples of Christ, Church of God, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Church of the Nazarene, Episcopal, Luthern, Mennonite, Methodist, Pentecostal Holiness, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, Unitarian, non-demoninational and interdemoninational congregations. Several years ago, Muslim residents purchased land to build a Mosque. (It is currently under construction). Although the Jewish faith is represented in the community, it does not have a place of worship within the city limits.

The School District

The school district has seen as dramatic a shift as has the city. In 1965 the student population was 3,082. By 1991 this number had welled to 13,752. The growth rose at a rate of 300 to 400

students per year until 1971. Beginning in 1971 the student population began to rise at a rate of 600-700 students per year. Of the approximately 14,000 students ninety-two percent of the student body is Caucasian; four percent is Africa-American; two percent is Native American; one percent is Hispanic; and one percent is Asian-American (District Profile, 1992). Less than ten percent of the total student population quality for free or reduced lunch. The dropout rate in 1991-92 school year was 4.5 percent. Sixteen percent of the students in the district are identified and receive services for the gifted and talented.

The School

Surrounded by baseball diamonds and wheat fields the school in which all five of the teachers work was built in 1982. To reach the building requires traversing a two lane asphalt road that appears to lead into the countryside. The building is constructed in a modified V-shape. The apex of the building encloses the main entrance and forms an atrium with glass doors where children can wait for rides after school. The building is separated from the atrium entrance by three sets of double doors. Passing through the atrium doors and into the actual building visitors are greeted by a large, well lit, attractive media center. Perpendicular halls form two sides of the media center. The left hall includes the principals, secretaries, counselors offices and the teachers' lunchroom with classrooms beyond. The right leads first to the cafetorium and then to classrooms. The classrooms are built in clusters. Diamond

shaped pits are located periodically along the central hall. These pits branch off into suites of classrooms. Large rectangular pits, flanking either side of each diamond shaped pit, serve as central meeting areas for each suite of four classrooms that open on to them.

The school houses five half day kindergarten programs, one developmental first grade, four first grades, five second grades, five third grades, four fourth grades, four fifth grades, one self-contained primary learning disabled class, one-self contained intermediate learning disabled class, one class for the emotionally disturbed, and one Chapter I program. The building also received physical education services for students from developmental first through fifth grade, music instruction for grades one through five, art instruction for fifth grade only, gifted and talented enrichment, and remedial speech services. The building has a full time school counselor.

The school experienced a population shift three years ago as a result of redistricting. This shift is reflected in a change in the socio-economic make-up of the students. In November of 1990 only 4.98% of the students qualified for free lunches. By November of 1991 this number had increased to 11.71%. By November of 1992 the number was 11.83%. By the spring of 1992 this number had climbed to 17% with an additional 22% qualifying for reduced price lunches.

The racial composition of the school differs from that of the district. Of the school's 583 students eighty seven percent (87%) are Caucasian, seven percent (7%) are African-American, three percent

(3%) are Native American, one and one-half percent are Hispanic and one and one-half percent are Asian-American.

Leah's Story

Her Context

Leah's room is roughly divided into three areas: a discussion area, a work area with tables for students, and an exploratory area. The discussion and work areas are separated by bookshelves topped with animal cages, puzzles, games, and other assorted activities. Bookshelves stuffed with books line the walls while moveable bookcarts, overflowing with books, are parked at either side of the opening to the common pit area.

The visual and kinesthetic images in the classroom reflect Leah's belief in the importance of the room belonging to everyone in it. A set of blocks announcing "OUR ROOM" is prominently displayed at the front of the class discussion area. A picture of Wrigley Stadium with the electronic scoreboard displaying her name hangs above Leah's desk as does a Cub's pennant. The cross-sectional drawing of a Rube-Goldberg type invention made by a student decorates part of another wall. Student stories and poems, many written at home and brought for sharing, also hang on the walls. A picture drawn for the class by children's illustrator Jose Aruega decorates part of another wall. Several children's back supports sit in the discussion pit area.

The Conversations and Her Writings

I invited Leah, through a series of conversations, to reflect on and share her thoughts about her life as a teacher. As she does not compartmentalize her life into discrete components, inviolate from each other, her life as a teacher is not different from her life as a person within other contexts. Each part of her life flows into and nourishes the other. In particular, she does not accept the predominant concept that being a teacher is a role that you put on and take off. It is a matter of leading an authentic life.

> I try to be honest with kids, honest with myself, and honest with anybody else. I think I am pretty much what I am and who I am most all of the time. . . . You have to be honest with kids or they will see right through you and they will take you to the store. You have to be real. Everything here [at school] has to be real or you can't, they can't relate to it. I have to be real. They have to be real. If we are going to have to put on a bunch of roles and hats--we are not going to get anything out of this.

She describes this as being far different from the way she was when she first started teaching six years ago. Leah earned a master's degree in special education, (specializing in the teaching of the emotionally disturbed) as soon as she completed her bachelor's degree in elementary education. As she describes it, that was where she learned "what teaching was not." Her master's level classes in teaching the emotionally disturbed relied extensively on behavior modification and Skinnerian principles, as do many programs today.

She argues, from her former experiences as an E.D. teacher's aide, that the behaviorist's model is not conducive to children

learning and becoming because it is the "ultimate in control and isolation." She perceives this model as based on contrived situations with meaningless, extrinsic rewards that are directed toward the attainment of unrealistic, externally derived goals. Instead of this reality, she proposes that children need to function in situations that make them participants in society and that do not require them to conform to predetermined roles or goals. "They need to be part of society. [They need to be] brought in and encouraged to be a working part of it." She suggests that a new model needs to be constructed. This new model, she proposes, is not just for those special education programs that continue to be behavioristically based, but also for many "traditional classrooms " that share the same behaviorist approach. When pressed for further definition of the new model, she responded that she was not sure of its parameters but that they must include

> a lot of conversation, a lot of sharing, a lot of positive intrinsic reward. . . . Setting up problems they can solve until they are risk-takers enough to try harder. It's got to be a set up for success to begin with - - rather than a set up for failure. . . . They need understanding and more nurturing and more caring and more talking about what they are doing.

Given this position, it is quite consistent that the word "we" is a very important part of Leah's vocabulary. Although reinforced by her early teaching experiences, the sense of belongingness and community have been essential to Leah since her primary school days in a tiny Pennsylvania town. She remembers that period as a time of sharing and belongingness. "I liked best the sharing. I don't

think I ever remember not being allowed to talk about things and share things."

Her willingness to relinquish the need to control the environment reinforces the concept of community. Reflecting on the beginning of her teaching experiences she said that she originally had thought that "I was a teacher. I was going to give them [students] knowledge. So I presented knowledge in ways to please me more than to please them." After six years of teaching this definition has changed. Her definition of teaching is no longer one that means "conveyor of knowledge." "If that [conveyor of information] is what teaching is, then I'm not a teacher." Rather, she creates environments and situations where students become more curious and where they are encouraged to construct explanations for questions they formulate. The students are expected to assume greater responsibility for their own learnings.

Communication is a priority for Leah. Realizing that communication helps shape thoughts and create meanings within an environment, she listens as much as she speaks. Recognizing the equal importance of non-verbal communication, she watches children's actions and responses. Curriculum, as she comprehends it, is the embodiment of the communicative life of the room.

The knowledge acquired through her experiences as a teacher's aide has provided a foundation for her belief in the necessity of children having a voice. This idea was reinforced by Marian Kuhns. Leah met and became friends with Marian when Marian gave a week-long workshop on whole language several years ago. For

several years following the workshop Marian would visit Leah's room periodically. Leah muses that Marian was always reminding her to listen to and watch students and allow their voices to form the basis of the curriculum. "Marian told me that I have to hear things three times before I really listen to it." She interacts with students on multiple levels to help them and herself find new meanings in their work, to give insight into new directions their work needs to take. In this room the community members learn from each other and share responsibility for what is happening, for finding knowledge together.

These processes reflect her acceptance of change as a reality and a necessity. In the eight years of her teaching experiences she mused that no two years have been the same. She believes that curriculum cannot be static if it is to be meaningful to students. It must be a result of and in response to students' needs and students' interests. "It keeps changing [because] we keep changing."

Part of her recognition of the necessity for change has been fueled by her own curiosity and desire to learn. She is an avid reader, has frequently attended workshops and seminars and has participated in teacher exchanges. She has accepted student teachers, not as individuals for whom she could train to "her way" of teaching, but as individuals who can share new and different perspectives on education. She is close to the three other teachers who share the common pit area with her. Those three teachers and two friends who are administrators share her love of reading and

discussing. One of those administrators is her principal. She acknowledges that he serves as a resource for "doing a little reality testing" and for "asking pointed questions." She describes these questions as the kind that force her to look deeper into her own ideas.

Leah believes strongly that children and adults must learn to move beyond their differences and see and respond to each other's humaness. This belief was strengthened by her years as a teacher's assistant in inner city schools in Rockford, Illinois. She describes this time as a period in which she was confronted with African-Americans as well as Caucasian who were so contained within their racial and/or ethnic identities that they could not move beyond them and see those who were not of their racial and/or ethnic group with the same degree of humaness as themselves.

Leah brings a sense of joyousness and play to her work. This joy, this sense of play, begins in her home. Her home is filled with a collection of children's toys. "Do you want to know what our house looks like? It's a fun house." Little trucks and cars and stuffed animals inhabit the living room. A life-sized cardboard replica of James T. Kirk can be found in their den. Before Christmas they built a huge castle out of Legos to use as a centerpiece. Her vocabulary describing activities at school reflect these attitudes, "Is that not neat? We had lots of fun." "I love it!" Her interviews, as well as many of her conversations, were interspersed with a natural spontaneous laughter. She recently described this joyous, ongoing dialogical process to education

majors at a local university by saying, "I play with kids for six hours a day because learning comes from play and doing and being involved. I am doing and being involved with what they are doing."

Yet it was during this same conversation with education majors that the intensity and passion she feels towards the profession were evidenced. At the same time that she spoke of playing with her students, she went on to caution them that the only way she can do this is to "work real hard before and after [school]." When they responded, "Yes, but that's so hard." She retorted "It's a commitment you make. Yes, a moral commitment." Then she continued by telling them that

> if you think you are going to come at 8:00 a.m. and leave at 3:00 p.m., you are in the wrong profession. You can get out now because we don't need people like that. No one's ever said it would be easy. What I do is hard. But I made that commitment going into teaching that I was going to be a good teacher.

Her intensity and passion are often focused and expressed toward teachers who refuse to continue to grow professionally. At such times she can become angry and impatient. She recently attended a seminar on the constitution. Several of the teachers there were disturbed about her interjection of whole language into a conversation. Their response to her was that "what I have been doing has worked for X number of years, so why change?" When she responded that it had only worked for a small number of students, she was summarily rebuffed. She couldn't understand why persons with those attitudes (refusal to try new approaches to learning) choose to remain in the teaching profession.

Her risk-taking, her embracing of change, her passion for commitment have a dark side in a profession held largely by norm-seeking, norm-maintaining individuals. She does not remain quiet in groups, rather she openly explains her views, often citing literature or personal experiences. For that she has received the rebuff of the many who are afraid to step away from a comfortable role of teaching. It is a source of sadness and frustration for her. She expresses feelings of the aloneness of being in a place where there are few who understand her need to follow her intuitions about what is best for children.

She expresses concern that the students identified on her roll sheet as third graders will not be able to follow through next year with the partial day multiage theming in which they have participated in for two years. As yet, there is no one in the fourth or fifth grade in her school that has expressed interest in developing a similar program for the upper elementary. Last summer she visited a multiage school in Colorado. She returned from the visit more convinced of the "rightness" of what she and her fellow teachers in the pod are doing. This fall she has been struggling with the idea of trying to develop a single multiage class that would contain third, fourth and fifth grade students or trying to interest a fourth and fifth grade teacher into beginning a third-fourth-fifth grade group similar to the D-1-first-second-third grade "pod" she has helped develop for the last two years.

In spite of the loneliness, sadness and concerns, when asked if she would go back to a traditional teaching "style" she adamantly

said "NO".

Pedagogical Repertoire

As Leah's pedagogical personality and values are reflected in the appearance of her room, so too are they translated by the teaching strategies she has chosen to utilize and the personal exchanges she has had with her students.

She has translated her belief in leading an authentic life in the classroom and her dissatisfaction with the idea of transmitting knowledge into using approaches that allow children to construct their own knowledge and meanings. "Whole language" has been one of the approaches Leah has found to be instrumental in allowing students to learn in meaningful ways. She describes whole language as a philosophical stance that asserts that language learning depends on the integration of real language into learning activities as well as the learner's motivation and self-confidence. Children, according to her philosophical stance, should have real purposes for reading, writing, listening and speaking. They should use authentic texts, both those of other authors and their own. This stance is predicated on the idea that children have been developing their own knowledge since birth and the schools must build on each child's knowledge.

Consonant with this base is the idea that learning is integrated and must be real and meaningful for students. She describes how students read and write during "reading time;" they also read and write during "writing time." Much of the classwork is

based on themes that integrate all of the content areas. The themes come from the children. She asks them what they want to study. The several ideas suggested are each brainstormed. She uses semantic webs to record their ideas. The group then narrows to one choice. Themes may last several days to several weeks, depending on the strength and the complexity of the concept. Students compose their own questions and find their own answers either through the variety of activities and materials she finds or ones that they find or create.

Her need for honesty and forthrightness are not exclusive to her dealings with adults. The following exemplifies this need as well as describes how she works to promote her belief that children must move beyond racial and ethnic boundaries. Recently while on playground duty she observed that the third grade African-American girls were all grouped together. They began to tease and taunt Caucasian girls both individually and in groups. When the students had come back in she approached the African-American girl who was in her classroom. This child is the leader/role model for the other African-American third grade girls. Leah talked to her openly about the need for all of the children to understand how much they are a part of each other. She told the child that she could not tolerate "black" groups and "white" groups. "We are all one group together." The child stated, "They won't play with us." Leah responded, "No, you won't play with them." She talked to the child about her responsibilities as a leader and encouraged her to play with the Caucasian girls so that the other African-American

girls would begin to leave the exclusively all African-American group. She has continued to dialogue with this student in hopes of moving the students beyond the necessity of separate racial groups.

Her strong sense of community has been enhanced by cross-age teaming. Originally the teaming took the form of "study buddies" for younger children. In the last two years the cross-age teaming has expanded to include several "grades." The teaming has allowed the room to become more fully a place that belongs to all of the people who enter it -- students, Leah, student teachers, and, occasionally, visitors. Children from the adjoining classes wander occasionally in and out of Leah's room looking for particular books or materials, and occasionally stopping to ask Leah or another student for assistance.

Leah's valuing of communication is evident in the kinds of exchanges that occur between Leah, the students and other adults with whom she works. Rather than monologues or directing conversations, Leah's conversations reveal a co-learner in action. "What would happen if we . . ." was often the beginning of sentences with students as well as with other adults. She willingly questions herself as well as the students and admits to her uncertainties. During one of the class sessions, a team of students approached Leah with a concern. They could not find materials that would help them answer one of their questions. They asked what to do next. Leah hesitated for a moment and then said slowly, "I'm not sure either." Together they explored options and decided on a course of action.

Her belief that children must construct their own knowledge is evidenced by her utilization of conferencing for reading and writing. Each child selects the reading materials that they find interesting. Periodically, Leah and the students schedule conferences. These conferences allow the students to discuss what they have been reading and allow Leah opportunities to evaluate each student's level of understanding. These conferences also allow her to hear the students read aloud, providing her with examples of their reading strategies. In the writing conferences, the students discuss with Leah what they are doing, she shares with them what she has discovered about their growth from their writings, and together they identify any skills that would enhance the child's level of development.

Leah encourages risk-taking in spelling as well as reading and writing and theme development. During one of our conversations she explained that she had an "unspelling" test. She asked the students to write down ten words they did not know how to spell. She said that the students sat quietly for a moment. Then one student gave her a list of correctly spelled words. The students and Leah had a conversation about the words in which Leah posited that if the words were spelled correctly, they could not be words the student did not know how to spell. Eventually, several students raised their hands and declared that there were no words they did not know how to spell. They had taken that position because they are allowed to have a book listing words they use and provided free access to dictionaries. This booklet's content is increased whenever the

class encounters new words and ideas. Content and flow are stressed in writing. Spelling and mechanics are perceived as proofing skills to make the writing more reader friendly. Leah was thrilled by the responses, declaring that it was a wonderful reflection of their self-esteems and "willingness to accept risks."

Rachel's Story

Her Context

Rachel's room stands adjacent to the central hallway of the school. It is rectangular with three intact walls. Where the fourth wall traditionally stands, there is instead a wide opening with about five feet of wall as a structural support. An opening has been cut for a door that would lead to the central hallway. Rather than being cut into a single wall, the doorway opening was created by diagonally removing the corner intersection of one of the intact walls and the partial wall. Although similar in shape to Leah's room, Rachel's room has a distinctly different ambience than Leah's.

A corner doorway has been closed off with student cubbies that face into the room. Entrance and exit from the room is from the unwalled side that faces the common rectangular pit area. Both sides of this entrance have storage cabinets that face the pit area. A door leading to the outside is tucked against the far left corner of the room. Tables and groups of desks are placed throughout the small room. Against the narrow piece of structural wall, described earlier, stands Rachel's desk. It is secluded from casual view

even when one is in the room. The walls exhibit stories and poems for the children to read. Many of them have been created by children. An ample supply of books can be found on the shelves. An open discussion area occupies the carpeted space in front of the right wall.

"Manipulatives" in all sizes are evident in abundance. Some, like Unifix cubes, are small and purchased from teachers' supply houses. Other, larger manipulatives, are quite obviously the results of raids from children's toy chests. These have included such objects as a full scale train set and plenty of tracks. In cases of these larger manipulatives, space is carefully provided to ensure that students have room to explore all of the possibilities of these objects.

The Conversations and Her Writings

When I extended the invitation to Rachel to participate in this study, I wasn't sure whether or not she would accept. In our experiences together, she has always been a quiet, thoughtful and, to a certain extent, reserved person. I was, therefore, under standably delighted when she accepted. Through the course of our conversations and my observations, I have learned to respect her intellect, her honesty and her ability to introspect.

In searching for a word that best summarizes what Rachel believes and does in the classroom I was drawn to her repeated use of the word "interaction." The way she approaches working with students and adults, the kinds of pre-planning she does, the things

she finds that are important all center around the concept of the classroom as experiences in which reciprocal relationships are formed between collaborators as they search for meanings. She described this as her essence as a teacher and a person.

> Rachel has a love to interact with other people. . . . She has that drive to interact and discover what other people are about and how they work, how they operate, how their minds work. . . . I think it's kind of a circular thing - I learn from others, they learn from me. I learn from others, they learn from me. We work together. It's a constant interaction whether it is with a two-year-old or a seventy-year-old.
>
> [She asserts that within these interactions she is] a questioner, someone to provoke thoughts in certain areas or to answer questions in certain [other] areas as best I can, and model how I solve problems, to give them ideas on how they might solve problems, to encourage them, and listen to them. I am more of a helper to guide them through their day. They don't really draw a lot of knowledge from me. We find it together. They find it on their own with my providing the things for them to discover and explore.

Learning and teaching in this context are transactional. The learners are themselves an integral part of the learning situation. They actively construct their own knowledge from the environment (which includes interactions with other children and adults) rather than passively receiving information. She describes her commitment to teaching and learning in this way.

> Teachers need to be more child-centered and listen to students, and follow their direction and go with them and let them learn in a way of discovery and free inquiry. I accept all kinds of outcomes. I look at outcomes that aren't anywhere near what I expected from a center [or activity], but it is what the child produced, the way the child saw it. The child manipulated it and made it meaningful for himself. He constructed that knowledge that brought him a step closer to understanding the theme

> or broad subject matter. So that outcome is fine with me. I accept that as true learning. It has been something that has been meaningful to him.

She asserts that individual outcomes, rather than externally contrived outcomes, must be respected because each child derives something different from his/her interactions with the environment. They cannot be "taught and evaluated" by someone's external timetables because learning is as much contingent on what the child brings into the classroom as it is on what occurs when the child is there. For this reason, adults must be willing to watch students carefully and be flexible enough to adjust the activities to meet the needs of the students.

Rachel posits that there are no mistakes in the process of learning. She perceives mistakes as students attempts to construct rules and relationships. Therefore, mistakes are personal outcomes and as such must be accepted as valid. Each of these mistakes/outcomes provides her with "a key into how much understanding they have in a particular area." She, then, uses that information to "look at the child where he is in his particular development" and to help her decide whether the child needs additional support or stimulation.

She believes that physically, intellectually and affectively classrooms should be places of safety and security for children. Children need to have "a sense of belonging, purpose and calm." They need to know that by coming and being in school they are going to be safe, "that they are going to be accepted for who they are, and that they are going to be respected for who and what they are."

Each teacher has an impact, for good or ill, on a child's life. She reflected back on how this concept was first brought to a level of consciousness by one of her high school teachers who "taught me I could do anything I want to do." She, in turn, wants to share that belief in self-worth with her students. She wants "to be a teacher that people say 'she really believed in me. She taught me I could do anything I want to do. She introduced me to a world of math or a world of books and they have helped me understand a lot.'"

Acceptance and validation of personal outcomes encourage the development of a belief in one's own self-worth. Rachel believes strongly in the importance of nurturing self-esteem through her interactions with students.

> One of my main purposes for entering the teaching profession is to help people understand that they have worth. People, students can do anything they want regardless of their I.Q.'s or their stage of development. Children are worth investing time with them because they are [each] different. They are individuals. I just can't even put into words how much people need somebody to believe in them.

Schools must accept that they are involved in a moral enterprise. Second only to the importance of helping students develop self-worth, Rachel asserts that schools must bear a moral responsibility for helping students learn how to accept and respect others. "They need to learn interdependence, how to work with other people, respect other people's work and interact with other people." She considers this to be an ongoing process that should start when the child first enters school and should be a part of the curriculum every day the student is there. After the process of developing interdependence has begun, students also need to learn to be

independent, intellectually and morally autonomous. They must learn to find what is ethical.

The parameters of the learning environment are shaped by and shape the physical setting in which we find ourselves, as well as the words and actions of others and ourselves. Rachel proffers that physical settings can restrict thoughts or they can open their inhabitants to new possibilities. Consequently, she spends a great deal of time planning and preparing her room so that "there are enough things to spark their [children's] interests to make it a realm of exploration."

> I need time to prepare the environments. First of all, I have to find everything that has to do with the theme, resources for factual study, literature, hands-on manipulatives. There are so many ways of [learning]. Children, people can learn through literature. They learn through drama, or through interviewing people, for example. You can learn through a multimedia approach. A textbook is just one way.

Like Leah, she argues that the time for such preparation cannot be during the school day, "because I need to interact. I need to be with them. So on the weekends and at night are the only times I can prepare."

Such interactions or constructs cannot be accomplished within an environment that is restricted and controlled for either the teacher or the student. She personally rankles against the control structures that are typically forced on students by teachers and on student teachers by their cooperating teachers. She offers her own student teaching as an example of the control that is imposed on preservice teachers.

> The [cooperating] teacher was very much a traditionalist and you read the words highlighted from the basal teacher's guide at the reading table word for word until you had them memorized. You didn't vary from the plan. You didn't expand, or allow them to read other books. You didn't do anything except stay with that basal plan everyday: prereading, doing the vocabulary, doing the story, doing the workbook page there and correcting them at the reading table. Then they could go do their eleven pages of seatwork. If they didn't get it they stayed in at recess.

But the control did not nor does it typically end with the completion of the student teaching experience. Veteran teachers, administrators and publishing companies continue to police and control other teachers even when they have their own rooms. Rachel describes her frustrations during her first years of teaching while trying to do what she felt was a better way, but knowing that it ran contrary to traditional teaching practices.

> Then I [was hired] and moved across the hall. . . . I thought, I cannot sit here for twenty years and teach phonics to them in the way it is presented to them [in the basal], not looking for meaning. Everyday you are thinking, "I don't think I can take the low group first. But I don't think I can take them last either." I kept saying, [it was as if] my leg was chained to the [reading] table. I decided to venture out. I didn't use the basals, but I would mark the books because the teacher across the hall would come and check to see where I was in my basal. If I didn't have the marker, she would say "I don't see any of your workbooks. Where are you putting your workbooks?" She would come into my room to see where the kids were, what page, what story I was on.

Teachers such as the one she described have never recognized, have forgotten, or have been forced to give up their own instincts about how children learn. They have become caught in the belief that the only way to teach is using teachers' manuals and curriculum guides. They have allowed other people to have "control over what

you teach and you do and how you do it." She continued by describing this same teacher from across the hall again.

> She was on the same page of the same story at the same time every year. The "slide" went down each day for each group because each group had a different color of slide. So once you got a series for five years, there were your lesson plans for five years.

She disparages the kind of teacher she described. She realizes that there are still many like that teacher who remain in the teaching profession. She worries that some of them have made tentative forays into the unknown, but have withdrawn to the safety of someone else's thinking. Even more concerning, she gave an example of how they have returned to the traditional ways, but use the vocabulary of a different philosophy to cover their retreat.

> I thought that [for a while] a lot of people really had that understanding, could adapt to that philosophy and never turn back. And now I am finding that more and more are turning back to direct instruction and using textbooks with teacher's manuals to provide [them] with questions and answers. They say they have "developmentally appropriate" rooms, but you go into [one of their rooms] and there may be a "center" that just involves following directions on a ditto with a few manipulatives.

She sees this as a compromise and she thinks teachers are compromising too much. Compromise is not always possible or acceptable. It is especially not possible if teachers know or learn that the compromise would not be best for students. Teachers must model risk-taking if they want their students to be able to take risks. Risk-taking implies real risks, in this case professional risks. It means reading the research, talking with others, and then risking something new in teaching because you have "a feeling" that there is a better way. She and I discussed on several occasions the

new National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards. In one of our conversations, she addressed compromise and the standards. Her concern is that,

> although it is a start, the standards don't go far enough. And that worries me. That means to me, that they gave in, [away from] what they truly feel. I think they compromised and I don't think you can do that when you own a philosophy. I don't know how they can deal with their own consciences when they have entered into that kind of compromise. Because they are not looking at the good of children and how children learn. They compromised to their colleges. They should be saying, "no, this is how kids learn." We are not going to change what we have written. You have to adhere [to the standards as written]. You have to understand that this is how kids learn. But I see adults doing that, compromising to please everybody.

She realizes that her philosophy places her apart from the majority of teachers. She acknowledges the feelings of aloneness, of being in a place apart that this position creates within her. She is cognizant of the risks that a teacher takes when choosing the less traveled path. She told about one of her favorite teachers in high school. This teacher began the class each day by asking "What is Truth?" Each day she challenged her students to think on their own. "She was fired, but before she left she gave us more. She showed us that answers didn't come from books, but from life."

While she disparages of the lack of willingness on the part of others to change and acknowledged the risks, she is unwilling to return to the safety of allowing someone else to make teaching and curriculum decisions for her. She admits that on some rough days she has thought about returning to traditional teaching.

> I think about what would happen if I had to go to a school where I had to follow the lesson plans to the 't,' where I'd have to do grades using the scale that the school prescribes. I believe in outcomes and curriculum, but the way I achieve it, the way children achieve knowledge cannot be dictated to me by a district's philosophy. I have to be able to use my own philosophy. I have to have that kind of professional respect that my knowledge of how children learn is going to be accepted by the people I work for or otherwise I couldn't work for them. . . . I know I could never go back to the other way.

She also does not believe that she has found "the answer " or the set of "right" answers. For Rachel, there are no permanent answers. "We cannot be static. We are growing and interacting. As we interact we act differently. We want [what we do] to reflect those actions and reactions."

Pedagogical Repertoire

Implicit in Rachel's definition of herself is the belief that she is a learner and a teacher and so are the students. She takes great joy in her own learning and shares that enthusiasm with her students. She explains that although she has more experiences to draw on than her students she learns new and exciting things from being and interacting with them. In the process of interacting she learns more about each of the children and she learns more about herself.

She brings her own experiences, as well as her children's toys, into the classroom making it a place of belongingness for everyone. This in turn opens students up to bringing things from their own lives away from school. It is not unusual to see stuffed animals and other personal belongings from children's homes in her room.

The activities and materials within her classroom setting are open-ended and promote process thinking rather than products. Students are invited to explore and discover. They are encouraged to create their own questions and then devise ways of solving those problems. Curriculum is contingent on the outcomes established by the children in conjunction with the themes that the students and Rachel negotiate together. "Whatever they need to produce their outcomes is [provided] in their environment. And those outcomes are accepted as valid because they have to show what their processes were and we accept that as their available outcomes."

Content area boundaries are less distinct in Rachel's room than in most traditional classes. She has translated the lesson of a former high school teacher who said that "answers come from life" into the way she plans for the curriculum needs of her students. The students "read and write all day." When you talk with Rachel about reading her whole face lights up. An avid reader herself, she seeks to share the joy of reading with her students.

> To me reading is just traveling. It is being able to put yourself in other people's places without going anywhere. It's kind of a freeing process for me. For the children in my room, I want reading to be an enjoyment. A time of enjoyment and a stress-free time. I want reading to open up a lot of areas of interest to them.

Social studies takes on its original intent of exploring how people, environments and events relate to one another and to the other areas of the curriculum.

> Whatever our overall theme is, building for instance, we use reading and writing to explore all of it. During that time, that's when we talk about curriculum being

> covered. It is more than covered because they are looking at building in the community, that's the social studies. In building, math is covered with their measurements. History is covered in the study of buildings. How architecture is considered in the past compared to how it will be considered in the future. They are also learning a lot of study skills: where to look things up, how to use resources. They are learning different techniques of compare/contrast, listing, outlining. It's just built into a theme study because those are the things you have to do when you study them.

Science becomes a way of looking at and exploring the world. Mathematics is seen as a tool for solving problems. Children are allowed to discover purposes for what they are taught.

And how do the students respond? "They want to do it because they are interested in it. Because they suggested it in the first place. So the curriculum is covered, only on a child's level."

Amelia's Story

Her Context

Although Amelia works at the elementary school described, she also serves as the school district art coordinator. She and three other district art teachers are housed in an annex to the district's Special Services Center. It is the inside of this "room" that reflects Amelia's personality and values most. The "room" is on the corner of a cinderblock addition to the back of a gymnasium. It has two exterior walls. The top half of each of these walls is covered with unshaded windows. A dented steel double door is the only means of egress. Once inside the doors, one is confronted with a small opening that belies the width of the doors. Immediately to the

right of the entrance is a kiln, used for firing students' pottery, which serves on occasion as a second heat source for the large room. Open wooden cases run along the length of the left wall from the floor to waist height. Above the cases, reaching within four feet of the high ceiling, are small wooden cubbyholes that look like discarded postal boxes without doors. The cases and the cubbyholes are crowded and overflowing with objects. A collection of shoes and boots marches across the top of the cubbies. As the sunlight from the windows shifts during the day, different objects come into view or disappear into the cubbies and cases. The combinations of objects, like pieces in a kaleidoscope, create new forms with the light. To the right of the case is a series of rectangular tables that spans two-thirds the length of the room and about one-third of its width. It is covered with layer upon layer of objects and papers. To the right of the tables the remaining third of the room is sectioned into three areas that are as distinctly different as the teachers that maintain them. Behind the tables, to the back of the room, almost obscured from view is a desk. If you did not know it were there, you would not see it or possibly find it, unless the telephone rang. The telephone is hidden in this back area on the furthermost part of the cases that run the length of the left wall. This is Amelia's area.

The Conversations and Her Writings

My conversations with Amelia and her writings bore striking similarities to visiting in the elementary art room. Each time we

talked or she gave me something she had written she cast light into an unexplored area, giving it form. Like the rectangular tables, with each conversation or written communication she shared, a new layer of this complex person was uncovered. Her first response to my request to walk through the contexts and reflect on the meanings in her life was "How did I get here? Tangled question!"

Teaching is one of the central themes of her life. It is more than something she enjoys doing, she describes it as "inborn." Teaching, for Amelia, is "something I have always been doing." She suggests that, "sometimes I want to teach people who don't want to be taught and [I know] I don't need to be teaching everyone. I think that is called being pedantic." In high school she taught art classes at churches. In college she taught art classes at the elementary school and the high school connected with the college she was attending. These experiences were the closest she had to formal student teaching because "there were no other art teachers. I just taught art." Her capacity for spontaneous teaching was evidenced in both the conversations we shared and the writings she offered. In conversations, whenever she introduced an idea that would be generally unfamiliar to a non-artist, she would carefully work into the conversation an explanation and examples. In one conversation about the importance of students' decision-making she described how cultural contexts can effect it.

> But the decision-making part is where the light goes. . . . Once they [students] do it, most of them can see it. [But] some children, . . . are unable to perceive the illusion of form. Especially if they are from a culture where folk art does decorative images very often. . . . They will see pattern [only] as

> pattern. If you are from a culture that does non-representational art you cannot interpret [representations such as] a photograph.

Similarly, in her writings she was careful to provide clues to their meanings by referring to authors who were most representative of her stances lest the reader become confused.

> The visceral sense in most men and women has been reduced to an economic minimum - the effort it takes to tell that a piece of paper is not a piece of bread, to tell when a parking space is not filled, to find the doors of a department store. A person who treats the world as a collection of objects that do not speak to him by their appearance will walk into a museum and see drawings and sculptures as mere objects. Buber has a constant underlying assumption which seems relevant here: all life must be hallowed, that any worldly experience can be a gateway to the eternal. Instead of this, what we find is the I-it relationship--the ability to use.

Amelia defines her teaching as "offering something and then waiting as part of a dialogue and then trying to see what you get offered back. Then offer them something else and see what they will offer back. It goes back and forth." Through the dialogues that result from her "offerings" she seeks to help students "assign their own meanings" to things which they don't know about or which would be meaningless to them. The dialogues change with the students and the contexts.

> I begin the dialogue, I've begun it a lot of different ways. . . . We will have a series of things that we will go through like that [referring to an activity she had described]. Then I ask them, "if you found this piece of paper this morning before class, what would you have done with it?" They all say they would have thrown it away, they say, or put it back. I ask "why?" and they say something like "it was meaningless." So then I ask, "what would you do with it if you found it this afternoon? And they say, "I'd keep it" or "I'd take it home," I'd show somebody how it works." That's

> what I think the teacher is [about], to help students assign meaning. That's something that is purely individual, I cannot perceive for you. Its meaning is totally individual.

Teaching as a continuous dialogue happens for Amelia when she takes "children along the way you have gone, but it would have to become their own way. To help them find their own way." She explains that the teacher "affirms" for children that individual ways can be found because the teacher has found her/his own way. The teacher affirms for them that it is possible to find one's own way by example. This kind of teaching implies the teacher risking who he/she is as a person and implies a personal commitment to create the kind of environment that will allow children to risk becoming who they are -- finding their own ways.

> They must learn to trust themselves. To know that they have value in whatever art would need from anybody. They had it when they came [to me]. They've always had it. It's like the study in perception. We don't know that we have it. It's a journey in finding out what was already there. I don't think I put anything there. I want to affirm their value, and their value in their own limits. If they like what they are doing, it doesn't matter what anyone else says.

A key to her pedagogical dialogue is questioning. She reflects on and questions what she is doing. "If questioning is used as a focusing of reflection, then I think that is the best use of it. [Questioning is] not in seeking for <u>an answer</u>." She responds to her personal questioning in her writings and in her conversations with selected colleagues. She also requires students to question and reflect what they are doing and feeling and, also, what she is doing.

Her first real opportunity for self-examination, one that shaped many of her current beliefs about education, occurred while teaching at a community college. She received a complementary book that came from a "totally different point of view from the idea of teaching art. It was the idea of teaching children." It called into question what she thought constituted art teaching. It called for her to examine her beliefs about teaching.

> It was a remarkable book-- [it] suggested no rewards, acceptance of all students' work, no criticism, no praise, active involvement, creative problem-solving. The student response was an unbelievable increase in self-esteem. They felt empowered in ways which were difficult to understand.

She decided to use the book in her class for students who were to become art teachers. Some of these students were also art majors. Ideas flowed freely between groups of students. As a result she received a great many notes from her art major students saying "why can't all art be taught essentially the way you teach art for elementary teachers? Why do we have to feel compared, evaluated like we're being, more is expected of us than we are giving?" In response she changed to a dialogical relationship with all of her students. The oral and the written interactions with students were "very lively, very stimulating." It convinced her that the traditional models for teaching art had to be discarded. Unfortunately, her decision to question traditional methodologies and encourage it in students led to her dismissal.

The decision to ask elementary students evaluative questions about what she was doing began when she realized that personal reflection was not providing her with all the information she

thought was possible. She began to have students write to her in response to what she knew would be "a very, very painful" question. She asked what was "the worst thing that their art teacher had said to them." The students remembered "everything that was an inappropriate interaction." The most prevalent response was, "If you don't listen you'll mess up." She realized that what students were coming away from her art classes remembering was only, that to do art one must listen and follow directions. She realized that

> I thought I believed one thing and had functionally done things that were supposed to make it efficient-that were supposed to make it get a lot done in a short time. The idea was "I'll make them be successful and after they are successful they'll forgive the pain of the process." That very clearly wasn't successful!

She changed what she was doing with students when she received her answers. This process is now integral to her teaching pedagogy.

Because she had no role models when she was taking her bachelor's work nor when she first started teaching she never acquired the habit of accepting the curriculum of others as her own. Referring to her teaching time during her bachelor's work she explains that, "I wrote my own curriculum because there were not only no other art teachers, and, also, there was no curriculum." She continued to follow this practice when she had her first teaching assignment after she received her bachelor's degree. "I tried to find primary sources--letters, any historical information that expanded or made the subject more interesting." Her efforts were facilitated by the fact that, in addition to teaching assignments in art history and English, she also served as the school librarian.

Her curriculum evolves by "a putting together of two things, a set of things that kids like to do--things they can do without a skill level" and providing experiences that "throw them off balance."

> It doesn't stay the same. I am always thinking ahead of what I can really make happen. I'm thinking somewhere in my mind. There's an "I want place" and it's different from where I am. And usually I just read and talk and listen, really try to listen to kids. Trying to let them tell me what it is they want.

She values the thoughts of children. "I think all children know how learning should work. They probably know how schools should work. But we don't ask them very often. But, I think I have to let them teach me how to teach."

She believes that teachers must present activities and ideas to the students that allow them to be successful, "where the weight of success goes to the person who doesn't know what he is doing." It is through the experiences with honest successes and reflection on these experiences that students are brought into the arena where they are willing to risk the unknown, both motorically and conceptually.

She admits that dialogue and questioning are, at times, difficult. The tendency to teach as one was taught is always there. "Studio art classes are [traditionally] taught in a highly critical, competitive environment. The criteria for success are hidden secrets. Professors are all powerful." Art students are encouraged to imitate their teachers. She posited that many art teachers want their students' work to reflect what they as teachers believe is most important in their art. It is through students' imitation or

adaptation to what the teacher perceives as critical elements that the traditional teacher feels validated. "I had a professor once who said that figure in art is what is important. So, if your work didn't have a figure in it you were not going to advance his theory."

She suggests that the need to continue to imitate is a trap that continues to encapsulate some art teachers long after they finish their formal schooling. They are "the ones who keep working to get it 'right,' [even] using tracing paper." Amelia has found that many of her students come with this same perception of art. "They are very good at assigning value. They assign value toward work that is done in a traditional way. They try to look at what is most imitative." Because of this perception, students come into art classes with the expectations that they cannot "do" art. "They know they can't do it, they know they have been unsuccessful before. They know that art is something they think other people do that is real hard."

Amelia has found that students, "usually those with more artistic gifts than they acknowledge to themselves [and] think 'I am good at art' are much more into control. [There are] kids [who] say "'I like drawing because in painting I can't control the brush.'" Amelia's reaction to this student need, while acknowledging it, is to help students "trick themselves into not being in control." "Not teaching them to control media, more teaching them to let go and trust." She cited DaVinci's writings in which

> he said that he got a lot of his images by looking at clouds or bark or things that were abstract or finding something that had a kind of energy or imbalance which was intriguing. If you read the actual writings of artists, even those we think of as being very much in control, [you will find that] their writing is a lot about how they learned ways to trick themselves into not being in control.

Contrary to her training that promoted the belief that the art teacher must remain aloof from the students, she has realized that "Art stays connected to the self in a way that mathematics and science and other things don't." Her recognition of the self-revealing nature of art has demanded that part of the experiences she provided students to "throw them off balance" have been rooted in those things that excited her. "I've decided that probably what every teacher can do best is to introduce the things that excite you [the teacher] because they [children] have limited experiences of even knowing adults who even get excited about something." Art has been a vehicle for her to connect with students. The art experiences and her teaching style help her identify which students are most in need of personal interactions. It is for them that she "throws [her] weight to the lighter side," to whomever is having trouble. Her art classes are a time where many students who are not successful in other educational arenas can have success. Art classes are "a place where they think they can fit and they suddenly know what they are about and they know what they are doing."

> The way that I work is at so many different levels that they can feel successful if they just get paint on the paper. They feel successful. The ones who are not able to notice what they are not doing don't think that there's more that can be, that they are [or] could be doing. They are very happy. But some kids will go

> from this one that we are doing and we will talk about patterning when we come back at the beginning of the year [in January]. They will go to Einstein's "Theory of Relativity." It just depends on what they have going for them as to what they see in terms of possibilities.

Pedagogical Repertoire

Amelia has translated her belief in dialogical teaching into a strategy of presenting things to intrigue her students. "If I' m this position, what shape am I?" "But what if I changed and turned?" "How can you keep drawing things if the shape changes?" "How are the ways you can change it?" "What if I did this and this?" She encourages children to guess, to risk. She then has them work with the media or themselves to find out what happens. She prompts and probes, asking students to "explore both ways" [questioning and experimenting with media]. "I just keep upsetting that perception [that they can't do art] by 'try this, try that'." She has not sought an answer (a "correct" answer) from her students. She wants them to discover their own answers. She is "wanting the AH-HA! Accepting the AH-HA." She has found that students surprise themselves with their own abilities and their own successes. "They'll even do something really beautiful and say, with a surprised look on their face, 'Is this it? Is this OK?'"

When the questions "Is this it? Is this OK?" come she deflects them. "I don't want them to ask me if I like it or if it's all right. So I try to redirect the question to 'Does it please you?'" When she has encountered the question, "Is it good enough?" she redirects it by saying, "Did you do your best? If you did your

best, and they always say they did their best, I say, 'How could I ask for more than that? I want you to please yourself.'"

The dialogues between Amelia and her students include questioning in written forms as well as orally. Consistent with her belief that each student must find his/her own way and in his/her own time, the questions she asks are open-ended. Most recently, only five questions are posed: "What did you do in art? What did you learn about art? What did you learn about yourself? I feel . . . about art now. What would you like me [Amelia] to teach you about art?" She has received some amazingly insightful responses [all of her students are fifth graders]:

> I learned I could do things I thought I couldn't do for so long. "I learned that if I try I can get anything." "I learned that I like art and I'm good at it." "I learned that I like to do something longer and understand it better than if I do something shorter and don't get it." "I like not knowing exactly what to do, better than knowing everything." I learned I like doing something more than once." "I feel good about myself because I didn't think it would work." "I learned that if you mess up you can fix it." "I feel I can do art because I trust you."

She works hard to help her students succeed through personally investing in her students. Recently, she became aware that five of her students that were disrupting her art classes were also disrupting their regular classes. Rather than call their parents and tell them to "fix it" she arranged for a meeting with the parents of the boys who were difficult, the boys, a Ropes course instructor, a counselor from the local youth counseling center and herself. They talked about the boys, the possible outcomes from the Ropes program and an offer from the Youth Council to pay for the

course for the boys. It was such a positive experience that the parents and boys not only agreed to the Ropes course, but they also requested additional opportunities to meet with the counselor.

Jenny's Story

Her Context

Jenny's room is located at the back and left of a suite of four classrooms. It has three intact walls that form a squared C shape, a "wall" created by cubbies and storage cases and an opening to the common pit area. It is the left half of what was designed originally as a large double open area room. The wall of cubbies and storage cases divides the large area in half. The other half of the large area has been designed into a room for the first grade that is taught by Sarah. Jenny's room is, therefore, nestled between Sarah's half of the large room to the right and Leah's room to the left and front. The close physical proximity of the classrooms, the existence of a common open area and two hours of cross-group teaming with the other three teachers each day provide both support and, willingly or unwillingly, friendly surveillance.

At the right side of the entrance of her room are a two drawer file cabinet and a teacher's desk. The desk usually has stacks of materials at either side, a traditional lesson plan book with green and white squares in the middle, books lining the back of the desk top and a picture of Jenny, taken last summer, in her wedding dress with some of her students. To the left of the entrance is a table with a computer and printer.

Chalk boards line the front left wall and the far left wall. Charts and chants and stories are neatly arranged on the center back wall. Low rectangular tables and small chairs are located throughout the room. A discussion/conversation area is located in front of the far left chalkboard.

The Conversations and Her Writings

Jenny is in some ways the newest member of the four person team area, but in other ways she is not new to the team at all. Although she is a first year teacher, formerly she was both a student teacher and a teaching assistant to one of the other members of the team. Additionally, she substituted for another team member for several weeks before being hired as a teaching assistant. She has, therefore, participated in the changes that have occurred with the other three teachers for the last three years.

The role change for Jenny has been rather dramatic. She discussed having been Sarah's student teacher and teacher's assistant. In both roles, Jenny was afforded both independence and structure. Sarah encouraged Jenny to develop units and activities for the students, yet at the same time was there with suggestions, should Jenny need support.

> Being a teaching assistant, I was making chart chants and I did a lot of stuff with the kids. I was always there. I did prep work a lot of times, so I was able to observe a lot and see. Sarah really helped me get comfortable. She made me go to the library by myself and find all of these books on a topic. I had to do this and that thing, and if she had not made me do it by myself, completely by myself, I don't think I would be as strong.

Jenny has, therefore, had to make transitions from being primarily someone who takes directions from another to one who is a co-worker and from a role of limited responsibility to that of full responsibility for a group of children. For Jenny, the transition has been more modified than it would have been with most first year teachers. She is continuing to work with the same people with whom she has worked for two and one-half years. She openly admits that they have been generous and open with their support, their time and their teaching ideas and materials.

> Being here with Sarah, Leah and Rachel has taught me a lot. They just seem to have thought a lot. They have it all together. They know what they believe in. It gives me a little bit of extra security in what I am doing. It makes me think I am doing the right thing, what I am supposed to be doing. I mean, I have Sarah next door to tell me "you are doing the right thing or you are not doing the right thing." I have always have somebody to turn to . . . I remember one day I was up here and it took everything I had to keep from crying. I was just going, "I don't know about this. This is a real lot of responsibility." I can remember Leah pulling me to one side and saying, "Honey, you are going to be just fine. You are going to do just fine. You are a good teacher. You know that." Leah is really good to build me up. Sarah and Rachel are too. They are real supportive. They make me feel real good about myself.

While Jenny perceives the support as essential, she is still having to find her own way and her own identity through this first year. "Real teaching" is remarkably different from student teaching and being a teaching assistant.

> I knew what went on but, still, I didn't know. I knew things would work but you just don't really know until you have to do it for yourself. [When I was a teaching assistant] I didn't consciously sit there and watch children to see what they could accomplish in a day. Until you have your own room, you just don't know. You can see it, but until you have it all dumped

> on you, until you have to do everything yourself, you do not know. You don't understand how the whole process of everything working together really goes.

Finding her own way also means dealing with teachers who have seen and worked with her in another capacity. She is in the process of re-establishing her relationship with them. This has proved to be somewhat of a challenge because, as Sarah put it, "we are all strong personalities." Yet, she has been able, on various occasions, to assert her own personality and opinions into the group discussions.

There are some direct parallels between what Jenny is experiencing herself and what she wants for her students. She described one of her major concerns as a teacher to be focused on helping children learn how to become interdependent, responsible for their own actions and capable of solving problems. She perceives these to be primary objectives for schooling. "A place where they come to learn to socialize, a place where they learn to assume responsibility. . . . They need to be able to make wise decisions, to be able to solve problems when they encounter them."

She believes that children need to learn how to become interdependent, but she doesn't see many adults serving as role models for these beliefs.

> Everybody wants to rotate in their own little world, do their own little thing and not be bothered. That's not the way, not if you want to be really happy, not if you want to be really successful. You have to be able to converse with other people. You have to be able to make decisions for yourself and be responsible to and for others. You must be able to problem solve rather than just plugging in pat answers.

She believes that children can accomplish these goals better when they have a variety of both children and adult role models. To this end, she has come to believe that multiage groupings, whether full day or part of the day, are more advantageous to interdependent growth than totally self-contained classrooms. Jenny has observed over the last three years that when children are provided opportunities to work with other students who are either older or younger or both, they grow in ways that they are not able to grow in with just their age peers --"growing so much more compared with just being in a room all by yourself."

One of the distinct advantages of multiage activities is that children are placed into situations where cooperation is essential. There they are afforded opportunities to develop respect for each other and learn how to cooperate with one another. The children select their own questions both as individuals and as a group. They then decide as a group which activities will best help them answer their questions. As they work through the activities in the group, various member's strengths are utilized for the good of the group. Jenny sees this kind of cooperation as a life skill that must be nurtured in schools. "As far as the whole person, it helps him/her a lot. [In the small groups] they are having [to learn how] to get along with new people within the activities they choose to do."

She posits that it is through problem posing and problem solving with children of various ages that a child becomes more capable of looking at both his/her own and other children's thinking. Working with ohter chldren offers the student the

opportunity to watch and listen to other students' problem posing and problem solving strategies. The small groups also afford students opportunities to try their own problem solving strategies within a supportive environment. "They are having to solve problems that come along," even when it is something as apparently simple as "having to decide who goes first and who is going to go last."

She admits to being a "kid watcher" and being continually amazed by her students. "Kid watching" permits her to be aware of the progress of students and to become more aware of their needs and interests. "I think to begin with that you have to be able to watch children and know what they are doing and know what they are learning."

Like Rachel, she has found that her students' abilities often exceed what she had expected of them. It is, therefore, impossible to plan for the needs of students unless one is a careful observer of children. "I put them [activity materials] out for them to do. I was shocked . . . It just amazes me that I put those things out and they came about that in their own way, not knowing that they knew what they knew."

Kid-watching necessitates flexibility in planning. Jenny, like many teachers, has planned activities for students, only to find that the students bring more to the activity than she expected or that they do not have the background of experiences to derive much meaning from the activity. Kid-watching and personal/professional flexibility dictate that when either of these outcomes occur the teacher must be willing to acknowledge and respect where the students are. The teacher must be willing to change the lesson

plans or activities to accommodate the students. She finds it incomprehensible that there are teachers who can make lesson plans far in advance. "I do not feel like I can [make long range lesson plans]. I do not make my lesson plans three months in advance. I do not make them out one month in advance. I can make them out, max, two weeks in advance." Even then she is aware that students' needs and interests may change those plans at anytime. Her plans are continually in progress.

Jenny believes that learning is an ongoing process. Learning should be on a continuum. Children should be allowed to learn at their own rates. She has accepted the belief that learning must be individually appropriate for children as well as age appropriate. If a student is not "ready" to learn a concept now, he will learn it in the future when his experiences and his cognitive development are such that real learning rather than superficial memorization can occur. She believes that children should be allowed to move as far as they are ready to move during a school year, and then be allowed to continue growing the next school year.

Yet she finds that there are many teachers who feel bound to teach from a prescribed list of skills to "prepare students for the next grade." She worries that these teachers are dominant in the teaching profession, yet she is willing to give her colleagues the benefit of doubt. "I don't know, in the current atmosphere. I don't feel like it is all developmentally appropriate. At the same time, I don't know. I haven't been in everybody's room. I don't know what they are really doing."

She expresses the belief that superficial learning and adherence to external criteria and timelines leads to undue stress on children. She believes that schools have the responsibility of being non-stressful learning environments for children.

> I don't want to seem that I don't have expectations [for students], because I do have expectations. I do have things that I want these children to accomplish. At the same time, if they are not ready for it, I'm not going to beat them over the head to make them ready. I'm not going to say, "You *will* be ready for it."

As she finds school a place to learn new things from both her students and her colleagues, she wants her students to find her room to be a place that invites their own learning. "I want my children to feel relaxed and I want them to be happy. I want them to enjoy coming to my room. I want them to enjoy learning what they want to learn."

Her experiences in college were limiting when it came to understanding or practicing what is actually going on in schools. She doesn't think that most colleges of education are able to keep pace with what is going on in the field. In the school where she attended she found the school of education to be disjointed and the professors often espousing contradictory ideas.

> I know that just from the college I went to there is only one professor who introduces you to this type of teaching. Everyone else does not. [For instance] In my preparation for math, I was not introduced to Math Their Way. I had heard of it, but did not know what it was. I had no idea what it consisted of and even my science preparation was very traditional. We had to make our lessons straight out of the basals.

She was grateful for the one professor that seemed to have an increased level of awareness and shared it with her students.

> All of my reading, all of my diagnostics, all of my language arts were with the same professor who taught a very whole language approach. She was real literature based in everything she taught. So everything we had to prepare came from that aspect of the real book. . . . If I had chosen another professor I would not have gotten any of those thoughts.

She explains that while she is grateful for the professors' assistance, it has been her colleagues in the team that have nourished and supported her professional growth since she left school. They have helped her expand on what was begun in college.

> Maybe I would have done reading and writing pretty much similar [to the whole language approach taught in college], but as far as science or math, those would have come straight out of the book. I did not feel I had a strong enough background in science and how to present it through literature. Where do these ideas come from? I think that Leah, Rachel and Sarah have showed me a lot. Sarah really helped me get comfortable [with what I was doing]. If she had not made me do that by myself, I don't think I would be as strong in my feelings.

Pedagogical Repertoire

As Jenny is nurtured into growth by the team members, she in turn believes in nurturing the growth in her own students. She always has time to listen to them. She takes time to talk with them, to relate to them as persons, not just "students." Even when she is "taking a break" students feel free to come and talk to her. They come to her to share their joys and concerns. She always stops what she is doing and listens to them.

Because she stresses interdependence as one of her focuses, she plans activities for students that encourage their working together. She does not perceive talking with your neighbor to be "cheating, " rather she believes that it is a way for children to learn from each

other. She has adopted the methods used in the whole language approach and in Math Their Way to help reinforce cooperation between students.

Whole language and Math Their Way are programs that she uses to incorporate some of the other concepts that she wishes to stress with her students. Children are encouraged to explore materials in their own ways. They are encouraged to find their own problems and solutions.

She uses traditional activities in more open-ended ways, allowing students to find their own knowledge. For example, she brought in an addition game that involved a game board that was shaped and colored like a Christmas tree. The ornaments were manipulatives. Cards with addition facts were provided. She did not tell the students how they should play the game or even that they had to play. She left the materials as an open invitation for learning. The students surprised themselves and her with their abilities to combine the number values and reach solutions. It also gave her new directions to go with her students.

Like many beginning teachers, Jenny's teaching repertoire is a combination of what she has learned from other teachers and what she is willing to try on her own. Similarly, her beliefs are a combination of intuitive understandings and those concepts that she has accepted from those she trusts professionally. As she becomes more confident in her own teaching abilities her beliefs, assumptions and teaching strategies will become more personalized.

Sarah's Story

Her Context

Sarah's room is one of the two rooms at the back of a suite of four rooms. She has three intact walls. Only the side adjacent to the rectangular pit is open.

Her desk stands to the left of the entrance of the room. It is usually jumbled and stacked with things the students have brought. She seldom sits at this desk, rather she and the students use it as a place to put "treasures" until later in the day or time to go home. The insides of the desk are utilized similarly. The drawers are storage for important things that children bring from home that need to be kept "safe" until some future time. The children understand that the only things that may be touched on the desk are their personal items or community objects like staplers.

Next to the desk, running the rest of the length of this side of the room are cubbies and coat stalls. Running parallel to these cubbies and stalls are long moveable two-sided racks of books. Student tables and chairs are located in the center and the right hand side of the room. A fairly large open discussion area is located toward the center of the right wall with bookshelves beyond it. The discussion area has one adult-sized chair and an easel for recording stories or propping up large books. In the far right corner of the room is a door to the outside. The walls are covered with students' pictures and stories as well as poems that the children like to reread and chant.

The Conversations and Her Writings

When I distributed the requests for participation in this study, Sarah was the first teacher to respond positively. This was not a great surprise to either of us. In the public and personal interactions Sarah and I have had, she has always been willing to share her thoughts and beliefs.

Sarah has a strong sense of responsibility and commitment toward the others with whom she works, both children and adults. This conception is a significant part of who she is. Throughout our conversations and her writings she continually refocused towards concerns of various groups, individual children and the teaching profession. Many of her opening statements, written and oral, include the word "we."

"We" in her first sense of the word is the team of teachers with whom she collaborates for part of the day. "We had to hide out in the janitor's room and really talk about where we were." "We were living that way." "That's a good reason why we're doing this." Formed three years ago, this group of four teachers participates in multiage grouping experiences for two hours each morning. The group is an outgrowth of a series of activities that she and one of the other teachers in the group (Leah) began five years ago. Sarah was teaching a developmental first program; Leah was a third grade teacher, whose room was close to Sarah's. She and Leah decided to experiment with cross-age experiences, "team time." Experiences were developed that allowed the students to participate in activities with a common theme that "incorporated literature

extensions and art." At the end of the project, as she and Leah reflected on and evaluated the outcomes of the experiment, they realized that such activities offered "many positive aspects" for the children in both groups. Her ideas of multiage grouping have grown from that original experience.

"We" also still includes the district Developmental First program and the district's early childhood direction. Sarah is and has been a openly vocal advocate of developmentally appropriate practices. She was one of the original planners and implementers of a Developmental First program that began in the district six years ago. As a kindergarten teacher, Sarah encouraged the administration to explore the possibility of establishing a program for those children who would be unable to succeed in the traditional first grade program of the district. She was distressed that many first grade teachers had expectations for the incoming students that were usually reserved for gifted students or second grade students. Yet, she acknowledged that their expectations were not without some basis. Many of the more affluent children in the community were sent to "preschool" at age five and kindergarten at age six. Although this was ostensibly done only for children who were "developmentally immature" most of the five-year-old children sent to private preschools received the same curriculum that other five-year-olds were experiencing in the public kindergartens. As a result when the six-year-old children with preschool experience entered kindergarten they had already completed the traditional program. "Enrichment" and first grade curriculum were brought in to

keep these students from becoming "bored." This eventually became the curriculum standard. Those students whose parents were either unable to provide private preschool or who believed that it was not appropriate were faced with an overly demanding kindergarten curriculum and a first grade program with standards that many of them had difficulty meeting. As a result, Sarah began advocating more developmentally appropriate practices to meet the needs of students. She saw developmental first programs as one of the ways to allow children the freedom to grow at their own rates. Since that time, Sarah has sat on the superintendent's teacher advisory committee and participated in workshops, task forces and study groups inside and out of the district that have related to the welfare of young children. Although she is no longer on his advisory committee, she continues to speak with the superintendent whenever she believes issues need to be called to his attention.

Her advocacy for children begins in her school room. Sarah expresses the belief that children's rights to be human must extend into the classroom. In order to do that she asserted that teachers must be sensitive and aware of what has happened and is happening at home.

> . . . the other thing that bothers me a great deal is for people [to walk into classrooms and] think that there is no other world in that child's life other than that classroom. Expecting a child to leave his/her luggage at the door that he/she is carrying. And he is not expected [or allowed] to bring it into the room. He [is expected to] put on a whole different face, even when he's been up all night, whether he's got family problems, whether the kid has come to school hungry. All of that is supposed to be left at the door.

One of her priorities is seeing that awareness and sensitivity of action is accomplished through effective communication between the parents and herself. She seeks out opportunities to meet with parents. Early in the school year she has a group parent meeting and then establishes a practice of frequent communications between herself and the home.

"We" also implies her strong sense of community and collaboration with her students in her classroom. She acknowledges that students bring their own learning strategies and schemas to school. Curriculum is designed to reflect the students needs and interests. "The thing we do is focus on them, not impart knowledge, but focus on where they are going." This focus helps establish a sense of belongingness to the room. It nurtures a culture and helps build a learning community that she sees as essential. Reflecting on her class she described it by saying, "This is a community and we must get along as a community. We have to give and take from each other." She perceives learning to be first a social activity.

She sees her part in the community as that of a facilitator who enhances, supports and assists children while they extend their own knowledge. As she sees herself responsible for the community, so too, she sees students responsible for their own learning. "We are all teachers in this community, supporting each other."

> I feel like it's time that we should be teaching children to learn. And you must give children that freedom. If you hand it over to them and enhance it, they can go further many times than what you had expected.

She believes that by teaching children how to learn and by supporting their learning she can help them make sense out of the world around them. She attributes the coalescing of the idea of creating meaningfulness in education and teaching to the experiences she had with two workshop facilitators in the summer of 1989. At a personal level, she said that Marian Kuhns helped her make sense out of what she was feeling, but at the time had no words to express it. "This is it. This is how we feel. Now this has a name. We didn't know that it had a name." Later, when workshop director Lydia Wims shared with her participants her premise that, "children need for learning to make sense," Sarah was able to perceive the complementary sides of meaningfulness and learning.

Giving children both the freedom and the responsibility for their own learning means giving them control over their own learning: letting them make choices, letting them make decisions about the directions the curriculum will take, letting them make mistakes. It is an idea that she conceded is unpopular, almost heretical. She posits that control is one of the major issues in schools and classrooms. It is one that concerns her deeply.

> There's that aspect of teachers that we talked about a lot, that control issue. I was very aware of that quite a while back. It's that control thing that you get used to because it has always been there. But that doesn't necessarily mean that it has to [continue to] work that way. Most teachers are used to being in control of the class and the curriculum. Some of that is basic personality. I think teachers tend to be drawn to teaching because of their personalities. They are drawn to it because it is something they can run and make it run like they want it to. I think [many] people are drawn by control issues and that's how they end up in teaching.

But without those freedoms and responsibilities she contended that there can be no "joy of learning, a joy of what we do here." And she truly believes that learning must be a joyful process. She describes her own learning as a joyful process and seeks to share that joy with her students. She argues that with so many choices available in children's lives they will not choose learning unless it is something that brings them joy. The motivation for learning must be intrinsic. She also readily asserts that those things that are not joyful are discarded or forgotten and offered a story from her teaching past as an example.

> You know I used to be really afraid of science, maybe the word is not afraid. I didn't like to teach it way back when. I think probably the reason why is that all we did was read it and you were supposed to understand it. You know the textbook thing. Read it, answer the questions at the end of the chapter and you are supposed to understand it now. And I think that is why I probably didn't like it.

She discussed the change in her perceptions of science that were brought on by the students helping her "discover science." "I was really surprised! We did a big water theme last year. Discovering aspects of water." In the process she discovered her own joy in learning science and is now excited about opportunities to share that sense of joy and discovery with her students.

Because of her sense of responsibility and commitment she is perceived by many in her local educational community as a leader and a person on whom other people can depend. I first observed this characteristic during district meetings when I realized that other people were deferring to her in discussions. It was evidenced again and again during our conversations by the frequent interruptions of

others. The "others" kept coming into the room and asking: asking for things, asking for help, asking for direction, wanting to talk. The "others" were other teachers, parents, student teachers (hers and other teachers'), an occasional university professor, and former students.

Her writings and conversations often take on a decidedly pensive tone. She reflects frequently about what is happening, what has happened and what can happen. She believes that reflection and self-examination are necessary for growth. But she does not restrict the reflection and self-examination to herself. She frequently draws the people around her into reflection. "We evaluated this time spent together [and] we saw many positive aspects."

As reflection and self-examination lead to growth, growth necessitates change. Change is something that Sarah embraces. It is a second essential part of her being. Where many teachers are frightened of change, she feels innervated by it. Sometimes the changes are small, others are not. In her sixteen years of teaching she has taught in three school districts. The districts ranged from a predominantly black urban district, to a white rural district to the predominantly white, middle and upper-middle class school district where she works now. In the six years she has been in her current school, she has voluntarily moved rooms four times. She has taught from kindergarten through sixth grade. Most importantly for her, she said that she has gone from the stance of a beginning teacher, "I didn't really have a philosophy" to some deep

philosophical commitments that she expresses publicly.

Pedagogical Repertoire

As was expressed earlier, one of Sarah's strongest characteristics is her sense of responsibility and commitment to others, including her students. That commitment is expressed through her personal efforts to insure that students' individual needs are addressed. On one visit, I observed that after the clean-up bell had sounded she suddenly sat down with a child and began to listen to him read. Later she explained that the child was one who had just recently begun to really read on his own. "I could not resist having Clay at the last minute. He had had to do the computer, but he needed that last book on his reading record."

That same characteristic and her sense of advocacy of children led her to go to the principal after a substitute had left the building and ask that she be permanently removed from the substitute list. The substitute had forced a child into participating in an activity when he clearly wanted only to watch. She then turned to the student teacher, and in a voice audible for several rooms declared, "It's OK. He's just acting like a brat."

Her strong sense of community and collaboration with her students in her classroom and her desire for continuity between what happens at home and at school was exemplified one day during discussion time. The students had requested the reading of a book on architecture. As she started the book, she remarked that she was sorry that a particular child was out of the room, "remember how he

loves to draw and make models." Several of the children joined in, commenting about the child's love of drawing. The group decided that it was important that the child be able to share in the book, so they waited. When the child in question came in within a few minutes he was elated to discover that not only had his interests been acknowledged but also that the class felt strongly that he should be there to participate.

She describes feeling that it is her responsibly not only to become aware of what is happening at home and share what is happening at school, but also to educate parents. She recently participated with a parent in "educative" dialogue about a student. The child had finally begun to read independently. At school he had been thrilled to read to others and alone. Yet, the thrill had begun to fade. He was becoming reluctant once more about reading. Sarah had contacted the parents. She asked if the child was reading at home. The mother confirmed that he was. Sarah asked if either parent were "standing over him while he reads." The mother responded affirmatively. She then asked if the mother had corrected the child's language every time he had attempted to speak when he was a toddler. "Of course not," was the parent's response. Sarah provided a comparison between the way children begin to speak and the way they began to read. "Oh," said the mother slowly, "do you think that is it?" The parent agreed to quit hovering and correcting the child and observe what happened.

In helping students find meaning, she chooses the small everyday things that go on to show them how to relate "school

learning" to "real life." She helps them make connections to mathematics by having them count the lunch trays, assist in taking attendance, predict and estimate using ordinary objects like watermelons and pumpkins. They look for words they recognize on signs, newsletters home and in new books. "Do you see any words you already know?" She helps them reach into the unknown from the safety of the already known, encouraging risk-taking.

Sarah's students are given the freedom and responsibility for their own learning by allowing them to make choices first in the books they read, then by helping the group develop study questions and topics and later by selecting activities they may use to resolve those questions. She facilitates question and topic development through the extensive use of semantic webbing. By mid-year her students are quite adept at using the semantic web to define areas they wish to study.

Sometimes the joyfulness of teaching takes a decidedly "silly" turn in Sarah's room. "Probably the most fun about having these children is they enjoy silly. They enjoy the rhythm of language and the excitement of learning." Nor is Sarah immune to participating in the playfulness that learning can be. At Christmas time, she brought Chris Van Allsburg's book, <u>The Polar Express.</u> She and the students all brought their gowns, pajamas, robes and house slippers and read the story together. They then reenacted the story and made trains from candy to take home as mnemonic devices for the retelling of the story to the families.

Sarah shares the need for reflection and self-examination with her students as well as her colleagues. After a discussion with the other members of the multiage team it was decided that the children, too needed time to reflect. Now during the last fifteen minutes of each day the teachers draw their groups together to reflect and "share what they have done."

The Pod's Story

Their Contexts

As mentioned earlier, the school building is entered through a spacious atrium at the front of the building. The remainder of the building is reached by passing through one of the triple interior atrium doors. To reach the intended area, it is necessary to turn to the left and walk past the suite of administrative offices on the left and the bright, beckoning media center on the right. Upon walking through the double fire doors beyond the administrative suite, the building becomes transformed into a busy city in daylight on the left and the same city re-created by the night on the right. Painted in vibrating colors, the children's work helps create a different atmosphere from the rest of the building. Directly in front of the path, beyond the paintings, is a diamond shaped pit area that is subdivided into four smaller areas by partitions. Each area contains different kinds of activities related to buildings and architecture.

To either side of this central pit are two identical large rectangular pits that open into four rooms apiece. Each pit has two

steps down to its bottom level. Each is capable of holding 100 children, if some sit on each of the two layers of steps, and some sit in the floor of the pit. It is to the right rectangular pit area, that we seek to go. A small lop-eared black bunny, in his cage, inhabits the far end of the pit. Boxes of books, pieces of rugs, and boxes of assorted materials sit on the steps. Most of the time children, both individually and in groups, sprawl in the area, reading, working with materials, and conversing in low tones. Two rooms are located side by side at the far end of the pit. One room is located to either side of the pit. This pit, the four rooms around it, and the inhabitants of the totality of space they create are called the "Pod."

The concept of the Pod has developed over the last four years with various events/interactions between several teachers. The first of the events occurred when four teachers from the building, Leah, Sarah, Rachel and Erin attended workshops with Marian Kuhns and Lydia Wims on whole language. The following school year, 1990-91, Amelia (the art facilitator) began teaching art to the students in Sarah's Developmental First (D-1) class. At the same time as the art project, Sarah and Leah began coordinating a "study buddies" program between Sarah's D-1 and Leah's third grade. During the study buddies interactions, the third grade students became intrigued with the art work that the D-1 students were creating. As a consequence, the D-1 students taught their third grade buddies how to create the art, also.

As Leah, Amelia, and Sarah discussed this turn of events, they began to realize that younger students can and do teach older students. In mixed age situations, it is not always true that older children are the "teachers." Rachel (a second grade teacher) and Erin (a first grade teacher) and Elizabeth (the assistant principal) were brought into the discussions. The group began an intensive study of developmentally appropriate practices, whole language and multiage groupings. Over the course of the year they studied and discussed. Before the school year ended, they asked the principal if he would be willing to allow them to try multiage groupings on a limited basis the following school year. They also requested that they all be placed around a shared commons area. After sessions with "pointed questions" the principal agreed to the arrangement. (Pointed questions is a phrase that Leah uses to describe the discussions with the principal in which he tries to draw forth from them their thinking, to carefully shine light into areas that may not have been previously considered.) All through the summer they planned.

Before school started they arranged for a parent meeting so that they could talk with the parents about what they wanted to try. This provided parents with time to think about what was going on and, if necessary, an opportunity to express their concerns. The parents responded positively. The first year of the "Pod" Sarah, Leah, Rachel and Erin were the teachers. They spent part of everyday talking, reviewing, reflecting. Every Tuesday afternoon they stayed until after 5:00 planning and re-evaluating. Erin did

not return this year. She chose to take a year's absence to be home with her first child. Sarah moved into Erin's first grade position. Jenny, who was Sarah's student teacher in 1990-91, Rachel's substitute for several weeks in the fall of 1991 and then Sarah's teaching assistant for the remainder of the 1991-92 school year, was hired as the fourth member of the Pod. She replaced Sarah in the D-1 teaching assignment.

Their Conversations and My Observations

Most evenings, if you go by the school, you will find members of the Pod team reflecting on, evaluating, and/or posing questions about what they or their students have been doing during their multiage "team time." There may be as few as two Pod members or all four may be there as well as several student teachers, several other teachers from the building or visitors.

There is a synergy created by their work and discussions together. In both their discussions and their actual work, one senses the enthusiasm, excitement, sense of mission, and challenge that most teachers had when they began teaching, but which has become lost in the routines of existence. Each of these teachers retains, or has reestablished, a sense of personal commitment to what is happening and together they propel each other toward greater professional and intellectual growth.

Like their students, each derives personal meanings from the interactions with their colleagues as well as with the children. They pose questions individually and as a group about what they are

doing and what the doing means. They are willing to ask hard questions about what they are doing and what the kids are doing. They are also honest enough to admit when things don't work and need to change. An example of this stance was reflected by a comment made recently by an administrator who conducted a series of workshops that included the Pod teachers. He said that he had never worked with a group of teachers who so frequently reflected and examined what they are doing.

They are learners as well as teachers. Their discussions do not rely on observations and reflections exclusively. Citations from current research and literature are often interjected into their conversations. They comb the research looking for information from other teachers who are also trying to redefine themselves. They discuss and compare the research with their own observations and experiences, searching for understanding.

R: I wonder if people that have had other non-graded systems have come up against these kinds of things and how they have handled it.

S: I don't know if Learning and Loving actually talked about it.

L: It did say in that the ideas did originate from the kids. It said that but it didn't say how.

S: I don't remember that.

L: But it did show several different (pause), like webbing, mapping . . . What they did was brainstorm in their own groups what they needed in their city and designed their city with streets and all the different things. They had . . .

R: What did they spring off from?

L: They sprang off from pollution. They all needed a sewage and a water treatment plant. So they had to find good

> places. One group put their sewage treatment plant next to the restaurant. And then they talked about where they had put all of this and they ended up with a lot of mapping skills.

R: Which I think would be real helpful.

These attributes are supportive of their shared realization that teaching is a process and as such they cannot conceive of discovering a perfect way to work with students. The phrase "what if" is frequently in their conversations when they are discussing where they are going. Symptomatic of this realization, in the eighteen months of the multiage groupings, they have altered their format at least five times and are currently looking at another format change. They explain that as their perceptions and understandings change, their formats evolve in new directions.

An educational philosophy that is based around the concept of developmentally appropriate practices is essential to what they are doing. They use this as a core concept around which what they are doing is framed. They rely on the two parts of the definition provided by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as criteria for activities that they plan. Both age appropriate and individual appropriate interests and needs are considered as they plan and work together with their students. When they are questioning what they have been doing or the appropriateness of new areas or activities they are considering, they refer to the definitions for guidance. A comment made during an evaluation session is typical of the kind of referencing they do.

> I feel like that. I have thought a lot about that. After going back and rereading that developmentally appropriate practices book one more time, I think

> we are struggling to force situations, collaborative efforts, instead of just letting things go at the developmental level of each child and let them work it out. So that's what I am saying . . . [After this beginning, the speaker took out "the green book" and reread aloud the two parts of the definition before they continued to evaluate what they were planning.]

Integrated into this philosophical base are the tenets of constructivism and the current whole language movement. These tenets unconsciously form a framework, a loose format, for designing a new unit of study with the children. First, the teachers do not accept the premise that knowledge consists of isolated bits of information. Rather, they believe that human beings construct knowledge by putting things into relationships, weaving meanings. To accommodate this belief, they use a thematic approach to teaching. As one study is concluding, they ask the children, "What do you want to learn next?" They listen carefully and record the responses of the students and look for common themes within those responses. The common themes are discussed and considered. Part of the decision to choose the next theme is based on how well it flows from the previous themes. They look for connections. The study on animals led to a study on forests, which in turn led to a study on shadows. The focus of the studies tends to become narrower and more indepth with each new theme. They try to optimize the possibility of finding relationships by working with the students to develop a semantic web around the theme once it has been selected.

Second, they acknowledge that knowledge is constructed as an interrelated whole. When new information is acquired, the individual actively works either to adapt the information to make it

"fit" into her own current knowledge base or schema, restructure her current knowledge base to accommodate the new information or discard the elements of her current knowledge base that do not "fit" into the new interpretation. The teachers' belief in this kind of learning is developed by intellectual risk-taking through the process of posing questions and finding tentative "answers." After new "teams" are established, the children are asked to share with each other what they already know about the theme topic and to record the questions they have about that topic. These questions are used by the students, both as individuals and as a group, to guide the selection of their activities.

Third, these teachers do not believe that knowledge is a matter of transmitting information to others. Instead they believe that individuals are busy constantly constructing and reconstructing their own knowledge regardless of the source. Once a general theme is chosen, and the students have recorded what they know and what they want to find out, the teachers work to create open-ended activities. These activities are designed to allow students to find their own purposes, answer their own questions, and relate what they are finding to what they already know. The teachers, other adults with whom they interact, and other children are resources, not "answer givers." The outcomes that each student creates are considered as valid. There are no errors. What would, in other classrooms and contexts, be considered "errors" are considered indicators of growth instead.

> S: The thing about it is, though, if we let them have it, the best ideas have always ended up coming from them . . .

R: I can see that in math. You know, when I let them choose what is open and available, they pick it out. When I put it out and say, "go to this table, go to that table" I never have out what they need. They will say, "I'm bored with this. Can I get that? It's over on the shelf." And I say, "Sure." They end up playing [pause]. They know what they need. We learn this over and over again. I told Christie, here's the difference between having behavioral problems and not having them--let them have a choice.

Within this philosophical framework, children and adults are seen as teachers and learners. They are all participants who must be afforded respect for the schemas and knowledge they bring to the learning situation. They believe that each individual is, therefore, capable of sharing information and participating in activities intelligently. All participants are acknowledged as being able to and responsible for interjecting their own purposes into the activities so that the activities have meaning for the individual.

R: You know their mapping skills can mean building with blocks and making their little house or neighborhood store.

S: We can do that and spin it back into our rooms more.

R: I think if it is an open-ended situation the kids are going to take it and they are going to be able to extend it.

Because they believe that knowledge is an interactive process, collaboration is perceived as necessary. Collaboration, like knowledge, is interactive in nature and is the means by which a community of learners is established. Their convictions unknowingly reflect Dewey's (1938) belief that" all human experience is ultimately social: it involves contact and communication" (p. 38). Collaboration is valued because it affords the multiple perspectives that are essential to creating a community in which cooperation,

negotiation, shared ideas, shared space, and shared power allow problems to be solved and decisions made. School is a place where individuals gather together to share, to pose questions together and alone and to learn.

Collaboration in the classroom exists within a variety of contexts. Adults and children collaborate with each other to discover the interests to be pursued, needs to be assisted and abilities to be nurtured. Based on what they have seen and heard from students and each other, the teachers make informed decisions about what activities will accommodate those interests and needs, what purposes may be infused in the activities and what materials will best assist in the development of meanings. Children collaborate with children thereby expanding and extending their knowledge bases while sharing and modeling learning and problem-solving strategies.

Beyond the classroom, collaboration extends to other teachers in the building. David, the music teacher, has been collaborating with the teachers for two years, providing multiage instruction to the groups in various permutations. Alex, the physical education teacher, began multiage instruction with the groups this year. Patty, the speech pathologist, has been coming to the classroom to work with her students rather than pulling them from the room. As the result of the speech push-in, the teachers have realized that part of what had been traditionally assigned for the speech-assisted child as homework could be accomplished with friends in the classroom. On some occasions, the speech therapist meets with the

speech student and his/her small "team" to work on speech/language activities together. The members of the small group, in turn, become more supportive in assisting the child with therapy. In a similar manner, the teacher for the learning disabled students, Jean, also comes everyday, moving through each of the rooms, working with small groups of children without singling out those children identified as learning disabled.

Collaboration with parents extends beyond keeping the parents informed through report cards and notes. Parents are welcome and have become participants in several of the classrooms. The home is seen as a place for extending what is going on in the classroom. Parents are informed as to what is occurring at school and are asked to provide activities that will extend the learning or occasionally provide an experience for the student before beginning new studies in the classroom. Recently, when the Pod decided to work on a project on buildings, they asked the parents to take their children downtown and walk through the downtown area while talking about the buildings. One parent was delighted with the assignment to take her son downtown to look at the buildings. His response was so intense that the family is now providing him with art lessons. The parents' feedback, in turn, alerted the teacher and she began to provide more books on architecture in the classroom. Because the parents were asked to be involved, it was discovered that the father of one of the students is an architect. He was asked to come to school and talk with the students. The teachers reported that he shared extensively with the students, at levels they were able to

understand, further blurring the lines between learning at school and the "real world."

Collaboration extends to the school district at large and the community in other ways. The arts/dance director from the local dance company and the district arts facilitator collaborated with the students and teachers on a unit on shadows last spring. Shadows were danced, painted, and created with puppets and shapes. This spring, the district art facilitator will again be working with the students, evolving a new project that incorporates the fine arts into the interests, needs and abilities of the group. The woodworking teacher at the high school has been contacted and is waiting to become part of a future theme.

As important as collaboration is, the teachers realize that there must be a balance between interdependence and independence. There must be times when the students can pursue their own interests, provide for their own purposes and seek answers to questions that no one else may find as important. In their discussions the teachers weigh these elements, realizing that "balance" must rely on a moveable fulcrum. The fulcrum must at times move more towards one end of the continuum, and then again, more towards the other end of the continuum. The independence they seek to develop is consonant with Kamii's (1982) term "autonomy."

R: Do you think? I don't think that they all have to be doing one "group thing" that is all produced by the group effort. Not all of the time. Let's think.

L: Basically where I am coming from is [pause], I just thought that that's how we needed to get together and start working. That's the major thing about first making friends and working together.

S: What we did a year ago, when we did our first one, we had 27 centers. A lot of working together. Maybe our expectation is too high, because even though a lot of those centers encouraged working together, they came away with something of their own, too. But you know.

R: But I am noticing now, and since we have all discussed this. I discussed this with you and Leah earlier, it's the same problem. A lot of my centers lead to collaboration, trying to get the children to integrate their processes and they end up with one product.

S: That's right.

R: But I decided and that what I had out this week was individual sheets of paper for everyone to make it more individualized on purpose and yet still encourage their discourse to be integrated and collaborative. [The result was that] they were still sharing ideas although the products were their own.

At another time, they discussed in this manner:

L: I am going to have each kid doing a different building.

S: Each kid doing a different building?

L: Yes. I am not going to kill myself to get them to cooperate when they are not yet ready to cooperate like that. They couldn't even decide on the color of paper to cover the cereal box. No. I am going to have them each do a building that goes with their literature.

R: And I will probably give them a choice. I will probably say, if you want to work on one [together, that's] good, or if you want to each work on one [by yourself, that's] good too.

S: I think what we are going to hear from them is

R: Because I know that with building those houses sometimes I made them all do one. I imposed myself on them. But a lot of the time two worked, the two youngest worked together, the two oldest worked together. But they were at the same table, sharing the same paint, talking about what they were doing. And then I said, "it has to be one house." And they said "OK," we can cooperate and do it.

L: See, that's basically what I want to do. Have each of them do one by him or herself and then put them together to make a whole story. Map out a story with the boxes, with the different parts of the town.

S: I think we have plenty of options. I don't think we have to be bound by any one way of doing this.

R: Let it be open.

Autonomy and interdependence are issues that the teachers have had to deal with personally since beginning the multiage groupings. There have been times when each of the teachers has wanted more independence from the group. Each has occasionally felt constrained from moving in a direction that she perceived her students ready to move because of the whole group involvement. A second issue of independence has concerned "giving up one's own students" for part of the day. Letting go, letting the students rely on another teacher is hard for teachers of young children. A part of this difficulty seems to come from a deep sense of responsibility for their students at all times. In the beginning, especially, this was an emotional struggle. This struggle occasionally resurfaces. "I don't really think I can give up my students for [an hour a day] for four weeks, not as long as I am the one who is supposed to be responsible for them." A third related issue involves the difficulty of accommodating everyone in the group. Given the three year age span of the group, there have been occasional difficulties designing a project that will stimulate interests from the students without overwhelming the younger ones and under-stimulating the older ones. Projects and activities are constantly evaluated and re-evaluated to keep all of the students in mind.

They share a common philosophy and similar professional attributes that contribute to the growth of the group. Yet, "in some ways it's very hard for four people who are as distinctly

different and strong-minded to work together." They have accommodated their similarities and differences by serving in different roles in group processes, using the varying strengths of their attributes to help the group function more effectively and support each other's growth. Sarah tends to function as the person who keeps the group together, drawing them back in when necessary. She is often the person who looks for the compromise through seeking clarification of different meanings. Sometimes she accomplishes this task by being an oral historian, chronicling events. She helps maintain the culture of the group. Leah brings her enthusiasm and focus to the group. Her intensity and focus impel her to challenge the group to take risks. She also tends to be the one who stresses collaboration the most. Rachel interjects her reflectivity and her depth of knowledge into the group. She tends not to speak as often as Sarah and Leah, but when she does speak, it is from thoughtfulness, mindfulness of the meanings she places on what is being discussed. Jenny contributes her beginner's freshness of view to the group.

Through their exchanges and interplays of personalities, they have developed a common vocabulary and common internal language. This has developed over time because they talk frequently, and explore each other's meanings. It is similar to what Kuhn (1962, 1970) described in the development of a scientific paradigm. They have shared common training and literature in recent years. The Marian Kuhns and Lydia Wims trainings and, more recently, a series of workshops on the project approach are but a few examples of the

continuous inservicing they attend together. They share and discuss research and literature articles. They have "shared work examples." They share a worktime together. During that worktime each will occasionally point out to one of the others things that are going on with students. After school, they discuss what they have seen and observed, searching and redefining.

> S: You know what I am hearing when I compare back, how it happened and what we are doing this time, I think we forced it. I mean think about it. Remember the centers, I mean they weren't totally one idea, not one of them. Maybe we are forcing it.
>
> R: What do you mean forcing?
>
> S: We are asking them to all come up with one thing. So many things. Last year, at this time of year, they came to their own.
>
> R: I don't know. Let's look at it. . . .

It has been to their advantage to have developed this vocabulary and internal language because it enables them to communicate more effectively with each other, but it is sometimes confusing to "outsiders." Because of the common internal language, when one of them is discussing, a thought may be left unfinished, like a shorthand note. The group will proceed from that point, needing only those few key words that were uttered as a reference. Those unfamiliar with the meanings and context around the key words are at a loss. At other times during discussions there are outbursts in which all of them are talking at once. The outbursts are followed by silences. During the silences they are apparently processing everything that was said, because the next comments reveal that they all understood each other. This common vocabulary

can be additionally confusing to those who want to have them explain what they are doing. At a recent inservice, Leah was challenged by another teacher who claimed that Leah was using subjective rather than objective measures to evaluate her students. Leah's response to her was that "you just know what is right." She had difficulty understanding that this teacher did not have the same experiences and could not identify with the key phrases that Leah was using.

One of the activities that has allowed this internal language to develop is the emphasis that they have always put on "kid watching." "Kid watching" is a term that implies not just looking at the child, but becoming aware of all of the contexts around the child. Because they work with the same children at a common time for part of the day, they often experience the same events with different perspectives. They use these common experiences to help them look at the children and their needs and interests and give them continuous program feedback as well as providing additional examples for their paradigm.

S: [child's name] was really wonderful today. He stayed with his work during work time. At the end, he came over and showed it to me.

R: But, then, right at the end of the day when I have my math he will start to lose it a little bit, but I think he is trying real hard. But I worked with him today and he worked with Pizza Man. He really stuck with it. He said, "this is fun." I just wonder if he has ever played games with anyone.

S: Probably not.

L: That's a good observation.

R: I mean, it was just like that, he stayed calm.

Their choices and decisions to collaborate in this multiage grouping have not always been positively received. They will admit both as individuals and as a group that they have had to deal with a great amount of emotional pain and anguish caused by other teachers who do not understand what they are doing. There are many more traditional teachers in the school district (as in all school districts) who are comfortably encapsulated in their teacher "roles," allowing teachers' manuals to script their interactions with children. These are the teachers who resent other teachers "shaking the foundations." These are also teachers who are not silent. Some of them have cast aspersions on the Pod teachers both when talking with other teachers and when talking with patrons or members of the community at large.

The teachers have found that seeking to move into areas that have not been explored by others can be a very scary enterprise. One teacher described the process as building a bridge as you are walking on it, laying down a brick and stepping, all of the time realizing that if you forget the brick you will free fall. Periodically, the realization of what is happening astonishes them.

L: "I don't know what we are doing!"

S: We won't know until we get there. It just works that way."

They are willing to take risks, realizing the possibilities of failure. They have been able to work through the risk and the sanctions from other teachers because they have each other, the support of the building administrator and several other administrators in the district, including the Superintendent and

Assistant Superintendent of Instruction. But they recognize that support is needed for others who step into the unknown. In other buildings where teachers are willing to risk alternative curriculums, they need support from the building and district level.

Because of the criticisms they have experienced, they are particularly concerned that the growing interest in what they are doing will bring them and other teachers who seek alternative curriculums into a collision course with groups of teachers, including the teachers' union. This issue concerns them more than any backlash from the powerful conservative element in the community. They have not sought to hide anything they are doing. But seeking forms of collaboration or alternative curriculums means that there will be the possibility that groups of teachers in different buildings may also want to work together. If those teachers seek to do a multiage grouping the question of finding teachers in continuous grade levels becomes important. What if there is not a teacher at one of the grades that is needed to form a community, but another teacher in the building is willing to change grades and participate? What if the teachers who wish to form a community all want to move to one end of the building so that they can be in physical proximity, even if it means moving three or four other teachers? What if they want to share "specials" (music and physical education)? How will their peers respond to several teachers having "first choice on the specials" so that their students can work together or so that they can have common planning times? These are not questions that the teachers can resolve.

These questions must be answered and support provided by building and district administrators.

Pedagogical Repertoire

According to Millies (1991), pedagogical repertoires include not only teaching strategies, experiences and routines, they also include images. She defined teaching images as "symbols representing concepts; in many ways they present a concrete manifestation of an abstract and complex idea" (p. 37).

The image of a community of learners is a strong image that the teachers in the Pod use as shorthand, as a "key word/phrase," for a concept towards which they are working. It embodies many of their ideals and aspirations. The term "community" implies a sense of collaboration and partnership in which the members are all learners and teachers. For this to happen, the teachers realize that they must be responsive to the students' needs and interests while being aware and learning from their own "presences" in the environment. They balance their work with the students: sometimes becoming involved in the games and activities and sometimes "watching" so as to better respond to the students. It is a delicate balancing act, one which they re-evaluate frequently. One discussion this fall was particularly focused on the balance between involvement and watching. They were unhappy with the way that the student teachers were interacting with the students. Then they realized that the student teachers were standing back and "kid watching" without also interacting.

R: I think we were watching and the student teachers were watching, too. I felt like mine watched and I was watching her interact. Then she started to watch them interact instead of actually interacting with the children. I think we have to actually interact with a lot of the kids in order to understand where they are at and provoke their thought processes.

L: Instead of us modeling interacting with the kids. It didn't work that way. They modeled us watching the kids.

R: I know mine didn't interact enough.

S: I wasn't happy that way.

R: Mine was interacting with children, maybe one at a time, but I wanted her to see more children. You can't just interact with one child a day.

Their discussions kept coming back to the acknowledgment that children really have a sense of where they need to go next and that this sense must be respected.

S: If we let them have it the best ideas will always end up coming from them.

L: I find that everyday.

R: They know what they need. We know this and we have learned it over and over again.

Because of this respect of the students as partners in their own education, the teachers work diligently to listen to students so that it is the interests and needs of the students that form the core of the curriculum. As mentioned earlier, they ask the students, "What do you want to learn next?" Then they develop open-ended activity centers that will allow the students to explore and research in their own ways.

This same respect for students and sense of community means that students are provided opportunities to evaluate their own learning and the learning environment. After activities or themes

are completed students are given papers on which to reflect and evaluate their own performances from both the social context (how well they worked with the group) and individual learning context (what they discovered). In group daily discussions, the students evaluate the environment by discussing what they have done that day, what they think was best, what might need to be improved, and where they want to go the next day.

The sense of community also implies a warm, nurturing and supportive environment that allows everyone to take risks. Children are encouraged to take risks in their mathematics problem-solving. Rather than giving the children algorithms, the teachers have incorporated Constance Kamii's (1985, 1989) approach to constructivist mathematics. Children are provided with problems in groups, sometimes the whole class. The students are allowed to work through the problems and share their strategies aloud with the other students. No answer is considered "wrong." No strategy is considered as "not the right way." Through the process of dialogue students find answers, but they also learn that answers can be arrived at in various ways. The same open-endedness, allowing for errors, applies to reading and writing. The students read and write constantly, but they are not penalized for errors. Reading is a process of learning lots of strategies and sharing them between adults and children and between children and children. Writing process acknowledges that thoughts are of first importance. Punctuation and spelling are "proofing" mechanisms used so that what has been written can be published and celebrated in some form.

"Community" is, for them, a living process that (using Leah's own word) "empowers" both the children and adults. As the children and adults learn more from each other they empower themselves as learners and teachers and thus redefine the community. It is a spiraling process. Some things will be revisited, but each visitation comes with new experiences and new knowledge by which to interpret differently. Given these parameters, the story of the Pod will not have an ending. It will continue to evolve as long as the teachers continue to explore their own teaching and learning and the students' teaching and learning.

CHAPTER V

INTERSECTIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Introduction

Connelly & Claudinin (1991), and Lincoln & Guba (1985) caution that generalizations must be avoided when constructing narratives. Accordingly, in looking at the lives of several teachers, care has been taken not to look for common elements in an attempt to derive a shopping list of characteristics by which one may identify, or worse, attempt to mold, other "uncommon" teachers. The pedagogical lives and meanings of individual teachers cannot be neatly categorized and "fixed" into either permanent forms for comparison or recipes which others can follow. The data acquired about people's lives are not only bound by their personalities, beliefs, and language, but also bound by time and space. People continue to move and grow and have their being beyond the moments and their meanings that are captured in print.

Lives can, however, intersect through the language of description and metaphor when expressed in authentic dialogue. From expressions of personalized languages a new, shared language can be developed between speakers. Such language allows persons to discover where their lives meet and touch or diverge from each other, yet not obscure individual meanings. It is within the context of potential intersections, the moments of shared

meanings and insights between the lives and thoughts of the teachers who were studied and the lives and thoughts of other individuals, that the original questions of this study have been reinterpreted and examined.

First, this chapter will examine the intersecting points between the pedagogical lives and meanings of the teachers in this study and the lives and meanings of other individuals through their writings. Their lived and perceived "contexts," the experiences they use as descriptions and metaphors for their lives, and the meanings they ascribe to what they are doing will serve as entries into possible shared understandings. Secondly, this chapter will offer the researcher's personal reflections on what these intersections, these shared understandings, can mean.

Research Intersections

Contexts, experiences and interpreted meanings play constraining and enabling roles in individual lives. They are blendings of the personal, the societal and the cultural. The cultural and social structures of schooling press on individuals--adults and children--attempting to shape them. These individuals, in turn, respond to, interact with, and sometimes create, cultural and social structures. Throughout such processes meanings are constructed and reconstructed in individual lives. Additionally, contexts, experiences and meanings are notations of time and place. The past and the present leave indelible and discernible marks on

the possibilities for cultural and social structures as well as lives.

Description and interpretation of personal, cultural and social environments within time parameters offer introductions into lives (Connelly and Claudinin, 1991). Consequently, it is the interpretations of the historical contexts of teachers' lives that will first be explored for possible intersections between their lives and words and the lives and words of others. Understanding the manner in which adults have interacted with environments and one another is prerequisite to exploring the possible educational environments that can be created by children and adults (Bussis, Chittenden, & Amarel, 1976). Constrained adult contexts can inhibit the evolution of new environments, stunt the growth of persons, or force adults to leave those contexts. Contexts that enable adults to grow and become more fully human provide fertile environments for further growth in adults and children and encourage participation.

Research Question One

The first question to be asked is: Of what significance, value and meaning are the events and changes the teachers chose to describe in their stories?

Although the teachers' experiences were unique, their responses to personal historical events were interpreted by them in a similar manner. The teachers in this study repeatedly interpreted former events and experiences as parts of a process of movements away from contexts that are no longer deemed as sufficient and movements

towards other contexts that might or might not yet have a form or substance.

This process of moving away Anderson & Hopkins (1991) also found occurring in the lives of the individuals with whom they conversed. They called it "leaving home." They described this process as being either physical and/or mental. Regardless of its origin, leaving home requires that individuals leave behind that which was normative and known. It requires that the person step beyond the safety of what has been accepted without question, and search for personally meaningful answers. Through their conversations, Anderson & Hopkins discovered this "truth" [their word] about this process.

> What is left is a consciousness that once felt secure, had categories to fit things into, and knew who it was, where it was going, and why. And what replaces this sureness is 'not knowing.' An openness. And something unspeakably, and sometimes almost unbearably, new (p. 48).

Similarly, Drake (1991) proposes this "leaving" in terms of a journey which the individual may choose to assume, a "lifelong process toward the actualization of human potential" (p. 49). She describes it as "heeding the call to adventure" and accepting that one can no longer tolerate "the inadequacies of the existing schema" (p. 51). In a similar manner, Campbell (1972) writes of it, "The familiar life horizon has been outgrown: the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of the threshold is at hand" (p. 58). Kushner (1977) elucidates, saying it is a "Setting out, leaving everything behind. The social milieu. The preconceptions. The narrowed field of vision. The

language. No longer expecting relationships, memories, words, to mean what they used to mean. To be, in a word, open" (p. 24-25).

Rachel's student teaching and beginning teaching experiences constrained her from moving away from what she believed were inappropriate ways to work with children. It was only in the physical moving away from this constraining context that she was able to experience another reality and an awakening of her own intuitions about teaching and learning. Rachel's experience was similar to the first year teacher Bullough (1989) studied. Both felt constrained by their cooperating teacher, yet both moved away into different directions. Whereas, Bullough's teacher moved away from the first year teaching experience into more traditional, normative teaching behaviors and roles, Rachel used her leaving as an opportunity to move toward an alternative path that had, as Anderson & Hopkins describe, only vague definition. "Kerri" (Bullough's teacher) sought autonomy only as it brought a feeling of being in control (p. 12). Quite differently, Rachel identified with the students' need for autonomy, and sought curriculum directions that developed autonomy in both teacher and learners.

Leah's student teaching and teaching assistant experiences created within her a disquietude and rebellion that Greene (1973) perceives as conditional for self-consciousness, greater personal clarity and educational action. Leah, like Rachel, felt herself, and the students with whom she worked, forced into unrealistic roles and constrained from growing. As Greene (1973) describes, Leah was provoked to explore her own uncertainties and to ask her own

painful, and perhaps unanswerable, questions. Hers was not so much a movement *towards* as a running away *from* "what teaching was not." When she moved away, she burst out into an unknown. Her words are reminiscent of Wiggington's (1985) remark to his students, "Look, this isn't working. You know it isn't and I know it isn't. Now what are we going to do together to make it through the rest of the year?" (p. 32). Like Wiggington, she intuitively turned to her students as a source of curriculum questions and needs.

Sarah has moved physically and philosophically during her years of teaching. She chose her present district because of its reputation for permitting teacher autonomy. Yet, when she had been in her present district for several years, she was forced to question her own teaching beliefs by teachers in the district who applied undue pressure to young children, forcing increasingly more difficult curriculums on them. Similarly, Erin, the teacher who worked with the Pod in the 1991-92 school year, chose to leave a previous teaching assignment because of regimentation. Once she had made the commitment to teach differently, to respond to the needs of the students rather than to the design of the district curriculum guide, she felt compelled to share this commitment with her principal. The principal responded that she would need to choose between this new commitment and her teaching position. She chose the commitment.

Amelia's experience of leaving was both voluntary and forced. While she was philosophically moving in new directions, she chose to stay at the university. She was morally impelled to take a new

philosophical position, what Kant would call rational and right action (cited in Greene, 1973, p. 230). The morality of her act was not dependent on the consequences. She could not or would not recant. She did not choose to leave the university; her students did not choose her to leave them. As in *The Dead Poet's Society,* the school could not accept her non- conformity and chose her leaving for her.

Historically, then, the teachers in the study have chosen as one way to interpret their different experiences as opportunities, "calls to adventure." These calls have required that they acknowledge that formerly accepted concepts, ideals and ways of responding were inadequate and, consequently, must be left behind. They have chosen to interpret their experiences as calls to embrace openness, uncertainty and the inevitability of change instead of accepting the normative and known. Like Juster's (1965) character, Alberic, each has been willing to say, " I don't know what I am or what I'm looking for. [I am not] a wise man or a fool, success or failure, for no one but myself can tell me what I am or what I'm not" (no page number). This commonality is not to imply that each individual does not still retain multiple, additional interpretations of their experiences, they do and these additional interpretations must be allowed to retain their full meanings. However, this similar interpretation of a call to adventure provides a first exemplar, a first intersection between the lives of the teachers in the study and the lives of the individuals in Anderson's

and Hopkins' study, as well as the experiences of Drake, Campbell and Kushner.

Research Question Two

Given this interpretation of historical events the next question to be addressed must become: How do the teachers describe and interpret their current "contexts?"

Reflective of a predominant definition of schooling that requires individuals to participate within defined roles, each of the teachers in the study has had repeated experiences with fellow teachers criticizing or shunning them because of their decisions to refuse definition and roles. Their decisions to leave the known and embrace uncertainty, to create organic environments where individuals can draw upon and nurture each other, have been resisted by the majority. There has evolved a social environment dominated by isolation and censure. It has been created by adults in the school environment for whom traditional teaching has been comfortable and "safe." In such an environment, the teachers in this study have often felt alone and abandoned. Instead of trying to cope with the personal and professional alienation that often occurs for teachers who become separated from their own identities and beliefs by confining education roles they are confronted with an alienation from other teachers who have become so confined.

The emotional process for the teachers of this study in leaving traditional and normative roles and curriculum behind has paralleled the processes that those who have sustained the death of a

significant other must face (R. Dematttis, personal communication, March 19, 1993). Each teacher has fluctuated, at times, between denial and isolation, anger (or frustration), bargaining, and acceptance (Kubler-Ross; 1969, 1975, 1978). Early into their quests, they could not or would not recognize that they had moved away from the normative stances of other teachers. Even now, especially when they have had more emotionally exhausting days than usual, a sense of isolation and loneliness almost overwhelms them. It has not been easy for them to accept this alienation from their colleagues. Avoidance of the reality of their situations occasionally affords transient respites from that sense of isolation. For example, Jenny temporarily quit attending a teacher's group to which she belonged because she could no longer deal with the acute disparities between what she was doing and believing and what the other teachers were doing and believing.

Characteristic of the grieving process, Leah and Sarah become frustrated and try to rationalize or "bargain" with more traditional teachers, with expectations that others will really change their assumptions and beliefs "if only they knew." They have not yet reached a level of acceptance of either themselves or the others that will allow them to "let go" of their colleagues. As Greene (1973) declares, "It is difficult to give up the hope that human beings know, intuitively and absolutely, what is right and what is good" (p. 237). Only Amelia, who has survived other educational losses, customarily accepts that there are those who will never understand what she is doing. Amelia chooses instead, to watch and

to listen, as Kazantzakis said, "to discover how to signal my companions" (cited in Fergusen, 1987, preface, no page number).

Over time, Amelia's patience and the others' persistence has rewarded them all in small ways. A network of fellow educators who provide challenge and support has begun to form. From this network, new contexts are emerging. This network, a community of learners, consists of individuals within both proximal and distal communities as well as authors whose writings are perceived as supportive and validating.

Within the school district a small, but slowly enlarging, group has begun to converse and visit with these teachers. Word of mouth has been the primary vehicle for the discovering of like-minded individuals. Adding to this group have been a significant number of artists across the state. This connection has been as a the result of Amelia's work with city, county and state arts councils and her artists-in-residence program. Amelia has brought the artists and teachers together in collaborative efforts that have provide adults and children with more open, interactive environments: a fall arts and education festival, two elementary arts-based summer school programs, and numerous arts-in-education collaborations. The reflections of these experiences between the teachers and artists has further enhanced the growth of all concerned.

The network of support has been expanded to include several university professors. The acknowledgement of the teachers' efforts and sense of collegiality that has been offered by several

professors from state universities have supported and enheartened the personal and professional lives of Leah, Sarah, Rachel and Jenny as they work.

A professor of early childhood frequents their classrooms, exchanging ideas and concerns. A professor of elementary education not only frequents their rooms, she has also called upon them to interact with her students through dialogues in her classes. The head of the art department at a local university has recently extended an offer to collaborate with the teachers as a result of Amelia's efforts. Amelia has, also, been sustained and encouraged by her personal interactions with Maxine Greene and by Greene's writing.

All of the teachers are, deeply influenced and supported by the writings of others. Rachel pours over the works of Piaget and Kamii and derives new meanings with each reading and retelling. Sarah and Leah have been heartened by the writings of Calkins (1983, 1991), Weaver (1990), Short and Pierce (1990), Short and Burke (1991), Atwell (1987, 1991) and Goodman, Goodman, & Hood (1989). Dewey (1959a, 1959b) influences them, as do Wiggington (1985) and Adams (1975). Freire and Shor influence them through the writings of Smith (1986) and Weaver and Henke (1992). These authors offer support through examples of their own risks, their own openness to change, and their own frustrations as well as their own joys at the discoveries that come of working with children when one has the courage to "let go" of known ways.

The current contexts, then, are the results of decisions by teachers to embrace openness and leave behind the known and expected ways of educating. These decisions to choose alternative ways of looking at and responding to schooling have resulted in the necessity to deal with alienation from and, occasionally, painful confrontations with colleagues.

Conversely, these alienations from a majority of colleagues have also opened teachers to relationships and dialogues with other professionals, some educators, and some artists. Consequently, the teachers have become more open to curriculum alternatives. From these new contexts, new relationships, and dialogues there has evolved a new vocabulary, a way of touching each others lives. This new vocabulary and its meanings require further exploration and explanation.

Research Question Three

A last question to be asked is: What meanings can be ascribed to what the teachers are doing?

Through the sharing of stories and narratives, the meanings, the incongruities and the ambiguities of lives are examined and reexamined. Reaching deep within minds and spirits, words are discovered and images and metaphors are created that represent personal truths to others. Through such sharings individuals hope to reach beyond mere personal translations of words, to go beyond the incommensurability created by differentiated paradigms, and to

establish a new, deeper, common language by which to speak and truly understand one another.

It is through a new language--truths and realities that are communicated not just through words, but also through metaphors, images and myths--that teachers can develop and share alternative curriculum meanings. For as Huebner contends (1975), without a new language, without new questions, images, and metaphors, educators will not be able to break from the traditional framework that binds them to times and places past their belonging. It is the beginnings of this new language, the vocabulary of those teachers participating in this study and those who have provided voice through their writings, that will be examined. Their words, words used frequently in their conversations with each other, words spoken with those with whom they are learning, words used by authors of like-mindedness, and words expressed through actions have been selected for more careful examination to discover their shared meanings.

Values. Inherent in the discussion of language, pedagogical lives and curriculum meanings must be the understanding that all curriculum is bound up with values. Huebner (1975) identifies two major realities that confront curriculum workers: talking about educational activities and "the existential situation of choice among differing classroom [or educational] activities" (p. 221). The first reality is tied to the language of description, how the educator talks about or describes the activities that will or are transpiring within the classroom. It is within the context of the

language used to describe the activities that the underlying value system first emerges. Language forms the framework that will determine the relationships that can or cannot develop during and in response to the educational activities.

Huebner differentiates between five value frameworks that can undergird curriculum: technical, political, scientific, esthetic, and ethical. The traditional educational paradigm embraces the technical, the political and/or the scientific value frameworks because they are the most consistent with the predominant societal values of rationality, economic meritocracy, authoritarian power and control, and empirically-based knowledge. Huebner claims that the esthetic is often completely ignored because esthetic valuing of educational activities would require that they be appreciated for their own intrinsic beauty, without consideration for usefulness, viewed in their wholeness and reflective of the meanings each individual would discover within them. Ethical valuing would view educational activities as encounters between human beings.

> The encounters are not *'used* to produce change, to enhance prestige, to identify new knowledge, or to be symbolic of something else. The encounter *is*. In it is the essence of life. In it life is revealed and lived. The student is not viewed as an object, an *it;* but as a fellow human being, another subject, a *thou,* who is to be lived with in the fullness of the present moment or the eternal present' (p. 227).

The second reality is tied to the first, the choice of activities. The choices made about activities are determined by the same valuing frameworks that determine the language used to describe them. Indeed, it is here that the value framework becomes more explicit than it is in the selection of descriptions about them.

This is possible because of the ambiguousness of the spoken language. Each listener or speaker may have different meanings for words. But activities and materials are not language-bound. Both the activities, and materials for those activities, which are chosen and not chosen reflect the underlying value system. Traditional choices have been made to support technical, scientific, and political frameworks. Those activities and materials that do not support, do not inculcate, or which do challenge the current cultural, political, and economic institutions of the larger society are consciously and unconsciously not selected. Alternative choices within the esthetic and ethical have become obscured by most, pushed to the background in the current educational attempts to define a technical and scientific methodology that will "solve our problems once and for all" (Beyer & Apple, 1988, p. 3).

It is within these last two frameworks, that those who are searching for curriculum alternatives find themselves. Characteristic of the ethical and esthetic valuing that Huebner describes, Amelia defines her teaching as "offering something and then waiting as part of a dialogue and then trying to see what you get offered back." She refuses to direct or inform students. Instead, she helps them find their own meanings. "That [meaning] is something that is purely individual," she says. Rachel, too, waits for children to discover their own questions and "accepts as true knowledge" the meanings the children discover for themselves. Loris Malaguzzi (1987) explains that from the very beginning children are curious and refuse to learn simple and isolated things.

They thrill in finding the dimensions and relations of complex situations. They search out the places of transgressing them, shifting the significance, creating analogies, metaphors, anthropomorphic meanings and realistically logical meanings. . . . these are the magnificent offerings of children. Their rhythms, their own rhythms require great respect" (p. 19).

Autonomy. Consistent with the choice of an ethical and esthetic framework for education, the teachers in this study value autonomy, the discovering of "one's own rhythms," both for themselves and for their students. In searching for a definition of autonomy, they have chosen to rely extensively on the writings of Kamii. Kamii (1982a) conceives of autonomy as the aim of education. If it is not the aim, she declares, neither schools nor society can move forward. Kamii derives her basic conceptualization of autonomy from the works of Piaget. Piaget (1965) first described autonomy within the context of moral development. He posits "that the child's theoretical morality could be subject either to the principles arising from unilateral respect (morality of heteronomy and objective responsibility) or to those based on mutual respect (morality of inwardness and subjective responsibility) (p. 175).

Through such a statement Piaget declares that autonomy is differentiated from absolute freedom (anomy or license) or heteronomy (absolute obedience to authority). This, he declares, is because inherent within autonomy's meaning must be reciprocity, inward reflection and subjective responsibility. Although autonomy means being governed by oneself, it can only exist within the

context of the morality of relationships with other persons. It is different from heteronomy. While heteronomy also deals with relationships of others, it does so only because it implies that others govern one's whole life. Autonomy, then, is a balance point between absolute individual freedom and absolute control by others. It is the moral response of living within a community.

Autonomy can be either moral or intellectual (Kamii, 1982a). Moral autonomy is constructed by the individual as moral and ethical decisions are made within the daily processes of living. Children who are encouraged to resolve conflicts through open discussion, learning to view from another's reference point, develop a sense of moral autonomy. Conversely, children who are given inflexible rules which are maintained through rewards and punishments do not learn to become morally autonomous. Instead, they learn heteronomy, blind obedience to rules and authority. Moral autonomy goes beyond duty, beyond the letter of the law, and beyond obedience and conformity. It is consistent with Kohlberg's highest level of moral development. The teachers in this study exhibited examples of moral autonomy by refusing to remain in environments that have required them to perform actions they find unacceptable.

Like moral autonomy, intellectual autonomy acknowledges that responses to life are more than sets of "truths" that must be memorized and ingested unthinkingly. Intellectual autonomy asserts that knowledge is a constantly evolving, personally negotiated process. It develops under conditions where participants in the learning environment are encouraged to discover knowledge and

critically evaluate information for themselves, rather than internalizing it from the environment. Macdonald, Wolfson, & Zaret (1973) describe it as a discovery and decision-making process in which each learner can "experience himself as a growing person, . . . test and affirm his purposes and commitments, . . . [and] continue his romance with ideas, things, people and places" (p. 18).

The implications for the classroom are apparent. If the participants in the process of education function within a paradigm that objectifies other human beings, heteronomy is the only possibility. If participants function within a paradigm that perceives and responds to other human beings with the belief that education is a process of nurturing moral and intellectual growth in each other, then autonomy will develop. One senses Rachel's belief in student autonomy through her words, "teachers must listen to students and follow their direction and go with them and let them learn in a way of discovery and free inquiry. I accept all kinds of outcomes." Again, her beliefs can be anticipated when she describes the activities in her room, referring to herself as a questioner, as someone to provoke thoughts in certain areas, and as someone to model problem-solving. Likewise, Schwartz (1992) describes his classroom as a place where "the teacher proposes to learn with his or her students" (p. 107). He advances that students must be trusted to contribute to their own learning. Duckworth (1987), also, asserts that children must be about the process of finding out about life by watching, "finding questions to ask, and figuring out

ways to answer their questions. What question the children find an answer to is not very important. What is important is that they realize that answers can be found through their own investigation" (p. 59).

Empowerment. To realize that one can construct knowledge for one's self is to move beyond empowerment. The actual meaning of the term "empowerment" is a contradiction to its intended purpose. Empowerment, by definition, means the sharing or giving away of control and power. Both the literature of school restructuring, generally, and site-based management, specifically, describe the importance of sharing control and power with the ultimate aim of shared decision-making.

To assume that one human being can empower another is to still live within the context of the authoritarian control and meritocracy that has had such disastrous consequences for society and education. "Empowerment," in spite of its best efforts, comes from a tradition of power-over others. To empower is to admit that power and control have been taken away from some individuals and are being regulated by other individuals. Accepting the belief that power and control can be offered, given, or taken, negates the very meaning and aim of moral and intellectual autonomy.

If Kamii's definitions of autonomy are to be accepted, then autonomy is *developed* within the human being. It is part of the inherent personality and belief structure of an individual. It is not something that can be given or meted out. Instead, learners and teachers construct moral and intellectual autonomy--power within

themselves--through mutual respect and daily negotiated interactions in communities that value each individual. Therefore, although empowerment is a word that has provided sustenance and support to the words, thoughts and actions of the teachers in this study, a dilemma exists. Can the term "empowerment" be redefined to eliminate the connotation of the giving of power by another, or is there another word, yet to be discovered, that will embrace the concept of discovering and using one's own power-within?

Community. A call for communities that values individuals, offers mutual respect and supports the development of moral and intellectual autonomy has come from a variety of sources: educational administrators, such as Barth (1991); Osterman (1989); Richards, Gipe & Duffy (1991); Sergiovanni (1992); and such educational theorists as Bullough, R., Goldstein, S. and Holt, L. (1992); Goodlad (1983) and Schubert & Ayers (1992). This call has, also, increasingly come from books by teachers. Among them, Short's & Burke's work (1991) summarizes the call from other teachers by saying it is through learning communities that individuals dialogue with each other, become aware of, then, compare and constrast the options which the intentionality of individual members has made available to the group.

In such environments as were described in this study, individuals are continually challenged to discover their own potentialities while learning to participate in a human community. As Sarah (private conversation, November, 1992) says, "This is a community and we must get along as a community. We have to give and

take from each other." The sense of community envisioned by the teachers in this study is not just individuals working together. Rather, it is a place where partners share their lives, their hopes, their needs, and their joys with each other. "They learn *interdependence:* how to work with other people, respect other people's work and interact with other people" (Rachel, private conversation, December, 1992). "They need to be part of a society. [They need to be] brought in and encouraged to be a working part of it" (Leah, private conversation, October, 1992). "[This community should include] understanding and more nurturing and more caring and more talking about what they are doing" (Leah, private conversation, October, 1992).

Each member is understood to be capable of thinking and choosing and worthy of sharing the values of one's own life. Such individuals are free to pose their own questions, to pursue personal meanings, and to effect changes. David, the music teacher in the building where these teachers work, explained this concept to his students' parents this way:

> I have four broad goals for all students coming to music: 1) to make the most beautiful music we can, 2) to learn to solve musical problems and questions in a thoughtful, cooperative way, 3) to relate music to other aspects of life as much as possible, and 4) to use music to better understand ourselves and others.
>
> . . . Therefore, I am trying to involve the students in making as many of the classroom decisions as they can. Each class has chosen its own musical topic or question to explore for the immediate future. I was a facilitator in the development of their decision, but provided no judgements or ideas. . . . I think

> you might be surprised by the breadth of discovery that such an approach will encourage; (letter to parents, March 3, 1993).

By making more connections to their own experiences, reflecting on their shared lives, and assuming responsibility for the actions they perform, learners/teachers can become aware of more alternatives and more experiential possibilities. "They are having [to learn how] to get along with new people within the activities they choose to do" (Jenny, private conversation, January, 1993). This will mean an increased likelihood of achieving moral and intellectual autonomy. Greene (1988) postulates that the capacity for achieving such autonomy must, however, be continually nurtured, informed, and communally sustained.

Reflection. Deeply embedded in the processes of the construction of knowledge, of moral and intellectual autonomy, is the necessity for reflection. Piaget described it as a turning inward. At times he used the term "taking consciousness" to describe the process of looking within, mentally reconstituting actions, and interpreting and explaining the actions (Bringuier, 1980, p. 90). Reflection, then, assists the individual constructing understandings about completed actions and provides possibilities for further other actions.

Pritzkau (1970) interprets the meaning of reflection in a similar, but slightly different manner. He, too, conceives of reflection as a process of constructing understanding, but he cautions that in the process of constructing understanding the reflective practitioner must take care to look beyond the accepted

notions and the normative explanations to find personal understanding. He fears that it is too easy when reflecting to passively look for the rationally conceived, culturally induced explanations that abound. Instead, he offers that the practitioner must aggressively deconstruct actions and thoughts to find possible meanings beyond the normative. "This suggests that one should look at and examine his own thinking with meanings rather than isolate himself as the 'settled one' with knowledge" (p. 12).

Beyond Pritzkau's reflection as active deconstruction and Piaget's reflection as a precursor to understanding and *possible* actions, Freire (1972/1968) conceptualizes reflective actions as part of a total process he referred to as praxis. Praxis, according to Freire, means reflection followed by action on the world in order to transform it. "To deny the importance of subjectivity in the process of transforming the world and history is naive and simplistic . . . World and men do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction" (pp. 35-36). Freire, then, incorporates the active deconstruction suggested by Pritzkau with *mandatory*, rather than *possible*, action.

Teachers and learners working within the contexts of alternative paradigms move between all three definitions of reflection. Within the context of the daily classroom, the adults and children in the Pod kept journals that allowed them to turn inward and "take consciousness" of what had transpired during the day. Atwell (1991) portrays the kinds of reflection that occurred in her classroom. "She provided her students with opportunities to

respond before and while they read and wrote, not merely at the end, when it was too late for her advice to do them much good." I responded to them and they to each other in conferences: brief, frequent dialogues with writers and readers about what they have done and what they might do next" (p. 43). Teachers, like Rachel, use dialogue with individual students during the school day as opportunities to encourage the deconstruction of normative explanations, allowing students to create or discover knowledge rather than providing them with pat methods and algorithms that will allow for unthinking resolution to educational problems. Rachel "poses" mathematical problems to her students, requiring them to discover their own processes for finding plausible answers.

Teachers encourage each other to move beyond the speculative, and transform their personal and professional lives through dialogue with others. Teachers, such as those in this study, develop ways of meeting with other educators to informally discuss common educational concerns. Their efforts are supported by Bussis, Chittenden & Amarel's (1976) research findings which determined that teacher's need support systems throughout their careers. Further, they identified two conditions which were essential for teachers moving into alternative curriculums: "a conception of the teacher as a person with potential for professional growth and an environment that is supportive of the exploration and reflection necessary for change and for continuing development" (p. 26). Support *for* teachers must be parallel to the support students need *from* teachers. "It is ultimately intended to foster a sense of

awareness--of purpose and reflectivity" (p. 30).

Dialogue and Authenticity. Dialogue is at the heart of the community of learners that is implied by this new vocabulary. To dialogue is to represent one' s self authentically. It requires that the individual become visible to himself or herself and to others. In dialogue, an individual accepts vulnerability and is willing to take the view of someone new to his or her personal landscape. It is to invite perspectives that are different from those which has always been accepted as real. "To be continuously engaged in interpreting a reality forever new; he will feel more alive than he ever has before" (Greene, 1973, p. 27).

The risk of dialogue is complicated by the unalterable reality that most people are afraid of what they might find out about themselves if they look too hard or too deeply. They are afraid that if they look too hard or too deeply, they may find that they are unacceptable either to themselves or others. To risk dialogue is to risk being rejected and alone. Yet, "the unavowed secret of man is that he wants to be confirmed in his being and his existence by his fellow men and that he wishes them to make it possible for him to confirm him (Buber, 1967, p. 95).

The alternative to risking dialogue is to hide behind the safety of being inauthentic. In being inauthentic there is less risk of rejection. But this safety demands a high cost. Being inauthentic means accepting the hollowness of knowing that one is never completely accepted, because one is never truly known.

Without acceptance, there can be no personal growth, no construction of moral and intellectual autonomy.

To dialogue, rather than to explain, to converse, or to instruct, demands the recognition of each participant as an equal partner. Dialogue cannot occur in an hierarchial atmosphere. Hierarchies require individuals to be maintained within the contexts of predetermined roles. Encapsulated by roles, individuals adopt the meanings of those roles and lose their own personal meanings. The possibility of real communication, dialogue, is destroyed.

It is, therefore, incumbent on those who would dialogue to first learn to trust themselves and others. To trust is to trust letting go of predetermined knowledge and risk finding new meanings. "I have learned to redefine the word teaching on a daily basis" (Rachel, written communication, February 12, 1993). It means for teachers and students, the acceptance that no one knows all of the "right answers" and realization that some formerly "right" answers may not be really "right." It means, as Duckworth claims, the recognition that errors are the best indicators of growth. "Within the context of dialogue there exists an attitude of trust in the mind, one that seeks meanings. To trust in the mind is "to give it priority over books, materials, computers, and all manner of arrangements associated with certain forms of school organizations. . . . When the mind is trusted, individuals begin to confront knowledge as a result of dialogue between them" (Pritzkau, p. 11).

Dialogue is a reciprocity of individual truths and a search for individual meanings. "We ourselves are the dialogue: we are spoken . . . Our being spoken is our existence" (Buber, 1967, p. 85). True dialogue occurs when each of us reveals himself or herself, without mask or facade, "fulfilling the speech that he [or she] is" to others (Buber, p. 85). Similarly, Pritzkau calls dialogue the "opportunity for man to continue to sing of his world 'in a melody of words,' given the listener who frees the speaker and draws out his experience in new verbal forms. He is free to engage in new insights, and to make them available to the other" (p. 11).

Through dialogue we can find both the community and the autonomy we seek. Within the context of the classroom, dialogue frees students and teachers to accept their own knowledge. Rachel uses dialogue during mathematics, to encourage students to problem solve aloud. In so doing they not only organize their thoughts more clearly, but also become role models for alternative ways of solving problems. Jenny uses dialogue to help children resolve conflicts. Rather than solve problems for students, taking away the possibility of autonomy. She encourages them to talk to each other, describing their own feelings and responses to the problem at hand. Leah questions herself aloud in front of students, giving them opportunities to see that adults don't have all of the answers. Sarah dialogues both with small groups and with individuals, leading them to turn inwardly so that they can reflect together about issues.

Joy. Although not generally considered a major value in education, joy is an attitude that begs recognition within a new language of education. Taking for the meaning of joy, "the expectation or celebration of good" (Living Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language, 1977, p. 520), it is critical to include "joy" as an ethical value in an alternative curriculum. Expecting the good--caring, creativity, capability--in each member of the community dispels the need for authoritarian control and power over others that is dominant in today's society.

For too long society and education have been based on the belief that people are inherently not good. It has, therefore, been necessary to conceive of rigid rules and regulations that will control human beings. Power has been kept by the few who believed themselves to be good, in order to control the rest who are not believed to be good. The result of this banking of power and control has been to alienate the majority of citizens from the processes of society. This majority of persons, who has been relegated to the outer edge, have learned to numb themselves to caring about their society. The result has been an alienation of human beings from each other and themselves.

To expect goodness is to raise the ability of each learner/teacher to trust themselves and each other. It opens the door to dialogue. If instead of perceiving people as "bad," unimaginative or incapable, children and adults are conceived of being good, creative and capable, the power-over-others approach to society would no longer be necessary. In place of power-over-others there

could be the development of the power-within. In such an environment, an acceptance and development of the latent potentialities of each person--or, as Kamii described it, moral and intellectual autonomy--within a caring community could occur.

The expectations and/or celebrations of good were evidenced by each of the teachers studied in related, but personal ways. For example, Rachel's expectations that students cannot be taught or evaluated by someone else's timetables because each brings a unique set of experiences and meanings to the classroom, illustrates her understanding of goodness. Furthermore, her belief that there are no mistakes in the learning process reinforces this idea. Amelia reflects her belief in goodness when she affirms for her students that they can each find their own way. She expresses this belief most eloquently when she says that students must learn "to trust themselves. To know that they have value in whatever art would need from anybody. They had it when they came [to me]. They've always had it. . . . I don't think I put anything there. I want to affirm their value, and their value in their own limits."

Nevertheless, children and adults are often "surprised by joy" (with apologies to C. S. Lewis). Adults who have been trained in a deficit model of teaching, are often surprised by goodness -- by the caring, the creativity and the capabilities of students when they are not scrutinized for their failings. During a recent district collaboration between classroom teachers, artists, and students, the teachers and artists were asked to keep journals and

occasionally answer written questions. Several questions dealt with surprises the adult may have encountered in the words or actions of the children. The following are examples of the surprises at (and the celebrations of) goodness written as responses.

> All the students created groups of their own choosing as partners and worked together with little difficulty. They seemed eager and willing to share and to solve problems as a team. They wanted equality throughout the whole group and there was a lack of discrimination of any kind.
>
> They chose to do things which were more difficult than expected. They were interested in challenge. But not [in that which would create] fear or embarrassment, loss, or recrimination. They maintained high interest, were intrinsically motivated, and the [extended] time seems to have inspired commitment [in those things the children chose independently].
>
> Children always say what is meaningful to <u>them</u>; contrary to adults who usually want to say what is expected. Pleasure was obvious when a child created any new idea in a task that was not readily available to them in normal life--clay, plaster, soap carving. Risk-takers enjoy this more because of unknown factors in the experiences. Older children were very willing to work with younger children and help them figure things out--without always doing it for them or telling them how to do things. I think this behavior could be enhanced if teachers would work in the same manner.
>
> In the making of the pots they really worked for satisfying forms and were not content with little effort. Because it is pleasing to create something beautiful, something to be proud of, and the doing is unhurried. [Being] at one with feeling is its own reward in the moment.

A final written response seems to summarize the surprises of and celebration in joy, "Children are natural explorers and learners. If enhanced, their experiences can be infinite."

Curriculum. "It keeps changing because we keep changing" (Leah, personal conversation, December, 1992).

The words, images, and actions of the teachers in this study suggest that curriculum is the transactional process of living that evolves between and among the members of a learning community. It is "ecologically embedded" within all of the contexts that impinge on the lives of the children and adults in these rooms. These curriculums are not and can not be written and published as documents that can be kept on a shelf, to be used from year to year. Instead, these curriculums are bound by changes in membership, in time, in physical spaces, and with the answers given to Schubert's (1986) three most basic curriculum questions: What knowledge is most worthwhile? Why is it worthwhile? How is it acquired or created (p. 1)?

The curriculums of the teachers in this study and selected other teachers whose writings have been examined reflect Dewey's idea that school is not a preparation for life, it is life. Within the context of school-as-life, they assume that "problems in different situations require unique solutions" (Schubert, p. 4). Rachel assumes such a position when she insists that children must discover their own outcomes. Amelia and Leah assume this position when they insist that what they do with students is dialogue with them to help them find what is already a part of them. Sarah and Jenny assume this when they deflect questions back to students, helping those students redefine their identified problems so that they can begin to grapple with finding their own answers.

Other teachers have made similar assumptions. Ashton-Warner (1965) made this assumption in the 1960s when she realized that her Maori students could learn to read, *if presented with words that had emotional meaning for them.* Wiggington (1985) made this assumption about the high school students he taught in Rabun Gap when he asked them to help design a curriculum *based on their own experiences.* Schickendanz (1990) made this assumption about Adam in his "writing revolution." You can hear it in her words, "In these episodes, *Adam's goal* [my italics] seemed to be studying words and how they are made" (p. 26).

Other curricularists have expressed similar views. Drake's (1991) journey of the learner embraces the idea of curriculum as an ongoing process of discovery that is negotiated between the learner and the environment. The transactional model proposed by Macdonald, Wolfson & Zaret (1973) also offers curriculum as interactive processes in which individuals interact freely and intuitively with rich environments, sort out tentative knowledge, restructure patterns, reconcile differences, resolve paradoxes, and create personal meanings. These individuals act on, test, and transcend tentative understandings. As with the alternative curriculums lived by the teachers in this study, Macdonald et al. posit that their model "requires that programs and curricula and people be flexible enough to allow for personal responses to the reality of the ongoing experiences" (p. 16).

Greene (1988) and Huebner (1967) describe the transactional qualities of curriculum within the dimensions of the dialectical.

Greene conceives of curriculum as a dialectic between personal freedom and social control. Huebner conceives of the curricularist working within a dialectic created by individuals, the world, and given social groups (p. 326). Furthermore, he contends that essential to understanding the meanings humans create is the comprehension that these meanings are tied to the meaning of time. Man is defined by his temporality. "He is not a fixed being. His existence is not simply given by his being in a given place, but by a present determined by a past and a future (p. 327).

Although presented from different perspectives, all of these proposals carry a common understanding. Curriculum is process, not product. Curriculum is lived and generated by those on whom it impinges. It cannot be written by those whose lives remain aloof from the process. Curriculum "cannot be absolute and final since it responds to an ongoing understanding of humans living their lives" (Dobson & Dobson, 1987, p. 279.)

Reflections

"Every educational practice implies a concept of man and the world" (Freire, 1972/1968).

Each human being is confronted with the reality of being and non-being, existence and non-existence. When confronting one's own existence, each individual searches for personal meaning (Frankl, 1959/1963, 1969, 1978; Fromm, 1969/1941, 1973). In confronting the possibility of non-existence, the individual searches for ways to conquer mortality. Given these awesome tasks, some persons search

for ways to live beyond their individual lives by creating concrete and abstract entities through art, music, dance, drama and literature. Others choose to participate in communities where meaning and mortality can be addressed through the establishment of societies with rules and regulations, and through the creation of religions, mythologies and rituals (Campbell, 1972, 1973, 1990). One of the components of society that has been utilized to provide meaning and to extend mankind's existence into the future is that of education. Education's definition is a reflection of a given society's perspective of individual meaning and of time.

Prigogine & Stengers (1984) observe that "Each society . . . betrays its own characteristic 'time bias'-- the degree to which it places emphasis on the past, present or future" (p. xviii). If a society emphasizes the past or becomes obsessed with longing for or fear of the future it will seek to use the conditions and experiences of the past and the present to restrain the society and attempt to predict and control its future (Fromm, 1973). A restrained society and controlled future provide each man and each woman with a common, rather than individual, meaning to his/her existence and allow escape from the possibility of daily confrontation with aloneness, uncertainty and unknowing (Fromm, 1941/1969). Education's definition, then, is to train or instruct in the skills of the past and present.

Such an encompassing framework or paradigm has been dominant throughout the history of civilization. The survival of groups, tribes, cultures, villages or emerging nations has depended on their

abilities (1) to coalesce, develop and refine social rules ("On The Importance of Being Tribal," 1992) and (2) to establish mechanisms for the maintenance of normative behaviors (Geertz, 1988). Safety, both psychologically and physically, is derived from conformity with the group. In such societies, each member is provided a strong sense of identity through a predetermined role. A strong sense of interconnectedness develops through reciprocity and mutual obligation (Maybury-Lewis, 1992). Commonality of perceptions is developed by mutual experiences and subsequent culturally generated meanings for language (Geertz, 1988; Kuhn, 1970). Interconnectedness and commonality of perceptions and language provide a net that supports members through life's crises (Maybury-Lewis, 1992; Kuhn, 1970). Education is a matter of learning the skills, rules, rituals, and roles that maintain and restrain the society.

As long as the society's goals and purposes allow effective functioning they go unquestioned (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990). But, over time, rules, rituals and roles can prevent an increase of cultural complexity, inhibit adaptation to new situations and stunt the growth of individuals. Under such conditions stagnation, entropy, and the dissipation of the group can occur (Kuhn, 1970; Prigogine & Stengers, 1984).

An alternative paradigm to such a controlled society can emerge from gratefully acknowledging the past for its contributions to one's vantage point, living fully within the present (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and perceiving the future as it comes to be

in its own time. "And it is by being its own time that it will have realized its own meaning" (Campbell, 1973, p. xiv). In such case, the society will seek to use the experiences of the past and the present to create conditions that will make possible individual growth, autonomy and "the end of all forms of exploitative control" (Fromm, 1973, p. 32). Each man or woman will, then, be "free to shape his [or her] own character, and [be] responsible for what, he [or she] may have to make out of himself [or herself]" (Frankl, 1969, p. ix). Only such individuals are capable of freely responding to, participating in, renewing, and/or re-creating a society. Education will draw definition from the Latin term "educe," meaning to draw out, to bring out the potential or latent (Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary, 1965, p. 263).

The importance of society and education are not denigrated by this stance, rather they take on a newer and more organic role. The boundaries and meanings of such a society will be negotiated as will be the boundaries and the meanings of the individuals in that society. Such a society and its individual members will not be a refutation of the predominant paradigm of former societies. Rather, like Kamii's (1984) explanation of how constructivism embraces and encompasses those aspects of behaviorism that are useful, this alternative view of society embraces and encompasses the present needs of a society.

This alternative paradigm suggests a restructuring of education with new creators. First and foremost among those creators must be the actual participants within the educational environment--

teachers, administrators, students, parents and community members. These individuals must be willing to serve as mentors for students and each other. Those hired to teach and serve as administrators must possess those qualities society will demand of students if they are to nurture them in others. They must be willing to devise ways to liberate themselves and others and to understand present and past situations so that they can relate to new meanings and question old ones (Giroux, 1988; Pritzkau, 1991). Furthermore, it will become incumbent on all those involved in education "to develop that openness that will invite better and greater humaness in the approach to learning" (Pritzkau, 1970, p. 1).

This openness will include a willingness to live fully in the present and assist others to risk allowing primary goals to emerge from personal experiences, to become personally and deeply committed to whatever one is doing, and to search for personal meaning to one's own existence. To do these things there must also be a willingness to assume personal responsibility for one's own actions. The ability to personally evaluate one's own behavior must also be developed within each individual (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Meaning will then be constructed within individuals as a result of negotiations between the internal self and the interpretations of that self with others. Meaning will become a continual process of assimilation and accommodation.

As observed and reflected in the stories of the teachers presented in this study alternative paradigms and curriculums are not only possible, they are emerging. Within such curriculums,

communities of learners have coalesced, developed and refined social rules. But they do not codify them. The participants are cognizant that change is both inevitable and necessary. The basis of such communities is dialogical. Through continuous dialogue, the members of the community are nurturing each other while expanding the meanings of community in ever larger ways. Part of this dialogical process includes the telling and retelling of life-stories. With each retelling, community members are enriched and the possibilities expanded because the listeners and the storytellers will bring new perceptions and meanings to each retelling.

O'Laughlin (1990) relates that with each retelling of a teaching story additional realities and dialectical contradictions emerge. Retelling draws forth those elements that have the greatest meaning, while at the same time highlighting continuing ambiguities and uncertainties. O'Laughlin describes himself as "still struggling with the unsettling ambiguities it has presented to me" (p. 4) even after three retellings. Like O'Laughlin, the teachers in the study find that they need, indeed are asked, to tell and retell their stories. As does O'Laughlin, with each retelling, they learn more about themselves. Their stories offer support to those who, like them, believe there are alternative curriculums that can be more relevant and meaningful to teachers and learners.

A final caution must be made for the reader. The pedagogical lives told and examined in this study are lives of five women who work in an elementary school. There were no secondary teachers involved in this study, although one was originally asked to

participate. No men were included, as no male teachers who were part of the original pool from which the participants were finally chosen were observed to implement their theorized curriculum alternatives into the classroom. Most assuredly, there were and are teachers within both of those domains who are exploring curriculum alternatives. Their voices must be heard.

> There are, of course, more stories to read, more lives to consider as we pursue a growing understanding of what the teacher is and might be. There are heroic teachers--no celebrities, but people of real and sustained accomplishment--almost everywhere. . . . [Teachers who] have built a practice on a base of dialogue, respect, and efficacy. Each has found a way to do what any teacher can do now: validate the dignity and worth of students, build bridges of mutual respect and caring, and create curriculum that nurtures personal visions as well as collective achievement. These teachers' stories are unwritten, and so they are mainly a source of knowledge and inspiration locally. But teachers like them can be sought out, observed, and interviewed. They, too, contribute to an enlarged sense of what teaching can become.
>
> . . . What each teacher did differs in detail, but follows an essential rhythm of empowerment. Each resisted the temptation to sink into the conventional, becoming merely a clerk in a system. In this sense each was a resistant teacher, perhaps a subversive teacher. Each looked unblinkingly at students as people with intentions, needs, hopes, dreams, aspirations, and agendas, students as whole human beings, and each struggled to build bridges of meaning from the knowledge and experiences of each to broader ways of thinking and knowing. Each conceived of teaching as an improvisation of judgment and action played in an arena as mysterious as it is familiar. Each goes on learning and teaching and living with uncertainty but also with a sense of purposeful commitment. What else can they do (Schubert & Ayers, 1992, p. 138)?

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APPENDIX

IRB FORM

[redacted] UNIVERSITY
[redacted] REVIEW BOARD
FOR [redacted] SUBJECTS RESEARCH

Proposal Title: TEACHERS AND ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM MEANINGS

Principal Investigator: Russell Dobson/ Rebecca Davis

Date: 12-02-92 IRB # ED-93-038

This application has been reviewed by the IRB and

Processed as: Exempt [XX] Expedite [ ] Full Board Review [ ]

Renewal or Continuation [ ]

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s):

Approved [XX] Deferred for Revision [ ]

Approved with Provision [ ] Disapproved [ ]

Approval status subject to review by full Institutional Review Board at next meeting, 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reason for Deferral or Disapproval:

Signature: Marian K. Tilley Date: 12-3-92

Chair of Institutional Review Board

VITA 2

Rebecca Louise Davis

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: TEACHERS AND ALTERNATIVE CURRICULUM MEANINGS

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 18, 1946, the daughter of Louis D. and Clema B.

Education: Graduated from Northwest Classen High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, May, 1964; received Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education from Oklahoma City University in May 1968; received Master of Education degree in Special Education from Central State University, July, 1980; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1993.

Professional Experience: Graduate Teaching Assistant, Department of Psychology, Oklahoma State University, August, 1968 to May, 1970; Second Grade Teacher, Oklahoma City Public Schools, August, 1970 to June, 1972; Fifth Grade Teacher, Oklahoma City Public Schools, August, 1972 to June, 1974; Kindergarten Teacher, Oklahoma City Public Schools, August, 1974 to June, 1984; Graduate Assistant, Central State University, Fall, 1980; Elementary Curriculum Supervisor/Early Childhood Curriculum Supervisor, Oklahoma City Public Schools, August, 1984 to August, 1990; and Elementary Curriculum Coordinator, Edmond Public Schools, August, 1990 to Present.

Professional Organizations: Association of Childhood Educators International; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; American Association of University Women; Delta Kappa Gamma; Kappa Delta Pi; National Education Association; National Association for the Education of Young Children; National Association of School Psychologists; Oklahoma Education Association; Oklahoma Association for the Education of Young Children.