

SHINY APPLES AND FUZZY WORMS: AN
ANALYSIS OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS
AND WHAT THEIR STORIES REVEAL
ABOUT THE AFFECTIVE EMOTIONAL
PREPARATION OF NEW TEACHERS

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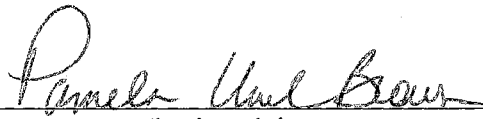
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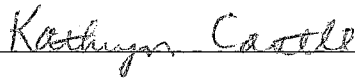
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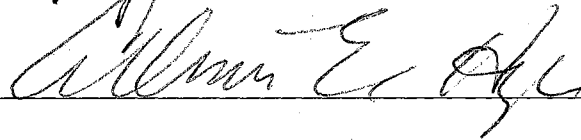
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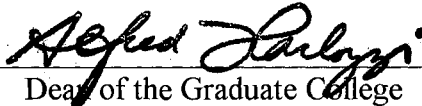


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Dean of the Graduate College

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Autobiography	1
Study background	5
The Problem	6
The Question	7
Purpose of the Study	7
Significance of the Study	7
Assumptions	8
Limitations	9
Definition of Terms	9
Summary	10
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	12
Introduction	12
Emotion Theory	12
Language and Definition of Emotion	12
Aspects of Emotion	14
Study of Affect	15
Study of Teaching and Emotion	15
Workplace Stressors	16
Definitions of Stress	17
Characteristics of Stress	17
Risks of Stress	18
Issues of Stress	19
Teacher Preparation	21
Problems in Teacher Education	22
Curricula of Teacher Preparation	23
Theoretical Rationales and Teacher Education	24
Alternate Types of Teacher Preparation	24
First-Year Teachers	27
Characteristics of Beginning Teachers	28
Stages and Teacher Development	29

Chapter	Page
III. METHODOLOGY.....	33
Chapter Overview.....	33
Research Methodology.....	33
Qualitative Research.....	33
Narrative Research.....	34
Interview Research.....	34
Dramatic Representation of Data.....	36
Selection of Subjects.....	36
Data Collection.....	38
Multiple Sources.....	38
Interview.....	38
Protocol Writing.....	39
Ethical Issues.....	39
IV. FINDINGS.....	41
Preface to Play.....	42
Characters.....	42
Costumes.....	42
Setting.....	42
Lighting.....	43
Affects.....	43
<i>Shiny Apples and Fuzzy Worms</i>	44
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	92
Summary.....	92
Discussion of Research Findings.....	92
Specific Interview Responses.....	92
Emergent Themes.....	96
Themes of Self.....	96
Themes of Relationships.....	98
Themes of Structures of Schools.....	99
Themes of Reflection.....	100
Absent Themes.....	101
Discussion of Research Questions.....	102
Conclusions.....	103

Chapter	Page
Recommendations	105
Concluding Comments	107
REFERENCES	109
APPENDIXES	119
APPENDIX A--CONSENT FORM	119
APPENDIX B--WRITTEN PROTOCOL	121
APPENDIX C--APPROVAL: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD	122
APPENDIX D--THE VOICES IDENTIFIED	123

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Autobiography

Susan Gay Vineyard

9-16-00

The academic school year of 1983-1984 will never be forgotten in my life because it was my first year of teaching. I wish I could state that it was a year full of discovery and the joy of learning, but it was not. What it turned out to be was an induction into the cruel realities of humanity.

I was a very naïve 22 year-old from a secluded and safe hometown, and I had never lived in an unsupported environment. Teaching had not been my first choice for an occupation because I believed that the “theatre” called to me. Drama had been my forte’ for many years in high school, college, and community theatre. It was where I had an identity and could use my creative talents. The teaching degree seemed to be something that I had to achieve in order to appease concerned parents. After working professionally at summer stock theatre in Lawton, Oklahoma during the summer of 1982, I knew that I possessed the skills necessary to perform, but I also understood that in order to achieve my goals, money would be required. Thus, the teaching degree became a means to an end for me. I even turned down the opportunity to perform again at the same summer stock company in lieu of finishing my degree by the end of summer 1983. I believed that getting a job teaching would be a way to keep my skills sharp in theatre as well as begin working

my way toward Hollywood. After all, my teacher preparation courses stressed that teaching was fun. It would not be fun for me.

I entered into my first year of teaching at a very large city high school. The entire year was full of strange and bizarre incidents including: a threatened lawsuit by a parent of one of my students (the student was later suspended from school for bringing alcohol onto campus); a student who broke an arm during class time while my substitute was on duty (the student later dropped out of school entirely); my classroom, with amphitheater-style seating, flooded with gallons of water because a student set off the fire alarm with a lighter (the student disappeared from my class before the end of the school year). Though these events were traumatic in themselves, they did not compare to the way my peers and administration treated me. Only one teacher approached me to join her and others for an after-school get together; whenever I approached faculty, they were curt yet polite; my mentor teacher was standoffish and confused as to what to do with me. My principal was antagonistic toward me. Several times he berated me because of my lack of skills in handling situations, yet he never offered any advice as to what to do differently.

The entire situation was an extreme culture shock for me in every way. I had neither lived alone nor paid bills. Living in a large city was almost overwhelming since I had grown up in a small rural community. I had no understanding of how my personal and professional lives intertwined and should complement one another. Above all, I did not have understanding of how to get help. Moreover, my supervising teacher from a cooperating university told me he felt sorry for me. I was confused about my abilities, found no help when I did seek it out, and basically began a quick descent into depression.

Not until after I was fired did I find out what had been the driving force behind, at least, the administrative hostility. I had been hired and used in a game of politics. I was a pawn, used by someone who knew my father and thought he was doing me a favor. After visiting over the phone with the superintendent, he did allow me to resign, and he withdrew his dismissal. The timing was bizarre because I had just mailed him my letter of resignation the day before I received my letter of termination. The other man, who used me in his game, did not ever acknowledge that what he had done was wrong. In fact, to this day, I have never seen him again. Though his misguided attempt to help me actually hurt me in many respects, I must admit that this study has its roots firmly planted in the events of that dismal year.

I knew and still believe that many of the incidents which occurred might not have happened if I had been properly prepared or at least had been made aware by my teacher education courses of situations outside the classroom that could turn ugly. I left that first year behind, gratefully and bitterly.

After a short trip to Hollywood to perform at The Comedy Store, I discovered that I possessed the talent and drive but did not possess the survival skills to stay alive and see my dream to its fruition, at least, at that time in my life. After an offer was made for me to work with a group to write comedy, I had to face reality. Although I hated to go back into teaching because of that first year, I saw no other possible solution since I knew that I would be dead due to my naïveté if I stayed in California.

I returned to Oklahoma to try to pick up my life as a teacher. There was still hope in me that teaching could and would be something that made sense for me, that I did have

something to give. My second position led me to a very tiny school district, fourteen in the senior class.

It was while I was teaching there during my second year that I realized I was a good teacher who craved guidance from people who cared. My administrators and peers were unbelievably supportive and genuinely happy to know me. I was in an environment that allowed me to share my knowledge and to care for students. Because of this positive experience, I decided to continue in teaching. Suddenly, I understood that I did have something to give to my students. Although my dream of professional performance has dimmed for me somewhat, my gifts as a teacher have revealed themselves to serve as encouragement to those students who want to go try to do what I had. What I have been able to do is make sure they know what to expect; tips I did not receive. I doubt that I would have continued teaching if the environment at my second job had not been so nurturing.

Over the past 17 years of teaching, I have been on a crusade to understand what happened to me that first year, personally, spiritually, professionally, mentally, physically, and emotionally. I wonder what could have been if the environment had been as nurturing as in my later teaching positions. Whenever I wondered aloud to educators, however, what I found was that no one wanted to listen to what I had to say. My stories have been dismissed as first-year teacher exaggerations with no real value. I have been told to just forget what happened, get over it, and live in the present. The attitude these people, of whom most are educators, exude is reminiscent of those expressed during my first year of teaching. It was not until recently during graduate coursework that I met educators who

not only listened, they showed me how to grow professionally myself and in the process to help others.

Examination of the first-year teacher's experience is one that should include more than academic knowledge. Looking back upon my first year, I have discovered that I did know my field of teaching. What I did not understand was how accepting a career position as well as moving to another city would change me personally, nor that adaptation would be necessary in the classroom and at home in order for me to grow as a person. As I remember and reflect on my teacher education and first year of teaching, I am firmly committed to finding a way to help new teachers to understand the connections between the protected world of the university and the unprotected one of the first year teacher. An awareness of these connections is necessary for survival during a teacher's first year. I question whether a holistic approach is needed. Is it better to prepare a whole person to serve as a teacher or to train a person to deliver information? What I do know is that my stories produce powerful emotions in me, and other people seem to be able to relate to me better as I tell my stories. My self-concept has changed immensely since I have been reflecting upon my tales of teaching. What was once a dark time in my life could now become a source of light for those who choose to teach.

Study Background

The topic of pre-service teachers and teacher preparation is one that has been researched in many ways. Current research focuses upon individual teachers and their stories. Novice and experienced teachers' stories have been collected and published with great success (Kane, 1992; Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). Also, currently, research is being done on the emotional dimensions of the workplace in general because of the results of

other studies about the quality of employees' work lives and the findings which include the emotional aspects (Domagalski, 1999). These emotional facets relate to teacher preparation research as well due to the large demands placed upon new teachers. They must not only prepare for the academic work, but they must also prepare to work with colleagues, administrators, parents, communities, students, and their own personal lives (Anonymous, 1997).

Studying the personal stories of those who can speak in the first person can enhance any study of teachers' lives. Their voices are the ones that can reach other teachers better than anyone, especially those teaching or participating in a teacher pre-service program (Featherstone, Munby, & Russell, 1997).

Donald Schon (1987) has done extensive research on what he calls the "reflective practitioner (p. 1)." His ideas projected the notion of theory taught and action taken into a new realm of reflecting on what was happening at the moment and adjusting in order to meet the needs of the moment. The act of thinking about what events happening in the present and correlating them to the needs of the student is one that depends on the ability of a teacher to reflect. Teaching is much more than giving knowledge; it also includes the ability of the teacher to adapt, and this can be done through stories and narratives.

The Problem

The problem is that first-year teachers have stories to tell and no viable forum in which to share them or to have them examined for meaning. Since narrative is used as a form of inquiry, its analysis and interpretation by researchers is valuable in understanding existing commonalities between respondents (Hones, 1998). Teachers' stories are narratives that must be studied because these stories reveal insights into human experiences that relate to

societal constructs (Stuhlmiller & Thorsen, 1997). Understanding these constructs gives some explanations as to why pre-service teachers cannot be prepared completely to enter into teaching as a lifelong career (Danziger, 1999).

The Question

Primary Question:

What positive and negative emotional experiences are revealed by first-year teachers?

Secondary Question:

How are these emotional experiences related to teacher preparation?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the nature of the emotions experienced by first year teachers, the context in which these emotional encounters occurred, and how the emotions were expressed. A relationship between first-year teachers' stories and teacher pre-service affective curriculum can then be established or denied. Why choose first-year teachers over any experienced teacher? I believe it is because they can offer a unique perspective that can be lost over time. No other career field thrusts beginners into what Kane (1992) describes as a situation that offers "immediate challenge, the magnitude of responsibility, or the potential for intrinsic satisfaction and learning that teaching in an elementary or secondary school affords from the first day of employment" (p. 3).

Significance of the Study

The importance of any study is only as relevant as the need to advance existing ideas (Gay, 1996). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) discuss grounded theory as being comprised of concepts that bring together different strands of ideas and relationships of multiple actors to form one conceptualized theory (p. 278). This study espouses grounded theory because

it uses more than one subject for traceable data retrieval; it looks for distinct patterns and changes in patterns among the multiple sources; it can, in a limited fashion, culminate the data into a predictability that is based upon specific conditions and consequences, and above all it can present relationships as relevant (pp. 278-279). By researching different concepts and strands that relate to the topic, this study's impact could influence changes in current teacher education reforms that have spanned twenty years (Tomlinson, 1999). The results could persuade more in-depth research to be done in the area of the emotions and their impact upon teachers and the profession of teaching.

Since the entire subject of emotions is a current interest in theory within other areas of sociological study (Fineman & Study, 1999), it behooves the university educational community to also study them. The results of this study could serve as a communicative vehicle for educators to relate themselves to the profession of teaching (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). With this power of reflection and insight, teachers could find a voice to communicate their growth and maturity as individuals personally and professionally to themselves, to their peers, and to those viewing from beyond the school's halls.

Assumptions

First-year teachers-It is assumed that all first-year teachers have completed all the certification requirements by the state in which they teach prior to teaching. Also they have completed teaching a typical first year, i.e. fall and spring semesters consecutively.

Autobiography Background- It is assumed that by retelling my personal experiences about my first year at an urban secondary school and the subsequent consequences which led me to a rural secondary school, any biases I have are revealed, as well as adding validity to my interpretations of others' stories. This study's origins come from these

experiences. Hopefully, because of my own reflection, I will be able more fully to understand my respondents' experiences.

Missing voices-It is assumed that the voices of first-year teachers are not being heard within the educational community. Teacher narrative often concentrates upon any and all teachers with experience. I believe that first-year teachers who have recently completed their first year of teaching provide a different perception of what it means to teach. I also believe their talk about the teaching experience varies greatly from the way experienced teachers talk about their teaching.

Limitations

This study is qualitative in nature and based upon a temporally limited grounded theory approach (Robinson & Driscoll, 1993). It was my intention to study relationships within current first-year teachers' stories and how these stories relate to the teachers personally as well as to their teacher preparation. From this study, I have tried to reveal truths in all interpretations, though provisional and temporary in relation to culture and its socio-economic changes in our society, to human social endeavors within the educational community. I have sought to accomplish this through conceptually dense relationships by providing thick, rich description. The results of this study may or may not correspond to the readers' experiences.

Definition of Terms

Autobiographical Narrative-The personal written experiences of the researcher in hopes of making sense of perceptions of personal experience. By doing so, the writer tries to make links to personal meanings with those shared by the subjects in the study.

First-year/Novice teacher-Teachers recently completing the entry year. I have also used this term to refer to the subjects of this study.

Teacher Preparation-Any college educational curriculum the first-year teacher experienced before the entry year of teaching occurred.

Affect/Affective-I have used the Merriam-Webster (1983) definition which states, “The conscious subjective aspect of an emotion considered apart from bodily changes”(p. 61).

Emotions/Emotional Feelings-A physical state or reaction related by the subjects in the study, a marked arousal or agitation. (Merriam-Webster, 1983).

Emotional Intelligence- I have used this term defined by Bernet (1996) to explain the analysis and interpretation of emotional reactions when they are physically expressed.

Emotional Competence-I have used this term defined by Saarni (1999) to explain the idea of social constructs that take over as soon as emotional intelligence is established.

Positive emotions-I have used this term to refer to incidents that were reflected by the participants as something good for them.

Negative emotions-I have used this term to refer to incidents that were reflected by the participants as something bad for them.

Summary

Wenzlaff (1998) stressed the notion that people who are going to be teachers in today’s world and in the future need to have a firm concept of themselves and how, along with their values, these perceptions affect classroom atmosphere. In the early era of educational research, John Dewey’s studies made the connection of what we know and what we do (Jacobson, 1998). If we do not know who or what we are, how can we understand what we teach?

All in all, this research serves a purpose in the pursuit of knowledge of the profession known as teaching and all its aspects including the emotional expression of the human being identified as a teacher. Teachers' emotions have been vaguely researched in the past if not totally ignored, yet the current trend is to understand underlying social issues in all areas of research. By studying the first-person stories of those who are shielded behind academic skills, research could empower them with a voice to strengthen our entire educational system (Hogan & Kwiatkowski, 1998).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature to follow presents information to support the idea that emotional experiences of first-year teachers, the situations in which these experiences happen, and the forms of emotional expression the teachers use are useful to current educational research. The individual strands of study that relate to these issues must be separately defined and understood before the overlying issues of first-year teachers and their emotions can be studied and evaluated. It is within the literature itself that grounded theory connections between the individual conceptual strands can be linked and defined on a broader scope.

Emotion Theory

Why study emotions? Even though emotions have been thought to be a stumbling block to purist research because of a perceived lack of control (Eisner, 1997), emotion theory is now on the forefront of current research because of its ability to foster theory in relation to social constructs (Banyard & Miller, 1998). A language of emotion or affect must be defined in order to link emotions to behavior and problem-solving abilities (Hummel, 1979).

Language and Definition of Emotions

Words such as *anger*, *joy*, *happy*, *surprise*, and *sad* used by people in conversation send messages to those listening which are interpreted either positively or negatively

(Osborn & Osborn, 2000). Hargreaves (1998) illuminated the trek of emotion theory by citing the Latin origin of the word *emotion* which is translated from the word *emovere*. In turn, this word means “to move out, to stir-up” (p. 835). If people are “stirred-up,” they are moved in some way (p. 835). To clarify, these movements are mental states that bring about intensified body reactions since they are essential parts of everyone’s reasoning capabilities. Thus, these emotions guide reasoning (p. 835, 841). Emotions are neither bad nor good, only negative or positive (p. 835), yet they can influence what decisions people make because emotions are intermingled with the motivations of people (Emmer, 1994).

Besides previously described emotional states reported by Osborn and Osborn (2000), other possible states that will be experienced by all human beings during their lifetimes are: grief, fear, ecstasy, warmth, acceptance, and rejection (Henderson, 1972). Other states included are satisfaction, enjoyment, anxiety, and discontent (Emmer, 1994). If these individual emotions can be consciously recognized, then their existence can lead to emotional concerns for individuals. Schneider (1972) includes self-awareness, interpersonal sensitivity, self-esteem, value clarity, meditative processes, sense awareness, and relatedness as areas which arise out of these concerns (p. 104).

People who have no understanding of themselves, their emotions, or the origins of their motivations are generally less effective in their human endeavors (p. 106). This is clearly a connection between feelings and our value belief system (Henderson, 1972). From all of this, the pattern is clear. First, there is experienced a feeling, a recognition of the feeling as a specific emotion, a self-consciousness of such emotion, and motivations based upon this consciousness that lead to behavior which then leads to consequences (Schneider, 1972).

Aspects of Emotion

What is emotion? Researchers have looked at the different aspects of emotions. Definitions of experiences labeled emotional have been, in the past, defined as purely a neurophysiological response, but more recently emotions and feelings have been divided and researched in very different ways (Artz, 1994; Bernet, 1996). Since the physical definition is the core measurement, it has been up to new ideas in research to further this direction of study to include other definitions including *Emotional Intelligence* (Bernet, 1996) or *Emotional Understanding* (Hargreaves, 1998). Whenever the physical reaction is experienced, analyzed, and given interpretation, it becomes an emotion. Once the conscious realization of the existence of the emotion is established by the person experiencing the emotion, the social construct takes over.

Saarni (1999) explored the idea of emotional competence as it relates to our cultural surroundings. In her work, she found that self-efficacy in the expression of emotions in a social situation is grounded in a person's moral, character, and cultural understanding. Therefore, Saarni's study found that we learn how to use the information experienced and that our perceptions of such experiences change and mature as we change and mature; emotions are culturally constructed by us and for us. If this is true, the workplace and the emotions experienced there play a role in our communication and expressiveness while working. Possessing only the necessary emotions to perform one's job perfunctorily is something called *Emotional Labor* (Hargreaves, 1998). Waldron and Krone (1989) explored this emotion-role identity by looking at two sides of emotion: (a) the social construct; (b) the individual/personal construct. Their work was done in a corrections facility and explored how individuals express affect within the perimeters of an

organizational context. They found that emotions tended to be suppressed and that negative emotions were more suppressed. Overall, they found that little research has been done to examine the various relationships in which emotion or affect is involved.

Study of Affect

There is clearly a need for the study of affect. Since emotions are considered intelligent, competent, and social, any study of teachers must include research that explores its importance. Planalp's (1999) acknowledgement that past opinions consider any study about the communication of emotions "flaky" is one that must be challenged. Planalp goes on to state that "emotion is central to ...many communicative functions" and "that emotion plays a bigger part in communication processes that you would ever know from reading the...research"(p. 216). Qualitative research itself seeks out the subjectivity of the individual subject in research projects in order to derive personal, emotional reactions (Domagalski, 1999). Life histories reveal the emotions that have brought about current life events and can be used to understand specific dichotomies; feminist research has found the study of emotions effective in their studies because of its congruency to feminist principles (Pamphilon, 1999). A distinct shift is underway, moving toward accepting the study of emotions as viable and important to research.

Study of Teaching and Emotion

The study of teaching and emotions has become increasingly relevant though not as well studied or explained (Emmer, 1994). According to Schneider (1972), much of the research and analysis that professes to be of a mature, objective nature is really some kind of emotional need or self-interest, a hidden agenda. Schneider suggests that it would be best to bring such issues out into the open arena of conversation to be explored rather

than rationalized (p. 105). Teachers are human beings first, after all. The fact that they are teachers must relate to their personal beings in some form. This is illustrated by Schneider's (1972) definition of relevancy in education. It is a fact that in our society there are countless millions of young, middle-aged, and old who seek knowledge in our educational institutions. Since this is so, it would be in our best interests to study ways in which to help one another find out what we really feel about who we are and what we want, so someone else will not dictate to us what we should be feeling (p. 106). This should extend to those interested in teaching since emotions are at the core of teaching (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835).

Workplace Stressors

If emotions can be found at the core of teaching, what are the consequences of positive and/or negative affect upon the resulting motivations and behavior for teachers in the classroom? A study of stress is important in any affective study because of its importance in current sociological research. Likewise, this research is becoming more and more common in educational studies. How prevalent is stress? It is an unfortunate fact that there is a large body of research reserved for the subject of teachers and job stress. More and more research is seeking to identify both the social and the emotional side of humans because they are finding that the human feelings linked to beliefs and values with forms of behavior manifested with consequences are indeed important content (Henderson, 1972). Gulielmi & Tatrow (1998) echo the shift change which is occurring in emotional research. New trends indicate separating teachers into specific categories, and the test stress evidence theories actually have contradicted the idea that teachers' health issues are worsened by job stress (p. 1). Most importantly, what are the stress factors

within the school environment as well as most other occupations? This topic is important and needs to be considered a top priority in pre-service teacher training because of the emotional dilemmas which permeate a teacher's life (Helsby, 1998).

Definitions of Stress

Before an understanding of characteristics can occur, a basic definition of stress must be established. Bonn and Bonn (2000) use the definition, "a feeling of doubt about being able to cope, a perception that the resources available do not match the demands made" (p. 124). Gardinar and Tiggemann (1999) state it this way: "Job Stress...perceived pressure from work factors" (p. 301). Another name for stress also emerged from this review, *burnout*. Ayalon (1989, pp.1-5) reported on several definitions of *burnout* or *tedium*. Stress can be identified by three factors: (a) emotional exhaustion; (b) depersonalization; and (c) a loss of feeling of accomplishment. Along with the identifying factors are three stages of burnout: (a) stress; (b) strain; and (c) defense coping. A final phrase used to describe or define *stress* is "*affective well-being*" (Daniels, 2000, p. 275-276). From these definitions, specific characteristics seem to emerge.

Characteristics of Stress

Smith (1999) noted several early warning signs of stress: "headaches, sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating, job dissatisfaction, and low morale" (p. 32). Sparks and Cooper (1999) identified other characteristic including "work control," and six sources of pressure on the job: (a) job factors; (b) organizational role; (c) work relationships; (d) career development; (e) organizational climate; and (f) home/work pressures (pp. 219-225). Guglielmi and Tatrow (1998) credited "heightened job pressure and reduced professional satisfaction" as contributors of the rising burnout rates in

teaching (p. 61). Ayalon (1989, pp. 1-13) also reports that 42% of a sample of beginning teachers agreed that they “frequently” or “almost always” experienced some form of physical or emotional exhaustion. These experiences could lead to burnout from exposure to long periods of physical, mental, or emotional pressure (Harden, 1999). The literature is varied in nature and full of complementing information concerning the characteristics of stress.

Risks of Stress

Recently, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) prepared and published a publication entitled Stress...At Work. In this literature the topic of workplace stress is confronted, and employees are given strategies to help them stave off stressful situations (Smith, 1999). It is an unfortunate fact of our modern, technological lives that stresses will accompany our chosen occupations. Harden (1999) reported that “stress induced by work results in about 20 million days lost each year in the UK” (p. 245). Occupational Outlook Quarterly also reported in a Spring 2000 report that according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics in America, “stress induced mental or emotional disorders caused 3,418 workers to miss work in 1997” (p. 41). The teaching profession is not immune to these statistics either. Because of increasing enrollments, the teachers have more work and less time while battling financial cuts from federal, state, and local authorities (Harden, 1999). At the same time, the entire educational community is enduring public scrutiny from all sides of a national discussion including political, social, and ethical issues (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998). Service positions in our society demand much of workers.

Though the characteristics of job stress are interesting and meaningful, the factors that cause them to occur are sometimes unique to their specific jobs. Specific, intrinsic factors could include “working conditions,” “shiftwork,” “long hours,” “new technology,” “work overload,” and “role conflict” (Sparks and Cooper, 1999). Daniels’ (2000) study of affective well-being presented five factors that were specifically tied to affects and in their particular work context: (a) anxiety-comfort; (b) depression-pleasure; (c) bored-enthusiastic; (d) tiredness-vigor; and (e) angry-placid (pp. 275-276). These are important to the “psychological well-being” (p. 275).

Along with the psychological aspects are the professional aspects. Ayalon (1989, pp. 1-13) measured the following factors as associated with work environment: (a) role overload; (b) instructional rewards; (c) job design; (d) role ambiguity; (e) environment; (f) goal clarity; (g) interaction with administration and peers. Employees should keep these areas in mind when pondering the kind of stress he/she is experiencing. Not all people will experience all of these challenges, yet all of us will experience some kind of stress since to be stress-free is to be dead (Harden, 1999).

Issues of Stress

Issues for stress include gender (Mountford, 1999), balancing the family and work (Roxburgh, 1999), environmental factors including but not limited to physical, social, and culture (Cullen, Baranowski & Hebert, 1999), and physical, emotional, and/or mental exhaustion (Harden, 1999). No occupation is exempt from the possibility of being affected by stress while on the job. Different occupations and organizations seem to experience the similar side effects. Zohar (1999) studied various occupations in general and found that whether the worker was a parachute trainer, corporate employee, or teacher, they all were

affected by hassles, annoying episodes on a daily basis that interrupt or impede the work load either mentally or physically. These hassles disrupt goals and represent obstacles to be overcome. Whenever an employee must deal with hassles on a continuous basis, anxiety as physical and mental exhaustion can be the result. Sleep loss was also found to be a strong factor in the mood and fatigue evaluations.

A specific occupation which experiences strong stressors is sales. Srivastava and Sager (1999) state in their study of people in sales, "Thirty-three percent of Americans believe that their jobs have become more stressful over the past five years" (p. 47). Their work focused on how salespeople cope with stress. What they discovered was, first, that the term *coping* had to be defined because they found that salespeople use specific coping skills to help them to achieve job satisfaction (p. 48). The definition they used, "coping as a means people consciously or unconsciously employ to rectify stress" (pg. 47-48), helped them to reveal the behavior of coping is a situation-by-situation experience and that the results will vary because of specific, personal coping styles. Emotion was also found to be a variant in coping skills, but more importantly, it was found that emotions are suppressed as a way of coping although they could not answer why this occurred. This suppression was also revealed to be true of the correction facility's workers in Waldron and Krone's (1989) research.

The purpose of learning about the characteristics and factors of stress is to apply the knowledge to help people in any occupation to have a better experience as an employee. Teachers have a unique job experience all their own, yet teaching is a service-oriented career and can be compared to similar service organizations. A teacher has to be able to solve situations quickly and most of the time there will be no assistance because the

classroom is the teacher's domain. By recognizing that self-efficacy is possible, many first-year teachers who stress over decision-making might be better prepared to do so.

Specifically, how can education benefit from stress study? Emmer (1994) reported that teaching does have emotional facets and that these facets are major contributors to the overall classroom perspectives found there (p. 67). These facets or aspects of emotion can become stressful in that they compete for a teacher's thinking ability and attention-span (p. 67). If strong negative emotions exist in a classroom, the teacher's decision-making ability is affected (p. 69). The key is to unlock the emotional life of the teacher (p. 69). Teacher education curricula designed to prepare teachers not only in academic skills but also in socio-emotional awareness could only enhance a teacher's abilities (p. 69). Teacher education is an area that could benefit from this research because of the importance of the teacher to the overall dynamics of the classroom and schools in general (Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998).

Teacher Preparation

People who want to become teachers should be applauded for wanting to serve their fellow humans. However, what these future teachers will have to do to receive that education is sometimes not what they expected. The teachers in current school systems and in future ones must be people who can identify who they are and relate their vision, values, and beliefs to those of the school in which they work (Wenzlaff, 1998). Currently, teacher education programs in America are generally very uniform and are not founded upon similar definitions of purpose and program vision (Edmundson, 1990). This is why it is important, at various times, to review what is currently done in the teacher education curricula. However, consideration of reforms to teacher education programs of today

should include the construct of teachers as human beings. Their need to cope in an ever-changing educational climate is necessary since teachers must be trained in the diversity of cultures and expectations (Kirk, 1986).

Problems in Teacher Education

Thiessen (2000) stated, “The problems [of teacher education] are of their own making, the stall is theirs to overcome, and the solutions are theirs to find” (p. 129). If there are problems in teacher education or teacher growth, the educational community should find the answers since we know what is best for ourselves. Peer review is preferable to review by outsiders from differing occupations. That is not to state that other sources cannot present good ideas for us to adapt to our programs, because they can. It is good to look beyond and then back inside (Goodlad, 1990). Lanier and Little (1986) discuss the problems of teacher education that have been well documented since the World War I. A major problem is the perception by many of education as a field that refuses to grow and change; some educators who understand this often leave the profession impatient for change while those who do not seem to perceive the problems but never confront the problems (p. 527).

Another recognized problematic is the lack of a definitive understanding of what a teacher educator and teacher education are (p. 529). Do we include all subject-matter instructors or just those who teach education courses? Do not all teachers prepare future teachers? Lanier and Little (1986) also recognize that many of the problems in teacher education stem from the divisiveness between the different academic divisions. The politics of teacher preparation result in quarreling and belittling of program matter between the arts and sciences and education (p. 531-532). This lack of respect for

educators in the university setting is also mirrored by Kirk (1986). “Teacher education has never enjoyed a high profile amongst academics, nor the community at large (p. 155). The fact that Kirk’s article was derived from studies conducted in British universities and colleges seems to acknowledge that this lack of respect is not just an American perception. To add to the fire of controversy, it is also a fact that no other occupational group comes under as much public scrutiny as public school educators and those who educate those who teach (Lanier & Little, 1986, p. 530). With such a volatile history, it is without question crucial to understand teacher education’s past in order to understand the current curriculum.

Curricula of Teacher Preparation

Almost all of teacher education curricula are uniform in design. They are typically comprised of (a) General knowledge, (b) Specialty knowledge, and (c) Educational knowledge which usually takes from four to five years culminating in a practicum or student teaching experience (Edmundson, 1990; Lanier & Little, 1986). This uniformity remained unchallenged for almost thirty years because the universities and instructors were united by a common philosophy of teaching (Wragg, 1985). This is not always true anymore. Now, the majority of education schools worldwide must confront varied forms of teaching. A typical curriculum includes: classroom management, curriculum development, teaching strategies, student awareness and learning styles, and assessment skills (Turley & Nakair, 2000, p. 123). The past twenty-five years have given the world more knowledge than was garnered in centuries past (Wragg, 1985, p. 199). This new knowledge has led to confusion among the ranks of educators who have recently begun to question the very foundations of teacher education.

Theoretical Rationales and Teacher Education

The lack of a theoretical rationale uniting the purpose of such curricula has been the source of much controversy whenever public policy dictates reform (Rhodes & Bellamy, 1999). Reform has taken on a new appearance as *restructuring, reculturing, and retiming*, and more and more departments are redefining themselves from the inside out (p. 17). These strategies are not universal, but those schools who have chosen to initiate change do seem to inspire others to follow in pursuit of the betterment of teachers. One of these renewal efforts included the University of Colorado at Denver (UCD). Rhodes and Bellamy (1999) reviewed and researched what the school had done in order to answer Goodlad's 1994 call for reform. The university worked with another school, called a partner school (p. 17), in order to implement the program. By researching past records of school NCATE reports, partner school evaluations, curriculum committee minutes of teacher education recommendations, and any other pertinent documentation, the UCD redesigned its teacher education program. The most radical difference was the initial establishment of a vision for the program (p. 18). This vision resulted in opening the doors for a wider scope of discussion among not only the reformers, but also among the educators themselves (p. 18).

Alternate Types of Teacher Preparation

Other alternate types of programs now exist in various forms among university teacher education departments. Ongoing is a discussion of what should be changed. One of the most vital topics currently is the crisis need for teachers in some places in this country. Turley and Nakair (2000) explored this issue and found three reasons for alternate certification for teachers in California. First, the new laws in the state require smaller

classrooms per instructor. In this dictate comes a vital need for numbers of teachers to fill vacancies. Second, the need for alternative certification comes because of places that are not necessarily attractive to teachers either because of location or salary, or personal preferences. By allowing emergency permits, using people currently living in the area of need can fill these positions. Third, alternative certification exists because it provides a fast-track way for people in science, math, and other hard-to-fill academic areas to become a teacher. This kind of teacher basically learns to teach while teaching. (p. 122). When compared, the researchers also found that these fast-track certification recipients achieved as much success in the classroom as the university-based trained teachers.

Other current trends involve slow maneuvers toward infusing the teacher-as-human. This can best be exemplified in the use of portfolios for preservice teachers preparing to seek employment. Klenowsky (2000) expounds upon this idea as a way of infusing assessment from the inside out starting with the teacher applicant (p. 634). Portfolios are a major factor in many school systems' hiring practices because they reflect not just a teacher but also a person as teacher (Frederick, McMahon & Shaw, 2000). These collections of personal and professional materials are a means of understanding the applicant as more than just one-dimensional. The typical contents of a portfolio include: resume', lesson plan, transcript, discipline plan, and a reflective/self evaluation (p. 635). By allowing the teacher to reflect upon self as a teacher, power is given to the individual to prove worthiness of the position. This self-reflection is now seen as a very important tool for not only the administrator hiring, but also for the teacher personally. The ability to self-reflect and use narrative is a tool to be used past, present, and future (Clark & Medina, 2000).

Another trend toward change is an acknowledgment of the problem of current teacher education programs in regard to the acquired knowledge base. This acknowledgment is an important step to begin the catalyst of change. One of the most deeply understood problems which is receiving research attention is the problematic of preservice teachers who are thrust into their practicum classrooms and expected to use all of the complex information that has been poured into them (Martinez, 1998). In the past, this knowledge came from the university-based traditional curriculum. Now, there is a smoothing of this abrupt transition by having students look outwardly to research and other sources to enhance what has been taught in the college classroom. By empowering the pre-service teacher in this way, stress and frustration can be decreased (p. 106).

Banker and Lowe (1995) alerted educational communities to the oncoming question of values as a part of teacher education curricula. This is an area of wide discussion and controversy which they found to be a growing issue. Should values, ethics, and morals be taught in teacher education? Woods and Langley (1998) believe these teachers have preconceived ideas of what they should do in the classroom. As these perceptions persist, a kind of filtering occurs during the teacher education process in which much of what is taught is ignored while the preconceived ideas remain (p. 68). With an acknowledgement of this filtering, new research techniques are now being used to evaluate data. Instead of focusing only upon what a teacher does in the classroom, the focus is upon why they do what they do (Stuart & Thurlow, 2000).

From the research presented, a periodical review of what is changing in teacher education and preservice curricula is an important step in reform. Even with all of the

current trends enlightening advancements in teacher education, problems still persist for first-year teachers and their experiences.

First-Year Teachers

It is a sad fact that almost half of first-year teachers decide to leave teaching before their fifth year (Basinger, 1999). This fact alone calls attention to the importance of studying the first-year teacher. Questions persist as to why ten to fifteen percent will leave after the second year (Whitaker, 2000). This attrition is not just because of a lack of skills. It is because of the emotional, exhaustive repercussions that come from helping students and parents day by day. The body and soul are beaten down in a way that non-education people do not understand (Bradford, 1999). Emotions are isolated in a secondary fashion in current research as a reality of teaching; however, the intensity of new teachers' feelings of isolation as well as frustration has not been well researched until recently (Prescott, 2000). Helping our new teachers should be a priority since it will be these people who will train the next generation of teachers. However, most new teachers do not receive enough information or help to keep them interested in making teaching a career (Applegate, 1977).

Why would new teachers need information and assistance? Are they not prepared to meet the challenges of teaching? Even if they are prepared for the classroom, what about the rest of their existence? The new teacher will have to face many stressful situations including balancing home and work (Swanson & Power, 1998; Guterman, 2000). Another area they will have to confront will be relationships with peers and administrators (Proper, 1998; Domagalski, 1999). The first-year teacher will have to understand his/her emotions and how to deal with all of the stress that a new job, a new city, perhaps, and a new

environment bring. It is important for teachers of teachers to validate the importance of emotions to teaching because they can shape context, processes, and consequences (Fineman & Sturdy, 1999). The emotional aspect as well as the interpersonal aspect of most new teachers has been neglected (Hogan & Kwiatkowski, 1998). Learning how to deal with dilemmas in teaching is important as well as learning how to reflect objectively about those experiences (Helsby, 1998). To do this, an understanding of the characteristics of beginning teachers is warranted.

Characteristics of Beginning Teachers

Beginning teachers must be understood from their particular perception in order to help them to be better prepared. Sacks and Harrington cited in Cheng (1997, pp. 5-6) have identified six stages of development starting with the students as preservice teachers and ending with them as teachers. Stage one is called *Anticipation*. In this stage students are excited, yet have some anxiety about their teaching skills. The second stage is called *Entry*. Students begin to worry about their ability to do what is asked of them. At this point, teaching strategies are discussed but not personal feelings about what is happening to them. The third stage is called *Orientation*. It is here that the reality of the responsibility of teaching begins to sink into the consciousness of students. The fourth stage is called *Trial and Error*. The student as a student teacher experiences the classroom and tries to find the best way to handle everything that is asked of them. The fifth stage is called *Integration/Consolidation*. After some successes in their student teaching, the students begin to actively incorporate strategies and focus in upon their classroom needs rather than personal needs. The sixth stage is called *Mastery* and is defined by the moment when

the student thinks of him/herself as a person and a teacher who can identify strengths and weaknesses and adjust accordingly.

Stages and Teacher Development

Not only is preparation important to novice teachers, but so is an understanding of what lies ahead for them. Katz (1972, pp. 50-54). Studied teachers and presented a work entitled “Teachers’ Developmental Stages” that focuses on professional growth. Stage I is *Survival*. The new teacher is in need of great support from peers, family, and administration. This is a time of high anxiety and angst, and it is considered a training stage. Stage II is called *Consolidation*. The teacher realizes that survival is possible and begins to consolidate experiences from the classroom to create a foundation of knowledge to use as a reference. It is still a training stage with many questions still to be answered. Stage III is named *Renewal*. This happens most of the time during the third or fourth year. The teacher begins to look around at what is being done around him/her since much of the daily curriculum has become uninteresting. It is a time to reconnect and stimulate the intellect of the teacher. Stage IV is called *Maturity*. Katz states that some teachers can reach this level as early as the third year of teaching while others may take five or more years. This stage is defined by a search for perspective, realism, and insight into why teaching occurs. All of these dimensions are determined by the individual experience of each teacher.

Unacknowledged in all of the stages is the ever-present issue of how to recognize and handle emotion. Emotions can be described as social, and since schooling is a very social event, teachers may need to be prepared to understand their emotions as well as content knowledge (Planalp, 1999). Teacher development is based upon the perceptions of the

experiences of individual teachers, but it is not an area that has been researched in depth (Cheng, 1997). Only recently has there been a move to investigate different methods to help facilitate teacher growth at any level (Bullough & Baughman, 1997).

One of these methods is reflection. Though it has only become critically studied in the past twenty years, reflection has been one of our predominate ways in which to evaluate educational methods as opposed to training schools (Tomlinson, 1999). There are many ways to use reflection. Case studies are very useful for allowing teacher education majors to participate in actual situations without being emotionally involved. They can develop an adeptness in understanding their decision-making ability by using case studies (Doebler, Roberson & Ponder, 1998). Through this process the students learn very quickly that one answer to a problem is not necessarily the best way to handle the situations (Herman, 1998). Swarz and Alberts (1998) also stress the importance of case study has for in-service teachers. They state that not only do student teachers get exposed to teaching situations, but they also are exposed to how teachers handled certain situations. Through this process, the student also learns about the emotions that were in place (p. 125).

Another way for young teachers to grow is through journaling experiences and writing stories. Not only can they use these forms of narrative to help them prepare for their future lives as teachers, but they can also use them to chronicle the events in their careers that will help them to understand where they have been and where they are going (Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995). Reflective journaling is widely used now in many curricula. Its aim is to strengthen self-assessment skills of the student. This ability then can strengthen on-the-job practices when the time arrives (Harriman, 1998). A strong ability is required by teachers today to give their own inner voices a place to interact with the outer voices of

their social constructs (Hicks, 1998, pp.28-29). These voices of story and narrative appear to be a valuable, private tool.

A third way to help novice teachers is with a very public tool, the mentor. In many states, first-year teachers have internship programs including a teacher onsite in the school system who serves as a mentor to the first-year teacher. Recognizing that need of a strong mentoring program, many are beginning to stretch current curricula beyond the first year of teaching and offer continuing internships (Mager, 1990). The socialization of a first-year teacher is important. Too many novices become isolated from their peers and family because of the demands of the job. This isolation can become demoralizing to some, but attention paid to alleviating this isolation can lead to better retention rates. Thus, this can help to build up the teacher's esteem (Anonymous, 2000).

Mentoring in its simplest, ancient context means an experienced person helps an inexperienced person (Schlee, 2000). It is a process in which education has been a leader for quite some time since the purpose has been to help develop skills other than content in academics (Fairbanks, et al, 2000). These could include communication skills, problem-solving, short- and long-term planning as well as paperwork management (p. 112). With this comes another important element in successful mentoring, possibility of learning for the mentor teacher as well as the novice. As the mentor teaches, the possibility to learn is also available to them. Both parties can be affectively changed through this process (Fairbanks, et al, 2000). As an example of its success, the Kentucky Internship Program serves as an ideal. Its call for mentoring to have a mission made it possible for mentors to be consciously involved in the process of mentoring. Awareness was heightened which

enhanced attention to the needs of their first-year teachers who expressed a confidence in their own abilities as well as their mentors (Brennan, et al, 1999).

The fullness of understanding the characteristics, needs, and futures of first-year teachers lies within the current round of research. Much is left to explore and examine. What is known is that the quality of a person's preservice education does affect the first-year's performance and success (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Chapter Overview

The nature of this study focuses upon experiences of individuals who share personal perceptions of their lives. This focus naturally leads to a qualitative form of investigation. Qualitative research encompasses various forms in today's research fields. This study seeks to understand the teacher as an individual in our society and in the social construct of the school. This idea of social research is contained in the words "craft skill" and can be considered an individualistic way of exploring issues without having to solve disputes in philosophy (Seale, 1999).

Research Methodology

Qualitative Research

Qualitative researchers seek to learn not only what things are, but also, how did things get this way? Why did they get this way? How do people feel about these things? What are the beliefs about these things? And do these things have any useful meanings which can be related to other things? It is in this searching beyond existing knowledge that the complexity of human behavior can be explored within the context of purposeful research (Gay, 1996). Qualitative studies seek to study the way in which people "perceive, experience, and make sense of, the events in their lives" (Banyard & Miller, 1998. p. 485).

The stories that first-year teachers share come from this perceived experience, and the best way in which to research them for the purposes of this study is with qualitative

research. However, not all qualitative research techniques are appropriate. The emotional issues' component of the research must be considered and compared to the available techniques of qualitative research. Attention must be given to the inner as well as the outer states of human behavior (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Narrative Research

Qualitative research in its purest form seeks to record the voices of those who are studied (Banyard & Miller, 1998). Therefore, narrative research lends itself naturally to the task of inquiry whenever human experiences are articulated with the tongue or the pen (Pinar, 1998). Narratives are not limited, however, to just these two expressions. There are an infinite number of ways stories can be told and understood including film, audio, video, and multi-media (Stuhlmiller & Thorsen, 1997). As defined by Featherstone, Munby, and Russell (1997), narrative theory is based upon the assumed power of the human experience, and it is this power that transcends itself into the lives of those who are studied and those who study them. Yet there are specific kinds of narrative techniques, and some are not suitable for the study presented here. The one which is most suited to this study of first-year teachers' stories is the reflective process found in the semi-structured interview.

Interview Research

Rubin and Rubin (1995) explain that the interviewing process of qualitative research begins with the conversational skills of the researcher and extends itself to those same skills of subjects interviewed as well as how the factor of human emotions integrates into the interview experience. Personal interviews will uncover (sometimes strong) emotions in some subjects (p. 54). These expressed emotions are a powerful part of the

interviewing process, and they can lead the researcher into the discovery of other theories (p. 55). Not only do interviewers experience the face-to-face confrontation with their subjects, but they also can relive the experience through audiotape and transcriptions (p. 55-56).

Another option for the interviewer is the use of follow-up interviews with their subjects. These interviews allow both the interviewer and interviewee to re-evaluate the information previously given with the opportunity to add new information (p. 60). Kvale (1996) also echoes the idea that conversation can be used successfully as research (p. 5).

Different styles of interviews can be designed in order to obtain the best possible results from the subjects. Kvale suggests that the interview itself is, literally, an “Inter View” which allows two voices to speak to one common theme (p. 2). The questions chosen by the researcher are most commonly semi-structured and open-ended, so the subjects can freely express information. This freedom allows the subjects the ability to use personality and unique characterizations in a more informal way (Gay, 1996). As more and more subjects are interviewed, the researcher begins to “hear” common themes that recur (Kvale, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). However, sometimes it is not what is said, but, rather, what is not expressed verbally which can be the most revealing. This silent-speak can be found in what the interviewee wears, does not wear; says, does not say; body language and non-verbal cues (Poland & Pederson, 1998). The power of interpersonal face-to-face interviewing creates an atmosphere which is conducive to a study of first-year teachers’ stories.

Dramatic Representation of Data

The findings are presented in a nontraditional way as a response to a call in qualitative research to broaden and deepen the research experience and results (Glesne, 1999). This style is also presented in order to provide an example to enrich the qualitative community inquiry samples.

The data from the interviews has been forged together into a dramatic representation by using a grounded theory approach. The transcripts were copied onto colored paper, one color per respondent. Then the transcripts were subjected to coding according to the nine questions asked of all respondents as well as other similar questions or answers revealed during the interviews. Stacks were made from these coded segments, and the data gleaned was evaluated for findings. The questions, respondents' stories and statements provided all the dialogue in the written stage theatrical script to protect the integrity of the respondents words from the transcripts. Only transitional words were added apart from the transcripts to provide clarity. The result has "emancipatory and educational potential" (Denison, 1996, p. 351).

Selection of Subjects

The respondents were the first ten teachers asked to participate. There were three ways I contacted them. The first way was by a recommendation of a mutual friend. The friend contacted the respondent first to secure permission for me to contact him/her. The second way was by a recommendation of an administrator. I contacted the administrator who then contacted the respondent. In some cases, after permission was given to the administrator, I was given the phone numbers to call the respondents myself. Otherwise, the administrator contacted the respondent who then contacted me. The final way I

secured respondents was through various university teacher education faculty. This mentor teacher contacted the respondents first, received permission for me to pursue them, and then either the respondent or I would initiate the contact. The contacts who helped secure my respondents based their decisions of whom to call on which teachers were available during the summer months. All contacts and interview scheduling were made my telephone contacts. Whenever I made initial contact with either the contact or the respondent, I explained who I was, what I was doing, and what would be involved for the participant.

The interviews were conducted during the summer after the respondents' first year of teaching. These interviews were held in four different towns with four interviews taking place in my city of residence.

Ages of the respondents ranged from 22 to 43 years of age. Three were in their forties; one was in the thirties, and six were in their twenties.

Grades taught ranged from K-12. Three taught in high school; one taught in middle school while seven taught in elementary. Subjects taught were music, physical education, business, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades.

Universities attended included both public and private schools. Seven graduated from a public university, and two graduated from a private university. One graduated from both a public and a private university.

The family status of the respondents favored marriage with seven married. Six had at least one child. One was divorced.

The gender breakdown of the respondents was eight females and two males.

Data Collection

Multiple Sources

Multiple sources were used including semi-structured interviews and a written protocol. Familiarity with the subjects was established through the contact process using mutual acquaintances. A psychologically safe environment was created by allowing the subject to choose the time and place of the interviews with the researcher travelling to meet the subject.

Interview

Two interviews from 45 minutes to an hour each per interviewee were conducted and were recorded on audio tape for transcription purposes as well as captured on video tape for the writing of the dramatic presentation portion of the study. All of the audio and videotapes will be destroyed at the end of the study. The first interview was conducted in the summer following the selection of respondents and after the written protocol had been completed. A second interview was conducted at a specified time following the first interview; its purpose was to follow-up with any questions or additions to material presented during the first interview. When conducting narrative research, the interviewer and the listener are cautioned to allow the storyteller to tell the story first. This is not to say that there cannot be any interaction while the story is being told (Connelly & Clandinin, (1990). Conversation can be used to better understand human phenomena as well as to clarify meanings and relationships.

The interviewer becomes the instrument to gather the data, and by adhering closely to the research question, the interviews become tools for the listener to shape the data received.

Questions included:

- (a) Did your teacher education courses discuss emotions, feelings, perceptions and teaching?
- (b) Tell me about a specific negative experience.
- (c) Tell me about a specific positive experience.
- (d) Overall, how do you think you handled these situations?
- (e) How do you feel now as you recall these situations?
- (f) How did you cope?
- (g) Did your teacher education program help to prepare you for these situations?
- (h) How do you think other first-year teachers view personally charged experiences in teaching?
- (i) Did these experiences affect the way you view teaching?

Protocol Writing

The participants were asked to write anecdotes about their first year of teaching to the first nine questions that would be asked in the first interview. The respondents were allowed to use this writing as a reference during the interviews. Instruction was given for the subjects to recall, to write, and to talk about emotions about their first-year teaching experiences in regard to the questions asked. I also asked them not to focus so much on the events themselves, but rather on the emotions that were involved and their lived experiences (Van Manen, 1990).

Ethical Issues

This study was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for approval. Care was taken to disguise the identity of the respondents and the location of their schools. Names,

geographic locations, and any other identifying terms were generalized. All participants were asked to sign an informed consent form and given the opportunity to deny or approve audio- and video-tape recordings of the interviews. All were informed they could withdraw from the study at any time.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

SHINY APPLES AND FUZZY WORMS: A MODERN FABLE

First-Year Teachers' Reflections from the Modern Classroom

A Fantasy in Two Acts

By

Susan Gay Vineyard

Shiny Apples and Fuzzy Worms

Preface to Play:

This play is designed to be used as an awareness tool for new teachers, seasoned teachers, and those who are considering a career in teaching. The awareness factor is based upon the true stories of the teacher's voices used in the script. Found in these stories are valuable lessons of the teaching life, especially a teacher's first year. The play is not to be considered a standard of experience for all teachers, yet it can be perceived as a reflection of a portion of the teacher population's experience. Careful attention should be paid to the voices' text as it is the actual voice of those who experienced both the fire and the joy.

Characters:

The Mentor: One who has experience in life, love, and work. The philosopher.

The Apprentice: One who is experiencing in life, love, and work. The teacher.

The Novices: Those who are beginning their journeys in life, love, and work.

The Voices of the Teachers: Those novices who have already begun their journeys.

Costumes:

The Mentor: Doctoral robe with any appropriate decoration.

The Apprentice: Master's robe with any appropriate decoration.

The Novices: Bachelor's robes with any appropriate decoration.

The Voices: Choir robes of any appropriate color/decoration.

Setting: A journey that begins somewhere and ends there.

For Act I, an eerie, smoky fantasy place. Giant gates are the focal point. One is labeled *Fire* while the other is labeled *Joy*. The place is ponderous and invites thought. The set must be created as non-reality. The voices provide the reality to balance fantasy.

For Act II, a serene, restful place that is more realistic. One gate, larger than the previous two, is the predominate focal point, and it is labeled *Reflection*.

Lighting:

For Act I, bright colors and spectrums of darks and light create the atmosphere.

For Act II, cool, calming colors create the atmosphere.

Affects:

Smoke, dancing shapes, music, and sound all should combine to help the viewer to visit a foreign place unlike any other. The audience should be drawn into a daydream-like state, so they can fully release themselves into the fable's stories.

SHINY APPLES AND FUZZY WORMS**ACT I***SCENE ONE*

(The lights up on stage to reveal an eerie, smoky, fantasy place. Chimes ring softly. Two Novices enter from stage left. The mentor enters from the center.)

MENTOR

Welcome. Welcome. Come closer as I am not an enemy, nor am I a friend. No. No. Please understand that I am here at your command, your wish of the heart. It is knowledge that you seek, and it is I who possess knowledge. You, however, must do the seeking. (A school bell rings.) Ahh, the bell of your first day of school. Not as a student, mind you, but you are here to become the teacher! You are ready. Years at the university preceded by years in earlier classrooms. Class after class of theory and methods. Your hard work is now becoming pivotal in the process of learning how to change lives. What most newly-birthed teachers do not realize until years later is that the lives that are most changed are their own. I am the Mentor. My mission is to guide humans to servanthood whose desires are to focus all their energies into dispersing the light until it shines in all who seek from them. I lead them and you, as well, on a journey that is not only one of knowledge, but also one that encompasses the emotive, passionate side of teaching. Personal growth inside and outside depends upon how much teaching is done and received. Ah, but I speak too much. You will find that you have no voice here. You cannot speak until you have understanding. However, your questions shall be answered, for they are the questions that confront all who seek to teach. Let your journey begin.

(The Apprentice enters with keys and notebook in hand.)

APPRENTICE

I am ready, your Grace.

MENTOR

Good. Take our friends up to the first gate. I will meet you later. You must go now. As a mentor, I can share my wisdom and philosophical knowledge. Unfortunately, these are wasted until life experiences can incorporate them. This is, indeed, the work of the spirit. I cannot walk where you must go. It is a personal, individual walk. Follow my friend here. Be careful to observe, but most importantly, think about what you encounter. As you hear these stories, remember, we are all one and yet not. We are teachers. The only way to become a teacher is to be taught. To be taught is to be willing to accept that which is presented and to find a place for it in our hearts. Until later.

(The Mentor walks back to the center of the stage and disappears among the smoke while the Novices gather alone talking quietly.)

APPRENTICE

Come...come...we must keep our schedule!!

(As the lights dim, the Apprentice leads the Novices off stage right.)

END OF SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

(The stage lights come up on a smoky haze as the set has changed to a giant gate labeled “Fire.” Leading the Novices, the Apprentice enters stage left. Soft, moaning voices and screams as well as crying can be heard from behind the gate.)

APPRENTICE

Ah! Here we are, the Gate of Fire! Do not be afraid. The Gate of Fire is something to be revered, not feared. Though it sounds menacing, it truly is a part of teaching. Why fire? It is through the refinement that only the fire of living can bring which enables you to be tested, proven, toughened, and forgiven. It is something you must experience personally. But first, listen and observe those who have gone before. Listen to the stories of the first-year teachers. Learn from their fire experiences. They share because they care, and as they share they are healed. Listen. Listen to the Voices of the Teachers. In them you may find your teaching salvation.

(The Apprentice opens the Gate of Fire as a flurry of smoke and flames is seen. The moaning becomes louder as the Novices enter. The rest of the action is inside the gate.)

(All the Voices take turns speaking the following words:)

Disgust! Anger! Sorrow. Anxiety! Fear. Sadness. Frustration!!! Scared. Disappointed.

Rejection. Surprise!! Regret. Concern. Curiosity. Apprehension. Resolution.

Our emotions. Our feelings. Our experiences. Our stories. Our beginnings. Here we bare ourselves to you. What will you feel in what we share? Only you can say.

VOICE #1

Oh, my gosh! I was feeling fearful and excited whenever I went for my job interview. Interviewing for me was not really a fearful thing as far as whether or not I could do a good interview since I had been a legal secretary. But I was more fearful because this was a field I had never interviewed before. I was unsure what questions would be asked, so in that respect I was fearful. I was excited too because just the thought, even if they didn't hire me, just the thought that I might be getting a teaching job was really exciting to me. We didn't really practice going through the interview process in teacher education courses, maybe a little bit of what content might be, but as far as re-enacting the role of an interviewer and interviewee, no. If we would have done that, I think it would have helped. Not for me personally, but I think for a lot of my friends because they were terrified going into an interview due to not having any experience.

VOICE #2

When I went into my job interview, I was kinda down-in-the-dumps because it was the first of August and I was getting kinda scared and my friend Andy called me and let me know about this job. So, I came up here and interviewed. Met with the principal; she was nice, but I was nervous and, like, I'm here, I've been educated. I'm willing to do whatever you want me to do! In a way it was odd because I went for an interview last May and didn't get the job. I couldn't believe how I wasn't scared in August. It was just like, if you want me, that's fine. If not, that's okay too. I'll look around and make do with whatever. Well, my interview with the elementary principal went really well. She and I corresponded very well. Things I've taught, she was very pleased with. I could tell by her facial expressions and how she talked to me. I went and interviewed with the Superintendent

later and in my opinion I didn't feel like he was professional. The way he was going about asking me questions and joking with me. So I was nervous about that. I felt like he was trying to intimidate me, but I still felt confident. The high school principal came in and visited with me. He asked me a pop question, like what is a math problem that you would teach in the fifth grade? Like a reading problem. I sat there. I student taught fourth grade. I sat there and came up with a math problem and the Superintendent turned to the high school principal and said, "Is that a good enough problem for a fifth grader?" I thought, my God! Why are you asking the high school principal? Later, the Superintendent told me the principal was a math teacher, but I was, like, what does it matter? What does it matter if I can come up with a math problem? I was intimidated by him.

VOICE #3

I felt very unprepared for my job interview. Very unprepared. I applied at 42 different schools. I sent resumes' out to 42 different schools. I went through seven interviews. In each interview, I got better, and I felt more prepared. Yeah, my teacher ed course teachers talked some about interviews, some. Just about having a resume' and about how you need to have a philosophy because it will be asked in the interview. But we didn't practice actual interviews. Well, anyway, I interviewed the last time and then the position was filled with someone else. But they called me back and another teacher had resigned. They wanted me to come back for another interview. I had three interviews there. The first one was about two hours and the second was a little over an hour. The third one was about fifteen minutes. In each one I got more confident. I knew the Superintendent doing the interviews. I felt more comfortable with him because I was a former student of his. At first, I felt, like, if he sees me as someone who can be responsible enough to be a teacher,

and that's what I was worried about during the whole interview. Very worried. I'm a single mother; what if I don't get the job? Nervous. What if I say the wrong thing? What if I start stuttering?

VOICE #4

Going into the interview, I was very nervous and again my emotions were very raw from the last experience that I'd been through. So I was heartbroken; I was emotionally torn, and I think at that point if they hadn't offered me the job, I probably wouldn't have cried about it, but, yet, again, it would probably have been an emotional dent in my emotional armor. And the fact that they did offer the job! I had a husband who was saying to me, "You can do this; we can do this." He was so strong and supportive for me that I felt like I could. When they offered me the job, it was mixed emotions. I was elated. I thought, Oh, my gosh! Somebody does want me! So, for my ego, it was a big boost. Still, having to make the transition, but looking back it was probably better for me emotionally to grow and to be able to fall flat on my face and still get up and not have to do it under the conscious watching of the people I've known all my life.

VOICE #5

Going into the interview, I felt really good. I did my student teaching here. I graduated in December, and I worked in the library as an aide. Then I taught summer school. The fourth grade position came open and I was excited, to tell the truth---only under pressure of my mom and husband who worried that I wouldn't get the job. I strongly believed. The Lord took me through school while my kids were kids, and I just knew that he would provide then.

VOICE #6

I was in a good situation, actually. I graduated in December, so I had a full semester to do subbing. I took a long-term maternity job that had opened up in the school. So, I was already teaching in the school when I went to the interview. I felt confident; I was still very professional. I didn't take anything for granted. I prepared myself for the interview just like I would any interview, but I felt very comfortable because I knew the people in the school, and I'd already been in a classroom by myself, and during that interview, I was already making decisions to buy my stuff. I didn't, this is another thing I think teacher education should address; when you are doing your student teaching, and you've got that classroom; it's your classroom, but there's still that teacher that you still have to ask permission from to do something. You know you are learning and have to have that person there; I understand that, but you are not in your own personal way of doing things or would do. I was already making those decisions on my own for the classroom. I didn't have to answer to anybody, except, of course, the principal. So I had an advantage over other new teachers because I'd been in the situations they were asking me about. I would say this is how I handled it; this is how I do it. Instead of saying I think I would handle it this way or that. I think I was more prepared than some teachers that hadn't been in a classroom by themselves. You know, those kids, I had them for nine weeks, and that's a long time to build a bond with a kid and be able to say, "I'm a teacher, and this is the way it's going to be, and this is how we're running it. So as far as my interview, I felt very confident.

VOICE #7

Well, my attitude going into the interview was, "I'm gonna go apply, and if I get it, I get it. If I don't, I don't." And, it just, I mean, I was surprised that I got it. And now, as I look back and think about the interview and the principal who interviewed me, I see why he picked me. It wasn't because of my musical abilities, or that the other person quit when it was only two weeks before the teachers reported for the beginning of school. The school that I'm at really doesn't have a good reputation for its music program, and when you really look at it, the parents and patrons and constituents and all that, they don't have a real understanding of what music is or can be. Because of my background in music therapy and my philosophy of music, I think that's why he really picked me.

VOICE #8

Scared. That's the way I felt on that first day. I really wanted to be a good teacher, but I had these seventeen students in my classroom and the fear, "Am I going to be able to teach them anything? Will they be able to leave my classroom at the end of the year better than they walked in?" In fact, I was also not sure I would have the right discipline plan. "Would I be able to control them?" So in that respect, I was fearful. I had more than one negative experience, but one sticks out the most in my mind. It was an evaluation I had with my principal. In that evaluation he told me that he felt I was not working well with the other teachers in the building because I wasn't accepting any suggestions they were making. This bothered them. As well, he also told me that I had no joy in my teaching, and that bothered him because I had had so much joy in my teaching. Those two things really bothered me. I believed I was acting professionally. I believed I had lots of joy in my teaching. I woke up every day excited about going to school. There wasn't one morning

that I woke up and didn't want to go. That bothered me that he saw that, and I felt it was an unfair judgment because I had three extremely difficult students in my classroom, and the only time he came in to evaluate me was when they were in there and something was going on with them. And so, of course, I was not happy; the class was not happy. It was a very stressful time. When those students were gone out of the class, it was a totally different atmosphere. There was lots of joy; we had lots of laughing, but the majority of the time, it was a tense situation. As far as the other teachers, I felt it was really unfair of him to tell me that too, and not tell me who was saying that, so I could address it. I finally did at the end of the interview get him to tell me three names. And I knew for a fact that two of them didn't have a problem. I think, what he was trying to do was to try to cover up for a bad relationship that the counselor had in the school. She was not doing her job as far as my troubled students were concerned. She was sloughing off on it, and I had caught her on it. I had not criticized her face-to-face, but had criticized her to the principal. I think he passed the word on, and then she started making up all the stories. I remember telling him that I thought that was very unfair. Also, I asked him to watch me closely and tell me if there was anything in my demeanor that gave the other teachers the opinion that I was not listening or that I wasn't receptive to what they were saying. I asked him to come to my classroom whenever those three students were not there, so he could see what the classroom atmosphere was really like instead of judging me only at the times there were problems going on in the classroom. He agreed to do both of those things, and he never said another word about it. In fact, at the end of the year, he told me I had done a great job and was surprised that I had done so well under the circumstances. I think he

may have singled me out because I was a first-year teacher. Fortunately, I kept a professional attitude most of the time.

VOICE #9

This student came in late. He came into school a month late, and he had come in from a very difficult home life. He had no real strong female figure in his life, so he really didn't like me a lot from the beginning. His first day with me he had to be taken out because he was totally disrupting my class. The second day we were doing required testing, and he was taken out again because he would interrupt by standing up and telling me he didn't have to take any test. He began throwing things and yelling and pushing the students in the classroom who were trying to tell him to be quiet because they were all testing. Then he started screaming at me and calling me foul names like "mother fucker" and "bitch." I was shocked that a second grader was saying these things and shocked that he was saying them with so much hatred. And, when he first came, especially that first and second day, I felt a little bad for him and a little bad for myself too, and I guess, in that respect, it was directed towards me. But he didn't want to be in my classroom. I took this personally because I felt I should have done something more to make him feel welcome. I have since realized that it wouldn't have made any difference as far as he was concerned, just because of all the troubles he had. Nobody would've been able to make him feel welcome.

VOICE #10

I was forewarned by other colleagues about one of our peers. Her daughter was in my class. At the first of the semester, I gave an assignment, and there was a crossword puzzle in science. It was like a review. I give out literature to go with the puzzle, or they could look up and find the answers. I said, "If you don't get it finished, don't worry, we'll work

on it tomorrow,” because they had only fifteen minutes and I knew they couldn’t get it finished. “We’ll work on it tomorrow.” The next morning this peer teacher was downstairs in the hall as my students were going into my classroom. She said, “I don’t believe you should assign an assignment when they don’t have a place to put the answers.” And I said, “I’m sorry you feel this way, but this was not homework. I told them they could work on it in class; it’s not a big deal.” She said, “Well, you didn’t have to put up with her last night at home crying and bawling because she couldn’t do an assignment.” She left hostile. But what aggravated me was that my students were coming into the classroom. I left at this time to go to the workroom because I was just, I went into the workroom and just, I broke; I got chills and kept wondering why this was such a big deal. Another teacher had heard our peer talking to me, and she followed me to the workroom. She told me to let it go and not to let them see me cry. “You dry up your tears.” It was frustrating. It was just like, I’m doing my job. I worked; I stayed up; I’m doing my job. This teacher came to me later in the year and said I was picking on her daughter by drawing attention to her child in front of the other children. I didn’t feel like I was drawing attention, you know. But she felt like I was. Her daughter is a very intelligent student. This is what I told her mother. That I’m not picking on her for something done wrong, but rather to get her to stay on track with the rest of the class. Finally, I suggested we go see the counselor because the mother did not know any specific instances, and I need instances. We went upstairs to go and find her daughter, but she had left. The problem stopped right there. However, when we went upstairs to find her daughter, this mother told me that she felt like I was picking on her daughter all year and that I was after her daughter. I said that I felt like she had been after me all year. That she had made me feel like a horrible teacher by not doing my

job. She turned to me and said, "I think you're one of the best teachers here." And I thought, "Where is THAT coming from?"

VOICE #11

There was this seventh grade kid about the second week of school. I don't remember what activity we were doing, but he was not participating very well. I called him on it and gave him the option to either participate or I'd send him out to the office and write him up. He walked out the door, had a few words to say, I don't remember exactly what he said, but I followed him up there to make sure he was going to the office, and, on the way, he started throwing "F" words. I was just thinking, "What in the world?" He said that I didn't want to see him mad. You know he was a seventh grade kid; I wasn't too worried about anything. He had to walk upstairs to the office and instead of doing that, he walked straight out the front door of the school. I'm kinda sitting there thinking, "Mmm, okay." So I had to call the vice-principal to get him. He ended up being truant and was suspended for ten days. That was the first experience. Kinda woke me up. Man this could be interesting. You know it wasn't too bad. It does kinda make you think back in your mind that you make a kid mad, what he might do these days. That's the ten or fifteen minutes later. I'll laugh about it. I talked to some other teachers, whatever. It's not something I really dwell on or let it bother me the rest of the day. I just go on about my business and try to focus on everything else (smiles). Here's another one. This kid was pretty good at the end of the year, but during the middle of the schedule... he didn't dress out for gym. I sent him out to sit outside the gym door. I came by later, and he was lying down, so I told him to get up. I came back again, and he had his coat over his face sleeping, so I just kinda kicked his shoe, and told him to go to the office. He said, "Don't touch me!" Then he

started walking out saying something. I said, "If you've got something to tell me, just come over here and tell me." He said, "The next time I see you I'm gonna beat the shit out of you!" I was, like, I don't think so and told him to go to the office. It was another seventh grade kid.

VOICE #12

There was one story that just popped into my head. There was a little girl whose mother taught at our school. Her mom wanted to take her out to lunch one day, but she had an earlier lunchtime than her daughter's. So, the daughter went with her mom to an early lunch and then returned to our lunchtime. In the cafeteria they made this girl sit at the back table. If a kid sits at the back table, he/she is in trouble, so I tell this girl that she can come sit with my class. The cafeteria hostess stopped me and told me that the girl couldn't sit there. That she had to sit at the back table since she'd already eaten. I told her that the girl wasn't in trouble. The hostess said that she has to sit there. I said, "Can't she go out on the playground and play with the second graders?" The hostess said no. I got pretty upset about that. She was my kid, and she was a good kid and hadn't done anything wrong. So I got real emotional. I said, "Fine, she can just come with me." I took her back to my classroom, and I ended up taking her outside. I got so emotional. I was mad about that situation. After it was all over, I went to my principal. I later learned that the reason they do that is because some of the kids cause trouble at the tables. But this was a good girl. I got so emotional in that. I just wasn't ready for that. I guess you don't know all the inside stuff as a first-year teacher. And that was a very emotional time period for me. The incident may have lasted five minutes, but.....

VOICE #13

I don't think I've had a negative experience with an administrator or teacher. There's been a few times, you know; some teachers have bad days. You might ask them something, and they might kinda growl at you or something. I know my principal. He comes into the room, and he might not see you doing something that he likes. But that's more curriculum, and I understand about what he's wanting. He's wanting more of a program to get started as far as PE goes. I'm more laid back, and I let the kids decide a lot of stuff. To me, if the kids are more controllable and happy, they are doing some things that aren't as organized or straight line. You know; the principal sees it differently. He wants a program where you've got two-week lessons. But these kids up here, I think it's hard sometimes because you spend twenty minutes trying to get them under control. Well, anyway, the principal is some days like a Jekyll and Hyde. You can tell when he's having a bad day, sometimes. You don't know. The first time, I was kinda like, I didn't really feel. I wasn't really upset about it, but I think I understood what he was getting at.

VOICE #14

When we first go into school, I had this one little boy who was in a wheelchair. At first, I was like, oh, man, I can do this. It's not a big deal. So I got him into class, and I worked him and expected a lot out of him. I could tell that things weren't expected of him, at home. People did things for him or if he didn't do them, it was like, oh, all right. Just forget about it. And if things are expected out of us, we aren't going to do them. I was getting the feeling at the very first of school that he didn't think I was gonna make him do stuff or require as much out of him. So I started doing some background checking and what actually was the problem, and you know; it DID affect his learning, the reason why

he was in the wheelchair. He had a tumor on his spine, had surgery and couldn't walk. It had nothing to do with the neck up. So I treated him like a normal kid. I didn't care that he was in a wheelchair. I treated him like everybody else. He was expected to do the work. But, at first, I could tell things weren't getting done. He would have homework, and it wasn't getting done. So I set him up on a homework contract, and the parents weren't signing it. I went to his teacher from the year before. Now that's something my college really pushed... don't look back... don't look at their personal folders. But I went anyway. I asked her about the homework problem and the parents not signing off on his homework. His teacher said he just didn't do his assignments. I was like, oh, my! I cannot believe the reason he's acting this way is because he wasn't made to do it last year. This kid sat clear through second grade and was not made to do a thing. If he didn't do it, he didn't have to do it. So why do it? I started at the very beginning. He thinks he doesn't have to do it, but he does. Well, the dad set up a meeting with me, and he comes up and we're talking about homework and how much I expect out of him. I'd heard that he was a pretty tough guy. I felt I was going to stand my ground and say this is what I expect out of the other kids. In the beginning I had a tough attitude. He might be tough, but this was my classroom. I didn't want him to know I was a first-year teacher; I couldn't be weak. I wasn't scared, but I kinda had anxiety. The dad asked me how much homework I expected. I told him that I didn't expect any homework, that I expected him to do it in class. However, if he's not doing it in class, then I expect him to get done what he's not getting done. And I spoke to the dad, how if I felt he was really struggling with this situation because I'd already looked into maybe some learning disabilities in certain areas. This kid had to get his diapers changed. Well, if he was out of the room for thirty minutes

with this person, the dad thought that I was not going to make his son do the full assignment. So I was just really very forward, saying that he was going to be expected to do whatever everybody else was doing while he was in my classroom. His dad told me, this is really interesting; the dad told me face-to-face that I would give up on this child after the first six weeks of school. That made me angry. I mean, I was angry at this point. And my response back to him was, "If I give up on him the first six weeks, I'm a failure as a teacher and don't belong in this profession." I will never forget...and that's my exact comeback. He just kinda looked at me. I was very angry, and I had a bad attitude about him probably. You know you don't tell me I'm gonna give up on your child. I'm sorry you've had that experience before. But I'm not going to give up on him, and I didn't give up on him. We made a lot of progress that year. I actually gained the trust of the parents, and they gave me some progress themselves. I was mad after that first meeting though. I was mad before I ever went home. I went to my principal, and I was just... In another situation with parents, a lady made me mad, and I handled it very professionally, then when she left, and I was red in the face, and I was mad. The lady had said that the child's teacher the year before, Miss Johnson, had done this, and Miss Johnson had done that. I was very, very angry. I was very emotional then.

VOICE #15

Working at a Christian school, the parents are more involved. That's good, but sometimes they are a little more involved because they are paying for the education, and they want everything to be perfect. And oftentimes, I felt like that they were expecting me to do everything and not them or the church because it takes all three. The principal in my school discusses how raising children takes three things: the church, parents, and the

teachers. It's not just one; it takes all three together. So we would tell the kids that, and we would try to let the parents know that they couldn't expect us to take care of everything, and then we would send them home, and they wouldn't do anything at home. I had one parent who would get mad at me for the workload they said was too heavy. I felt like, I felt like, I mean... Their son did not understand time management. He never could get all his work done during the time allotted. Also, he needs it really quiet, so he can focus really hard on the answer. I would try to help him as much as I could. Well, his parents began to get hateful with me 'cause they said there was too much work. That he was coming home with all this homework and that it was ruining their life because they couldn't go to church or do this or do that. We kept explaining that we have all this stuff we have to get done, and that we were trying to help him as much as possible. It was like a power struggle between their poor attitude and his which continued to get worse and worse. They were getting angrier at us, so he was starting to get real hateful at school at us too. So this is a negative experience... I prayed to God a lot and cried about it a lot, and I don't know what... The principal had a conference with all of us. During the parent-teacher conference, the mom was sitting with her arms folded. Her body language was horrible, and the whole time her attitude was just very... there was a wall; she wouldn't hardly listen, and she wasn't open to anything we had to say. The boy said something under his breath, something rude about me, about how I was mean. I looked at him like I just can't believe you just said that. You know, I just couldn't believe. Well, anyway, we did work it out. These people give teachers a difficult time every year because I think they know it's not the teachers but their child.

VOICE #16

Oh, there are a lot of negative experiences, of course, the first year. The things you have to deal with on a daily basis, like extra-curricular activities... things that so many students are in and out. You don't really realize how many kids you're dealing with every day.

When I was going through the teacher education program, they go through all these things, about preparing your classes, being ready to deal with, I mean, a lot of preparation, how to present stuff, but you never really are prepared for all the stuff that comes along. Somebody's gone for a week, then they get back, then they are gone on a chorus trip or a band trip, and you never really get everybody together at once. It seems like most negative experiences, that everything was never just altogether at once.

VOICE #17

You walk into the classroom, and you have all these eyes. I had thirteen students, twenty-six eyes staring at me. Just staring at me. I just, where do you begin? I had a student in my class whose mother happened to be a teacher at the school, and she thought he was gifted in math, one of my strongest areas to teach. He was giving me "B" work, not "A" work. His mother wanted me to put him into the sixth grade math, and I would not do it. I would not move him up because I wasn't going to go through the extra time, extra preparation when he wasn't doing the work at the level I gave him. She came in at noon to talk, and I expressed to her that his grade was falling, and she said to me, "That's your problem." She then said she'd be back after school. It affected me. I couldn't teach. I taught, continued with the lesson I had planned, but I wasn't mentally there. I wasn't with the lesson. I was thinking what is she going to say? His grades had really dropped, to a 79. She stood in front of the desk. I didn't say a word as she more or less attacked me. She came into my

class in front of my students and yelled, "You're ruining my son's life! You're not teaching him anything! It pisses me off that you can't help my son!" I eventually said something. I did say, "This is my first year; put yourself in my shoes." And she said she was old enough to be my mother and knew what it was like to be a first-year teacher, and that I was not doing it right. And you know, she yelled at me until I cried. Once I started crying, she left and went to my administrator and told him I was ruining her son's life. I then had to go in and talk to the administrator. I brought my grade book, so he could see that the boy was not ready. Well, whatever the parent wanted, she got. She even told me that someday she'd have my child in her class. Well, I will not put my child in her class. I had to test her son, but he still did not test high enough for me to advance him. I never did. Anyway, this woman began to call other parents of kids in my class telling them how terrible I was. It backfired because the parents went to my principal and came to me to say they didn't agree. They said I was doing a wonderful job; that their children love my class. In the meantime, this woman would come and stand at my classroom door and stare in at me. The incident happened in January and carried on through May. Looking back, I think I tried to be as professional as I could at school and at functions. I think she crossed the line between personal and professional. I dread next year but not as badly as having her son in my class. It just shocked me whenever these things would happen. In the future, I have to get over that shock quicker and handle it.

VOICE #18

I didn't see it coming. I like to know exactly what's going to happen that first day. I don't know. I had a student who was being abused at home, and I had to report it, and after I reported it, well, this teacher from school called me and said that I was not prepared for that. The kid came to school the next day and told me his mom was mad at me because I had called the DHS people. That was a shock. I wasn't expecting that at all. After I hung up the phone, my principal said in the past they've given the name, but he didn't say it until I had hung up the phone. It is my understanding now that all a teacher has to do in a case like this is to report it to their supervisor. The child did tell me that he was being abused. Later, he told me that he was, sometimes. I was unprepared to deal with this situation.

VOICE #19

A negative experience with a student for me would be the troubled teenager who came to me and told me she had a drug problem. I'm not a counselor. Of course, this was during my planning period, so I did have some quiet time, and I took her over into another room. We sat and visited, and she explained about her past experiences and the problem and that it was affecting her schooling, and she needed to get some help. Of course, those were things I didn't want to hear; that it was more than I wanted to know about her. I knew I couldn't help her. The only suggestions that I could make to her were that we could go to the phonebook and look for some counseling and that we'd look for a teen hotline. So, as a resolution, I took her to the school counselor, and we went into the office. I told the counselor that this student was experiencing some problems, and that we needed some hotline numbers. I asked her if I could tell the counselor some things that she had

expressed to me, and she said to go ahead. It didn't come as any surprise to the counselor. Anyway, I left the girl with the counselor. I was jittery all morning after that and on edge because hearing those kinds of things and knowing that those kinds of problems exist for students in my classroom. I looked out and wondered how many more are like her too. I've always been sympathetic and have empathy for those; that's just a personal behavior, but as far as making eye contact with her the rest of the day, you know. I felt bad for her, and I am sure that my effectiveness was affected in some way. You know those are things that as an entry year teacher, you don't know. How far do I go with a student?

VOICE #20

Okay. With my seventh and eighth graders, well, one day they asked if we were going to sing that day. And I'm like, yeah that's what vocal music class is for, singing. So, yes we would sing. The kids didn't really have the stamina vocally and attention-wise to sing for a whole hour; they just couldn't do it. But you know they'll play all the little games and just be little distracters while you're working on stuff, and you don't accomplish anything that way and my attitude is this is music class, and if you're not going to sing, you are going to learn about music. So that day this whole classroom was just like, laughing at me and carrying on, and it was the beginning of the hour and they wouldn't settle down. I ended up sending the entire class to detention. And what happened was that I had sent one down to detention, and then another one, but that didn't seem to change anything in the class. They were all sitting there laughing and carrying on. They didn't want to get down to business. So, I sent them all down there. There was one girl who does what she's asked. The other kids don't follow her, but she does well. She was crying. I talked to her after class and said it's okay not to be perfect, but I will talk to your mom 'cause I felt badly for

her. And then there was another girl that asked questions and I, you know, pretty much told her the same thing. Nobody said anything. Then that evening I get a call from one of the girls' dad. He's a principal at another school. When I talked to him, he tried to intimidate me; he tried to manipulate me; he pretty much tried to harass me into changing and letting his daughter out of it. I explained to him why I did it, why I felt it was necessary, and then when none of that worked, it was like he tried to bribe me. He said, "“How do you feel, that you ruined my daughter's perfect record?” Well, I made a decision, and I needed to stick by it. So then, he calls the superintendent who lets her out of it. My principal was really mad about that. The superintendent was over at our school and I asked if he was looking for me. He wasn't, but then I asked how he would have handled it and he said he'd have an extra practice or something. That's not the way I explained it to the girls. I told them that even though music is a class, it's not like math or science because you work together as a group. You've got to function as a group. At first, they had a problem with that, but now they're catching on to it. You know, I just couldn't believe I had done that, sent them all. I was in disbelief. I still feel a little bit of the emotions of that experience.

(The Apprentice closes the door behind the Novices as they exit the Gate of Fire.)

END OF SCENE TWO

SCENE THREE

APPRENTICE

Now, now. Do not worry. These stories are not yours. Could they be? Possibly. Do you feel the fire's tinge? Can you still smell the smoke of passions past? Good. As you progress forward to your next gate, take what you have learned, for it will make the stories you hear next a more satisfying venture.

(They walk to the next Gate which is labeled "Joy". Giggles, applause, and soft music is heard.)

Yes. I can tell that you are pleased. Yes, it is the Gate of Joy, and beyond its gate lie stories of different kinds of joy. The Voices will share with you once again. Do not mistake this as a place of assumption, for were it not for the fire, joy could not exist.

Enter....Joy. (The Apprentice opens the gate as the Novices enter. The music and laughter swells as brightly colored lights dance inside the gate.)

(All the VOICES take turns saying the following words:)

Enthusiasm! Joy! Happiness. Excitement!! Love. Pride. Sense of Accomplishment!
Fulfillment. Adulation! Inspiration. Sincerity. Success!!! Sense of Well-Being. These words shine forth to you as token of our moments of splendor. Times earned because of fire. Do you share what we feel? You will; you might and might not. But it is in the awareness that you learn.

VOICE #1

When I got the job, I just cried. I couldn't believe that I had actually been offered the job.

Yes, the crying. It was a good thing.

VOICE #2

I am one who really believes in reading, and I pushed that very strongly with my students.

We didn't have a lot of books growing up except encyclopedias, so I started bringing them out in my classroom. I would open one up and say, "Oh! Wow! Look what I found!" Then

we'd start talking about what I'd found and they'd ask questions. There was one boy in

particular; he really loved to learn. He was excited about learning, but he was not one who

liked to read story-time books. Our reading program at school was predominately story

books. He'd check them out but wouldn't read them. His parents were worried about this,

but I wasn't because I knew he didn't like them. He was one, after I started bringing the

encyclopedias, who was never without one of those volumes on his desk or on the floor

beside his desk. The first time he took one and took it to his desk, I don't remember which

volume, but he came back and asked me a question about the area he had opened up to. I

told him to read it just a little bit and if he didn't find the answer to come back and ask me.

And not five minutes later, he turned around and said, "Mrs. Jones, you're not gonna

believe what I found out. At that point, my heart just melted.

VOICE #3

When I got the job, I was excited. Ecstatic! I was excited because the principal was so

nice! We hit it off really well, and that made me feel much better. I knew that if I needed

anything, I could go to her, and she would know exactly what I needed to do. She'd been

there. It was her job that I was filling.

VOICE #4

On the first day of school, I woke up, and I was getting ready, and I wanted to be there early, earlier than I needed to be. I was curling my hair, and I was so nervous. I thought, I just can't believe I'm actually here. I mean; cause you go through high school and think that you're never going to make it. Then when you go to college, you think that you'll never graduate. Now, I'm actually doing what I wanted to be doing since I was in the seventh grade. So I was really excited. I had my husband take a picture of me, so I would always remember that day and how I felt.

VOICE #5

My first day went really well. The only thing that happened was that I made a little girl cry. The way I did that was to go around the room and ask the students to tell something about themselves. Anything. I should have thought about this because I was shy. She was one of the last ones to do it, and she just started crying. I felt horrible, but then during a teacher parent conference day, this little girl's mother told me that she thought I was the best teacher her daughter had ever had and that her daughter enjoyed school because she was in my class. So, that made me feel like I'm doing my job. I felt ten feet tall when I went home that night. Told my husband, I did have an impact on their lives, you know, in my teaching.

VOICE #6

I had a student named Mark. He was pretty much marked as a bad kid. Usually, the other teachers never liked him. I worried a lot about him, but there was just one set of rules. Mark was truly a success story. He just, oh, by Christmas, he was a model student. Not only did I like that, he liked that. He liked being the good one. At the end of the year, I

started getting emotional, “Oh, my gosh! It’s over!” And he did too, and he didn’t want it to be over. He had learned self-control, and before, he couldn’t do it. Teachers do touch lives. I feel successful. I feel like, at night before I go to sleep, that I’ve done what I was supposed to do. Each day is so different. There weren’t many nights that I went to bed worrying.

VOICE #7

In one of the seventh grade classes, we share a class. The other teacher and I have our seventh grade PE classes together. There were a couple of girls in there that had never liked PE that much, and at the end of the year, they said that we had made it fun for them, and they liked it. That was something positive that made you feel pretty good about being a teacher and helping a kid out. I was just, happy. You gotta feel good when you make someone else feel good about being special in your class. I think the positive feelings affect the rest of the day more than the negative. If a kid says somethin’ to do you during the day, early in the day, and then you see him in the hall, you know, they smile at you or wave. Or a lot of the guys, we joke around a lot, so they would say some remark to me and just make me laugh. That kinda makes your day go by faster. You see these kids that you have in class in the halls between classes. The positive makes me feel better throughout the day.

VOICE #8

The best I felt over the past year was when you have a lot of kids in weight lifting that don’t want to do it. It’s physical labor; it’s a lot of work; maybe, intellectually it’s not what physics is, but it’s not sitting in a chair for an hour or forty-five minutes. It’s physical work, and the best feeling I ever had, the first real good feeling I had last year was the first

time I gave them a choice to do whatever they wanted to do for that hour. They said they wanted to go to the weight room. That's when I felt the most positive emotion probably the whole year. Now, I'm getting through to them now, you know, kinda putting the ideals of what they need to see are getting through to them. They know, this is good for me. They are starting to enjoy it because they can see the good effects it's having on them, and you know that could be an individual too. Maybe one kid that doesn't see it for months but finally gets through and some of them never see.

VOICE #9

I had a student that came in at the beginning of the year, and they didn't want him at the school. He had been home schooled because of behavior problems. At the beginning of the year, he was very, just like a bully, and anytime he took criticism he would just shut down. At the end of the school year, he was a perfect student; he had never been in our school system because he came from another school system. He is starting to realize that the other students have feelings, too. He's the one that if someone came to the room to have someone sent to do errands or take notes around to classes, he's the one I trusted at the end of the year that I couldn't trust at the beginning of the year. It made me feel very worthwhile. I think I miss him; I miss that student. I wish I knew what he is doing now.

VOICE #10

Well, positive to me as a professional person is being positive in the classroom dealing with students. Coming through an entry-year process, as it was explained to me, you were to your meetings with your mentor teacher, your principal, your university representative and then the entry year teacher. Going through those observations and then going through your meetings which last anywhere from ten to forty-five minutes, to me, that was a

positive experience. Why? Maybe, it was because I received such outstanding reviews. Had I been ostracized or criticized, I might not have thought it was such a positive experience. It was a learning experience, so that anything that I gained from that experience I think would be positive. As far as the process of the entry-year program and the meetings, that was positive. I got feedback from representatives of the university on how they do things which was different from the university that I'd been trained at. And then I got the experience of a mentor teacher who was fabulous. She was a twenty-five year veteran who still had joy in her heart and loved her teaching and the kids. She was excellent, just an excellent mentor. One time, she said that she had noticed I was handling discipline in the halls and taking over a class for the coach who was always late coming back and forth from buildings. So I would take over his class and start his class and my class as well until he got over there. And she said that showed her that I was a team player. That made me feel appreciative that somebody noticed that I was doing my job.

VOICE #11

I have two girls in my music class who have the most musical ability, you know, but behavior wise, they just weren't getting it, and I told them it's not what you have, it's what you do with what you have. Well, they really wanted to do something with their talents but didn't know how to go about it. Whenever they misbehaved, I would give them written work about different music aspects which at first they viewed as punishment. Later though, they would come to me and begin to ask questions. It made it all worthwhile. I was elated. It was really neat in the awards assembly when one girl received an award and she gave me a hug, and that was, just, you know, neat.

VOICE #12

Why did I go into teaching? I've wanted to teach since I was a little girl. I played school the whole time I was growing up, and I went to a private college over twenty years ago. I had enrolled as an education major, and they came and told us that there were hardly any jobs available for education majors, and they strongly recommended for any of us that had any other strengths to go into other fields. I decided to go into business. I did that until I had my son whom I stayed at home for until he began going to school. I really wanted to go back and get my education degree. And I did.

VOICE #13

I teach because I love kids. I didn't originally go into education. My whole family is in education. I went to college and wasn't going to be a teacher because I didn't get paid enough. Then I was in college for about two semesters and decided no, I really want to teach. So I went back. I started to work with kids in the job I had at the time. The pay wasn't great, but the coming in and being with those kids just touched my heart. That's another huge emotion that I don't know that I was ready for, the attachments. Especially, you know people say it'll be different after the first group, but that first group of kids, I didn't want to leave. They were mine. My principal told me one day, "You know, these are your kids." I'd have done anything for them.

VOICE #14

I've got some family that are in teaching. I've just always been good with people. Good people skills. Pretty good sense of humor. That's good for teaching. I played basketball in college, and I kinda wanted to continue working with kids. I just enjoy kids. Socializing with kids.

VOICE #15

I have three kids of my own. I feel like teachers can make a difference. Someone needs to make a difference.

VOICE #16

I chose to teach because it just felt natural. It was something I'd wanted to since the second and third grade. When you had to fill out something that asked what you thought you'd be doing in the future, I just always put down that I would be a teacher. My aunt is a teacher. We'd always play school, and she'd always be our guinea pig. It was fun.

VOICE #17

When I was twenty-three and in my third year of college, I decided to go into teaching. I had an athletic background, very competitive, and in all the extra-curricular stuff. I went into college intending to pursue an accounting degree. My mother is an accountant. She's someone I've always been around, and I'd really gotten a jump on my major working in her firm. Then getting to do it on a daily basis in college, I really decided that it was not something that I wanted to do. I wanted to do something I'm happy with. And the thing boiled down to being happy the rest of your life in whatever you wanted to do. The one thing I really like, not just the athletics, but I like the daily interaction with all that encompasses those two things. I like being with the kids, being able to place your ideals and some of your beliefs on becoming a better person, in going through life in a positive manner. Those things really geared me for teaching.

(Applause rises as the Novices come out of the Gate of Joy followed by the Apprentice.)

APPRENTICE

You are tired. You need to rest. It is good to rest. There is much spent upon that which you have heard. Much more to hear and learn, but not now. First, a short break. Clear your minds and your bodies of unwanted stressors, and then we shall continue to the next destination, the Gate of Reflection.

(The lights dim. Curtain down)

END OF SCENE THREE

END OF ACT ONE

INTERMISSION

SHINY APPLES AND FUZZY WORMS**ACT II***SCENE ONE*

(The Apprentice enters with the Novices following behind. They approach a much larger door than the previous two. Soothing nature sounds and music are heard. Cool lighting is used to convey a sense of serenity.)

APPRENTICE

Come this way. Much more to see and hear. This is the Gate of Reflection, a place where perception and truth must meet. A time must come whenever you must acknowledge what is. Once you can do this, then you can begin to understand why things are the way they are. The Voices await you. Persevere now, and in the future, your strength may not leave you. Learn to reflect. It is from your reflection that truths are seen. Enter.

(The Novices enter the Gate. A rush of wind is heard.)

VOICE #1

It's good. It's good to reflect back. Especially in the summer when you almost forget some of the stuff that's going on and it gives me a chance to follow up with the year and remember some of the things that went on and how I dealt with it. I think the reflecting process could be incorporated more into a first-year teacher's schedule. It would let them see the situations that they kinda went through, how they handled it and something they might want to change. It's always good to look back and see what happened, and see if you want to change something.

VOICE #2

How did I feel the first time I was called Miss Heath? It felt weird. Strange. It just kinda makes you feel old. Just felt kinda strange, that's all.

VOICE #3

It feels good. It feels like therapy. I haven't tried to think about school for awhile. In the summer it is nice to recap and remember what it was like, how I got through it, and I'm ready for the new year. It's also nice to talk about how you had frustrations and being able to talk about it. I'm not the only one. There's power in that. When other people talk about stuff, it's a way of getting things out and just letting it out. If you hold stuff in and just dwell on it inside and not let other people help you, then you're going to feel alone.

VOICE #4

During the school year I tried to think about things in part, but you really don't get to sit down with anybody and really reflect on things. They just reflect on how they feel about the job you're doing. So reflecting has helped a lot to verbally get it out and think about what's happened and how you reacted to it. There's just so much you can discuss when you are verbal. You've got your committee, administrator, teacher representative, college representative, and they all have input, but you really don't have any. You don't have anybody asking you, "What's going on with you?" and sit down to get some insight.

VOICE #5

I think it is really important for entry-year teachers to have this opportunity to hear from other entry-year teachers because only as you have finished the entry year, can you really understand what somebody else is going through. I know that other teachers have all been through their entry year, but I think it's still real fresh on your mind, and you don't have

anything else clouding if you can talk to somebody right after your entry year is over.

Reflecting on it gives you an opportunity to look back on things that you might have been able to change, ways that you might do it better next time.

VOICE #6

I think reflecting has helped me to know what to do and what not to do. We can draw from each other. We could draw from each other on a daily basis. This benefits me because it makes me a stronger person. It makes me more patient with people who get out of control. It's made me understand that somebody who is out of control needs the opportunity to go ahead and express that as long as they are not being an endangerment to themselves or to someone else.

VOICE #7

I think this reflecting process has helped me. I know that if there is a new teacher who comes into the school, the first thing I'm going to warn them about this person or that person. I know it's not professional, but it's something I wish I'd known.

VOICE #8

I think I'll be better with the people I work with. They aren't going to push me around.

VOICE #9

I believe that you should have teachers meeting without the administration. I think that we should get together and we should discuss the problems we are having in our classroom. That maybe would head off some problems before they happen. Also, it might be a time to get some new ideas; you know; three heads are better than one. There is this continual learning of the teacher.

VOICE #10

I've done this reflecting process before. It's something that for me, I just do it because I work at it, and I think about what works and what doesn't. This way I can make changes. It is a good thing, oh yeah. You have to do it, so I mean what works for one person doesn't work for another. Don't keep doing something that doesn't work.

VOICE #11

As I recall a particular situation, it comes back very strong. It does. To me, learning is so important that to have a child grasp that feeling and to get excited about it made all those years I waited to become a teacher and all those teacher education classes worth it. Even all the bad times I had with the students in the classroom, that one moment made it okay for me.

VOICE #12

I'm a very caring person. Tender hearted, maybe. But I can hide my emotions, too. I can hide my emotions from my kids, but they still know when something has happened. Looking back, I wasn't prepared to care so much for my students.

VOICE #13

As I look back, I think I handled things, okay, I guess. At school, I'm okay. At home, I cried.

VOICE #14

Listening to these stories makes me think about the way I perceive teaching. I learned the most from the negative experiences. I'll be a better teacher next year.

VOICE #15

I think I handled situations professionally. There was a comment from my mentor teacher. She told me I seemed very mature in how I handled an incident. I don't know if she did that because of how young I am and in my first year, or exactly why; I didn't question it. I don't feel that I would have done anything differently. I felt like I handled things the way other teachers did. I view teaching as a challenging ocean. Now, though, I do see it from a different perspective.

VOICE #16

I don't think my experiences changed the way I view teaching. I knew going in, especially if you are going into junior high, that there are going to be some kids that are going to be a little wilder than the others.

VOICE #17

I never realized how powerful emotions could be in the classroom. You know I never showed negative emotions in front of the kids, at least not until late in the year when I began to gripe in front of the kids. One day, I walked into the classroom, saw their bad moods, and realized how much I had affected them. Until that moment, you know, how I act does affect all of my students. When I began to come back into the room happy, it was like the sun came up.

VOICE #18

Sometimes I feel, at first, overwhelmed about how I should be doing this and that. Now, that I've gone through it, I'm gonna be better next year. I feel more excited now that I have a year under my belt. I came in too nice. I'm a stronger person. I understand that when things go wrong not to take it so personally, but just to stand strong, and I have

people that back me up, and I don't have to worry about that. I think reflection is going to help me to become a better teacher.

VOICE #19

I still recall feelings from my elementary experience in student teaching. Those feelings aren't gone. No, I still recall.

VOICE #20

How did I cope? I cried!

(3) VOICES #21

I talked to my husband. My husband was so supportive. My husband was so level headed, that he could help me sort, put my emotions aside.

VOICE #22

I talked to my mother. I guess it was professional as well as personal because she's a teacher.

(2) VOICES #23

I went to other teachers. My mentor teacher and I got along very well; she helped me to learn how to shake it off.

VOICE #24

I would talk to other teachers about students because they have the same experiences with the kids.

VOICE #25

I have hobbies. I read, goof around on the computer.

VOICE #26

I do anything to get my mind on something else. I scrub the bathroom, fold clothes, or anything else. I just try to remove myself from the stressful situation at hand even if that means just getting out and taking a walk or a drive. You have to do something to remove yourself from the stress.

VOICE #27

I'd change my clothes immediately when I got home.

VOICE #28

I prayed, a lot.

VOICE #29

I tried to use humor. Then I tried cross-stitch. Then I learned that music is my number one way to release tensions because it not only gets the physical involved, it gets the emotional involved.

VOICE #30

I prayed all the time. I have a twenty-minute drive to work, and that's my God time. I pray really hard.

VOICE #31

Your career is gonna be the way it is for the rest of your life, and you can't panic. You've got to know how to learn from these experiences and continue to learn from them. I've always been real patient and well-mannered. I never let things truly get to me. If you let little things get to you, then it will crumble, your whole outlook and thinking.

VOICE #32

There was another first-year teacher in my building. We would see each other some days, and we would just give each other a look, a big-eyed look, like, “Oh MY GOSH! THIS DAY IS WILD!” Sometimes, we would just give each other verbal signals like, “God, when is this day going to end?” I think she probably had some of the same feelings I did. She encountered many things that I encountered.

VOICE #33

There was one other first-year teacher there. I didn't really visit with her. She was having trouble with a lot of the kids early on. I asked her how she was doing, and she said okay, blah, blah, blah. I don't even remember what it was now.

VOICE #34

There were two other first-year teachers in my building. I did talk with them about how we were all equally frustrated. They took things much more personally than I did because they were much younger than I. And they were crying constantly. I mean, I cried sometimes, but these two would cry a lot. Whenever they were criticized by anybody, they took the suggestions too personally, very personally. They took it as an attack upon their teaching ability, and so they were very defensive about that. I would try to talk to them about that. They were just so defensive.

VOICE #35

I found similarities between other entry-year teachers and myself. That let me know that I wasn't the only one out there who was going through a situation at that time.

VOICE #36

It felt good to have a confidant; someone you could trust and be talking to help reflect on yourself. This other first year teacher and I were eleven years apart in age. The way we taught was different. Our personalities were different, but we found similarities in our teaching too. Her stories helped me. I don't know if mine helped her.

VOICE #37

Whenever I was visiting with another entry year teacher, you just almost had to laugh, like, because you know exactly what they are talking about. It's just kind of humorous to know someone else is going through the same stuff you are. I guess it makes you feel human too; it's just something that gives you a backup on your own situation.

VOICE #38

With other teachers who were new like me, I'd share my worries. We would share something we were worried about. It made me feel welcome.

VOICE #39

I found similarities in our experiences. We were all shocked, and we didn't know what the process of school was. This one first- year-teacher latched onto me to tell him what to do. I think he did that because I was older. What would you do? I think the way we perceived our experiences was different based upon our personalities. Some entry year teachers just blew off everything. I didn't.

VOICE #40

Did the other teacher's story help me? Hmmmm...Did mine help? I'm sure.

VOICE #41

As far as teacher education is concerned, well, I think there's always room for improvement. I mean some of the courses could have been more upbeat. You've got to have something that can get you emotionally into it and to be really on the edge of my seat to learn. Maybe, there's some chemical in your bodies when you feel excited about learning. It helps you remember stuff.

VOICE #42

I would've liked to have had more one-on-one training in the classroom. Not having another teacher in the classroom. Thirty hours of observation is not going to cut it to know what a school is like. Student teachers, soak in everything you can. I mean it goes by quick, but you learn so much going into entry-year teaching.

VOICE #43

We did some readings on what to do if a student talks back to you. We read this little clip of what this student did, and then we discussed what we would do. We'd do this in group discussion and come up with a solution. Did it help me in my first year? Mmm, maybe, it helped, and I didn't know it. Maybe, I unconsciously remembered something like that. I think a lot of being a teacher is that things just come naturally. I think you can have a lot of teaching, but a lot of it is instinct. Things just come to you. It's just instinct you're supposed to know it.

VOICE #44

On the whole, I do not think teacher education courses can prepare you for everything because of the individual nature of your kids. Was I prepared emotionally for teaching? No, but I definitely think they should be better prepared. Maybe not with a psychology

course, but maybe, I don't know, if you could get some type of counseling thing going on where you can actually have situations. But I don't think I know what kind of class that would require.

VOICE #45

I think educators need to be more honest about what happens in schools and help new teachers understand that it is a political arena.

VOICE #46

I think the university should be responsible for helping the entry year teacher more. Give them guidelines. I also think the administration in the schools should expect the same things out of each mentor teacher. Questions need to be answered, like when do you record grades on whatever; when do you send out progress reports; what about the lunch line; I still don't know how I found out about these things. I guess when I did it wrong.

VOICE #47

Mentor teachers are paid, and I kinda think they are like a god. They are supposed to be there like a little pole, and you're tied to a little stick, and they have the stick to guide you through everything. My mentor teacher took the stance of leaving it up to me to ask a question. By the time I did some of the time, it was too late.

VOICE #48

I don't think anybody told my mentor teacher to make sure I knew this or this. I don't think there's any guidance there for them; they're on their own.

VOICE #49

I was really scared of my administrator evaluating me because the last time I was evaluated by my advisor during my student teaching, they just ripped me apart. So,

anytime the word *evaluation* comes up, my stomach hurts, and I get real scared. And you know, when you're a first-year teacher, you're evaluated twice. My teacher was real sweet and gave me lots of encouragement. She gave me great evaluations, so that was nice to get her support.

VOICE #50

I never knew how many times I was going to be evaluated. My mentor came in. My administrator came in. My cooperating teacher came in. I think teacher education should do a mock evaluation, so you'll know what it will be like. We never did any mock evaluations. We just got hints on what it would probably be like but not in great detail.

VOICE #51

I think when you are taking your education courses, everything is cushioned. You know you are going into a profession, and you love to teach, so it's almost like nothing bad is going to happen. It's mostly book knowledge that they are trying to push on you, and you don't really learn much experience even though some of the books might have case studies or stories. It's still not the same thing as having it happen to you. I had some professors who may have done their entry year, but then they went right into upper education. Those people are the hardest to learn from because they had no stories. They had no experiences to draw from. They only had secondary stories.

VOICE #52

My teacher education did not prepare me for the frustration I would have with the kids, the system, and the teachers. My courses did not discuss teachers as human beings. They focused more upon the students and curriculum.

VOICE #53

My courses did discuss feelings somewhat. And when I say somewhat, I feel like emotions and feelings are something that you have to learn pretty much on your own. But you can learn what others have been through. Emotions and feelings are how you are going to go through things. We talked about incidents, like if this happens to you, how would you handle it. Did these courses prepare me totally? No. Somewhat, yes.

VOICE #54

As far as emotions, the more personal part, at least for me, I didn't get a whole lot out of that from my courses. As far as class courses, once I started my observations and practicum and student teaching, you get a little better feel for emotions, perceptions of students. Classroom management would probably be the closest to it.

VOICE #55

Yeah, I think classroom management courses gave me a lot of different solutions for different situations. My course used stories to illustrate what they meant, and yeah, those helped. Some were funny, especially with negative stories.

VOICE #56

I'm trying to think if anybody really got into emotions. They might have told stories or given little hints about what you might encounter, but it was nothing you encounter when you're really here. No, I don't think they can prepare you for real situations. They prepared me to go in and teach the subject, but they don't prepare you to live daily with a bunch of kids, and I think they should. I just don't know how.

VOICE #57

I don't feel that my teachers discussed emotions or feelings. I think that a lot of stuff you just kinda have to experience just like everything else in life.

VOICE #58

There were times when feelings would come up in a class in a story of what happened to another teacher, and we were told that you have to look at the child as a student not what their parents do, not what their parents say. Things like that, emotional value, also teach you to be aware and to be ready, no shock value, and when something good happens, you celebrate.

VOICE #59

It was kind of a hit and miss thing for me. They would relate it to certain teaching situations. But what I really remember was dealing with myself, getting myself ready.

VOICE #60

We didn't touch on private lives. We were just basically on time management.

VOICE #61

Student teaching for twelve weeks tells you nothing.

VOICE #62

Mine just didn't prepare me. The closest thing I can remember of anything resembling feelings and emotions was in a music therapy course. Music therapy is about the process not the end product. Education doesn't seem to be like this.

(All the VOICES take turns saying the following:)

I'm coming back next year to the same school.

Mmm Hmmm, I'm coming back...to the same place.

I'm coming back to teach next year. I'll be in the same district. I

I'll be back to the same school.

Yes, I'm coming back to teach in the same place.

I'll be here; doing my thing.

I'm ready to come back.

They hired me back, so I'll be there.

I'll be teaching the same grade in the same school.

They couldn't stop me from coming back.

END OF SCENE ONE

(The Apprentice leads the novices out of the Gate of Reflection. They gather at one edge of the stage while the scene changes to reveal the Mentor.)

SCENE TWO

MENTOR

Well, my friend. Thank you for your guidance. You may go. (The Apprentice exits.)

Once again, I greet you. Come. Come. Let us sit and reflect upon what you have experienced.

(Mentor guides Novices to a sitting place located to the side of the stage. They all three sit.)

You have seen and heard what has gone before. Those who shared with you are not at that same place. They exist in the present and will exist in the future just as you shall. (The MENTOR rises and walks center.)

What can you learn from them? (Novices try to speak.) Remember, you have no voice here. The questions asked are rhetorical in nature and thought-provoking in essence. What you have seen and heard in the Gate of Fire, the Gate of Joy, and the Gate of Reflection are alive only in the past. When you enter yourselves into the processes of these gates, you will be living a present. Then, you shall have a voice. I want you to reflect upon the questions asked before venturing forth. The fire does purge as it scorches. The joy leaves as swiftly as it arrives. The reflection is what lasts a lifetime. Nothing in teaching is as it seems to be. Take for example, the shiny apple and the fuzzy worm. (He takes an apple from a tree, and picks a worm off the limb.) Apples are not shiny, no, not until a protective wax coating is applied. In this fashion the apple's color is enhanced and kept from the elements. Like an invisible wall, it keeps the delicious fruit from harm. Without it, the apple rots more quickly and is rendered tasteless. Teachers are the same. A first-year teacher who has not been given protection will find it difficult to remain fresh and fruitful. (The MENTOR takes a bite of the apple.)

Ponder now upon the fuzzy worm, for it is not a worm at all but a caterpillar. Caterpillars do seem to desire much in order to grow. It is with this massive consumption that they can eventually cocoon into either a moth or butterfly. Sometimes, an apple is destroyed by such an assault. Other times, it is only slightly damaged with no loss of fruit. Again, first-

year teachers will encounter worms and caterpillars. Awareness of the difference will provide protection from an assault. I see that you are confused. This journey of teaching; it is a lifelong journey that will be confusing at times. That is why I am here. Why we are all here...to be a source of strength. What else do you need? You must ask for it, or it shall not be given you. Go now; rest yourselves awhile. The journey will be there whenever you are ready to resume. (A school bell rings.) You have completed your first day as a teacher, for the first days of a teacher are found in the reflections of those who have gone before. By hearing what they have to say, you will find a map to lead you on your way. Who knows what the next day shall bring. Only you will know, but I shall see you. I shall see your reflections until the end. Until then.

(Fog rises and the lights flicker and fade as the curtain falls.)

END OF SCENE TWO

END OF PLAY

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

At the beginning of this project, I presented my autobiography and reflections of what my perceptions of teaching were and how they have evolved. I shared my humanity and how the emotions of what I had experienced affected me and still affects me to this very day. The stories of the first-year teachers whom I interviewed also revealed humanity and its emotions. What is desired from those reading this effort is an appreciation and maybe a more in-depth acceptance of the power of emotions in our lives as teachers.

The dramatic play presentation was designed to bring to the forefront the emotions and not just the stories of what happens during the first year of teaching. It is not the intention of this research to allow emotions to overpower the truth, but rather to acknowledge their existence and influence upon us as individuals. By doing so, perhaps, a better understanding of what it means to teach can be found to aid future teachers and those who teach them how to teach.

Discussion of Research Findings

Specific Interview Responses

The nine questions used as the basis for the first interview protocol revealed specific findings. The first question asked, “Did your teacher education courses discuss emotions, feelings, and perceptions and teaching?” The answer from the majority was a firm “no” or they could not recall specifically. The only one who chose to major in early childhood development expressed the existence of much of this while the other nine who chose to

major in elementary or secondary stated that they did not. If it was presented, they did not remember it.

The second question asked, "Tell me about a specific negative experience." As related earlier, the respondents found it very easy to relate these experiences. As well, the stories were told in a graphic detailed fashion. Categories of negative stories included: (a) administrators at schools or from teacher education; (b) students in their classes; (c) peer teachers' students in their classes; and (d) parents. Personal challenges they encountered dealt with questioning of their authority, differing philosophies of conducting classroom business, and adapting to the school's and to the community's environment. As the subjects shared their stories, it was plainly evident that the emotions from the incidents still existed. When asked about this, they all replied that although it seemed that the incidents occurred a long time ago, they still felt the emotions almost as strongly as the day in which they first experienced them. This was evident in their body language as their facial expressions changed as well as shifting in their chairs while the stories were being told.

The third question asked, "Tell me about a specific positive experience." Although the positive stories were outnumbered 5 to 1 by the negative ones, their impact was no less felt. The interviewees expressed the difficulty of defining what it was to have a positive experience. They needed more time to ponder on how to express verbally what they experienced. Overall, there was a generalized feeling of goodness in all experiences shared. The stories were less detailed and less graphically expressed while the emotions of the moment were more fully explained. The subjects' physical expression of emotion was evident on their faces as smiles and a lightness of being came upon their bodies.

The fourth question asked, "Overall, how do you think you handled these situations?" Without exception or hesitation, they all replied that they thought they did the best they could under the circumstances. Some were more pleased with what they had done. Some spoke of the disdain of feeling they should have done something else. In the end, though, they all agreed that they would remember these incidents and learn from them in order to make as many mistakes.

The fifth question asked, "How do you feel now as you recall these situations?" The answers varied from one person to the next. They indirectly expressed the memory of such incidents through their body language and facial expressions. When they verbally responded to this question, they acknowledged openly how some incidents were still quite painful. For one of the teachers who experienced trouble with a peer teacher, there was a real fear about the next academic year and the reality of having to work with this person. As far as recalling positive emotions, most related that the feeling was always there whenever they wanted to relive it. One teacher spoke of the joy of knowing that one of her students now desired to read because of the efforts of the teacher. Her face beamed with a broad smile as she spoke of this memory that was almost twelve months old.

Question number six asked, "How did you cope?" This question revealed some very interesting results. At first, most of the respondents had great difficulty in understanding what I meant by coping skills. They would, at first, liken it to a student-teacher situation instead of teacher-self situation. After clarifying a bit to prod them, they began to understand it in terms of day-to-day situations and what they did to keep focused. Many of the ways in which they coped they learned how to do as they lived through the year. Some of the coping skills they used they brought with them from their own personal lives

before teaching. Surprisingly, all agreed that they needed to develop more coping skills and to take more time for themselves. The importance of this became clearer as we discussed this question because some would suddenly realize what they had done or not done to cope.

The seventh question asked, "Did your teacher education program help to prepare you for these situations?" A resounding "No" was heard from all but one subject, again the early childhood major. They all did agree that teacher education should prepare students to be more aware of the realities of emotional situations. One subject summed it up, "It is impossible for it (teacher education) to fully prepare everyone simply because of the individual nature of students." Another one stated, "We will encounter things we never have encountered before throughout our careers. This needs to be stressed in our teacher education." The attitude toward teacher education here was not one of hatefulness but rather one of longing. They realized what things they had needed but did not receive in their training and were lamenting. Another area that all the subjects were very united on was the confusion they had concerning the processes of the entry year. They were unsure of who did what and when. These perceptions were especially prevalent whenever discussion turned to their evaluations by their mentor teacher, administrator, and their cooperating teacher from the university. There was a general feeling of isolation because they felt uninformed. Most were pleased with what they had been taught, but they also expressed the need for more though they did not know what could be done.

The eighth question asked, "How do you think other first-year teachers view personally charged experiences in teaching?" All the interviewees had access to other first-year teachers in their school systems. All of them had at least a minimal amount of exposure to

these other teachers and their experiences. The general consensus was that it was good to have them there because they could relate to one another about things that the other teachers did not care about presently or had forgotten. Most believed that their own stories would help the other first-year teachers because they believed that these other teachers' stories helped them. Their feelings of isolation were relieved by the availability of these contacts.

The final question number nine asked, "Did these experiences affect the way you view teaching?" Each subject either answered this question quickly or slowly. Those who answered quickly would add that they had learned from the experiences. Those who answered slowly seemed to be thinking about it for the first time. When they did answer, they agreed that their views had been changed. One expressed that he did not view teaching differently, but that he viewed himself in a different light because he now knew that he could do things he once thought he could not do. Again, in all cases, the subjects related how their entire year's experience of teaching forever changed the way they viewed themselves in their profession.

Emergent Themes

The grounded theory research technique is successful at pulling out minute strands of commonalities that emerge from the respondents' contributions. The general emergent, overlapping themes that were found were: (1) themes of self; (2) themes of relationships; (3) themes of structures of school; (4) themes of reflection; and (5) absent themes.

Themes of Self

I really was not sure what I would find whenever I began this study. I was sure that I would hear emotions. How they would be expressed was an uncertainty because I was

asking people to share openly their positives and negatives as a teacher. Would they be truthful? Would they want to share? I was pleasantly rewarded with ten of the most open-hearted people I have ever encountered.

This openness turned out to be a most interesting and delightful find. When these teachers were informed about the goal of the study, they were most excited to be given an opportunity to express themselves. Their enthusiasm, at times, resulted in the use of more audio-and videotapes than predicted, but they all seemed genuinely desirous of helping new teachers to have an advantage during that first year.

Another finding in general that was apparent early on in the interviews was the use of the pronoun *you* when describing their experiences. All ten would refer to *you* as in, "You know, when you have a class of thirty kids..." After I contemplated this usage after the interviews were complete, I contacted a friend who is a licensed professional counselor (A. R. Anderson, personal communication, September 14, 2000). He viewed it as possibly two things. One, the interviewees might have been trying to bring me, the interviewer, into their realm, or they could have been trying to separate themselves from the events as if they were outsiders. I offer a third possibility. In our current informal American culture, the use of this pronoun is used in great abundance. Whatever the reason, I found it interesting to listen to them as they spoke in the second person. I did confront one interviewee who was particularly fond of using this term. She replied that she had no idea that she had been using it. This intrigued me more, and I wondered if teacher preparation teaches the use of this pronoun in an indirect way. After all, we are speaking to a class of students and referring to them as "You."

Something else which might help to understand the stories better is the fact that the majority of the interviewees did not choose to go into teaching from the beginning of their college studies. Several were persuaded to go into other fields for many years until they returned to teaching. Some changed their majors during their junior or senior year. Only two shared that they chose to go right into teaching at the beginning of their college coursework. At the end of all the interviews, each interviewee quickly expressed his/her intention to return not only to teaching, but also returning to their same school districts.

Themes of Relationships

How the teachers related to others became a strong issue in the stories related. One item discussed was the decisively different way in which the male interviewees and the female interviewees viewed their experiences. The men expressed no views which could be interpreted as sexist behavior from their administrators. The women, on the other hand, were very expressive in their views of how they had been treated by administrators, male or female. These expressions were revealed in an indirect way through their stories. When I asked them directly as a follow-up to a particular point, the women were very vocal and specific, although, they themselves could not decide if it was just their perceptions of the way things happened.

A big surprise was how these teachers were forced to relate to their peer teachers in this regard. Several of the respondents taught peer teachers' children, and most of the experiences were not pleasant. In fact, most were vicious with parent-teachers using threats and innuendoes. I was unnerved at how upset my interviewees became whenever they related how these other teachers treated them throughout the year whenever the parent-teacher felt that her child was being treated unjustly by the first-year teacher.

As far as relationships to students, the respondents spoke of not being prepared to care so much about their kids. They all spoke positively about how they enjoyed being physically around the students day-by-day. They also spoke negatively about how difficult it was to help those who desired no help. The respondents wanted to care more than they perceived they could be or allowed by the school, themselves, or circumstances.

Home relationships voiced were ones of great support, patience, and understanding. All spoke of how sometimes they would take their emotions from work home to their families whether they wanted to or not. As they spoke of how their families related to them during times of stress, they seemed determined not to overburden their home life with work situations if at all possible.

Relationships to administrators seemed overall a very positive thing. Though several spoke of how they felt intimidated or powerless in small ways, they believed that their administrators were trying to be of help whenever possible. This is exemplified in the information that all the teachers are returning to the same place to teach.

Themes of Structures of School

Another finding deals with the politics of schools. Most of the respondents were very surprised at how strongly the inner workings of interpersonal relationships existed among teachers and administrators. All shared about their feelings of inadequacy when understanding the whole political spectrum of school systems as well as a feeling of helplessness. Respondents expressed memory of instructions by their teacher educators to “stay away from the lounge” because of possible verbal attacks on students by other teachers. However, they related feeling confused whenever they encountered this same type of student gossip outside the lounge.

One of the most emotional issues dealt with the politics of peer teachers. Several of the respondents told stories of how they felt threatened by a tenured, older teacher who appeared to be taking advantage of a new teacher's inexperience. Those peer teachers who had children in the first-year teacher's class seemed to be the most likely to use their in-house perceived power in order to achieve their wants. The respondents who had to deal with these situations seemed confused about how to handle themselves and where to go to seek help. They spoke of circles of relationships within the school. Some they were told to avoid; some they were told to gain favor; while some teachers were considered loners, those who have no circle of support from peer teachers. The respondents related that they did not know that these kinds of politics existed in a school building and felt at a disadvantage.

Another interesting finding was about how they coped with what they were experiencing. Many admitted they had no hobbies or outlets of creativity while others had an abundance of them. When asked about where they learned coping skills, they pointed mainly to their families and not teacher preparation. They did all state that coping skills were important to teaching because of all the emotions experienced in a day's time. They did note that each school has its own way of helping teachers cope with situations that arise, other teachers, professional growth materials, or access to counselors.

Themes of Reflection

As I sat and interviewed these ten people, I watched all begin to question themselves, the events, and career desires. It was an exciting time for me too because I saw in living color how powerful the reflecting process is. By the end of the interviews, all interviewees expressed how good it felt "to get rid of it," referring to their emotional stories. As they

would tell their stories, they would, at times, stop themselves and ask themselves questions aloud. They seemed genuinely intrigued by what the interviews were bringing out of them. They all left me with a general comment of how they would use the reflection process again; only this time, they said they felt that it would help them prepare to avoid some problems they had previously. All shared about their feelings of inadequacy when understanding the whole political spectrum of school systems as well as a feeling of helplessness.

A thought-provoking finding concerns negative and positive stories. The ratio of negative stories shared compared to positive stories shared was almost five to one. The negative stories were shared more freely, and the respondents seemed to have more difficulty recalling positive stories. The subjects almost seemed embarrassed that they could recall the negative ones more easily. Another probing question that I asked dealt with the subjects naming one-word emotions for their feelings during the past year. In all cases except one, the top three answers were of a negative nature.

Absent Themes

When I began this project's interviews, I expected there to be more of a nature of complaining from my subjects. I knew that my questions would open hurts as well as joyous occasions. It was in the hurts that I expected them to become combative in nature when describing their experiences. My assumption of this relates to the part of human nature that craves vindication. What I heard instead were thoughtful, intelligent comments about what had happened to them. Granted, there were some severe comments, but they were spoken not in an angry way. An example of this was one of the male respondents who recalled a middle school student who was in trouble walking by and saying, "Shit!

You don't want to mess with me!" As the respondent told the story, he smiled because he said he knew it was an attitude that needed to be acknowledged as a possible threat, but the memory of just how naïve the kid was seemed amusing now. The incidents were related from a perspective of reflection of what could change because of what had happened not what will always be. The teacher who was threatened by a parent-teacher peer seemed challenged to find a way to get along at work. Although some had indeed been deeply hurt, none were deeply scarred by what had occurred.

Another absent theme that surprised me was the respondents' decision to remain at their positions for the upcoming year. Many had received other offers in other towns and school districts, yet they all chose to remain where they were even if they had experienced a traumatic event. I expected them to change their jobs in the pursuit of finding a more perfect place to teach. This was not the case.

Discussion of Research Questions

The primary question for this study asked, "What positive and negative emotional experiences are revealed by first-year teachers?" They do reveal both positive and negative emotional experiences. The premise of the question itself was to inquire about emotions and the first-year teacher. The fact that a qualitative style of research, stories, was used as the form in which the data was gleaned is important to note because of the nature of the topic. Could other forms of inquiry have revealed the same results? It is possible; however, the use of story as data collection seems to have revealed these emotions in a decisive manner. Emotions are a part of humanity that cannot be ignored without consequences. This question also gave a voice to the first-year teacher to express any emotional understanding gleaned from the year's final outcome. This voice allowed them

to freely share what they believed to be positive and negative about the first year of teaching.

The secondary question asked, “How are these emotional experiences related to teacher preparation?” They expose an area of the teacher education curriculum that seems to be lacking in depth and breadth of content. This question needed to be asked because if the first-year teachers revealed emotional stories, the question would arise as to where and what these experiences would be based on according to these teachers’ knowledge base. Why did they experience what they did? The answers would then need a place to be applied, so this secondary question was also of importance. It seems that the teachers used whatever information they had been taught in an effort to cope with the situations they encountered. Their perception is that they were given little, if any, affective preparation. Their experiences, negative or positive, related directly to teacher education courses because they discussed with me the fact that they had not been given a realistic vision, a picture of what the entire spectrum of the profession of teaching is all about. This spectrum includes getting the job, doing the job, and dealing with the job once they get it.

Conclusions

So what does this study mean? In a small way, the study has revealed a tiny yet very important area of teaching that needs more attention, emotional or affective preparation. Predominately revealed is the need for affective preparation in teacher education. This study does not purport to know how this can be done. Reforming and restructuring such curriculum must come as a result of much study and thought. What does apparently exist, though, is the reality of the emotions of first-year teachers. What they must endure is of a personal, individual nature. However, for teacher education to present the realities of

teaching as a profession to its members, there must be an acknowledgment that such emotional experiences will happen. To assume that all applicants for teacher education are emotionally sound could be dangerous, especially in today's violent American culture.

Another conclusion from this data is the importance of allowing first-year teachers a venue in which to express what they have experienced. From their comments, I derived that the most popular advice from seasoned teachers was simply to forget the bad and enjoy the good. This advice seems to be lacking in compassion, empathy, and depth. As stated previously, all the interviewees in this study expressed happiness about sharing their stories. It gave them a sense of empowerment as they recalled what they had been through during the past nine months. All believed that the process of reflection and voicing their stories gave them a release, a chance to reconcile and put closure onto their first year. The question must be asked then, if this release is not available to first-year teachers, how and what happens to their emotions? Does a lack of release affect them later?

A final conclusion is that the area of affective education must be re-thought and re-considered in education. As was revealed through the interviews, most current general teacher education curricula ignore emotions. Only the early childhood major related of a more detailed preparation. Through the literature, it was found that emotion theory is now becoming a topic of importance, something researchers believe to be important to improving the education community. The current trend toward linking social sciences and education is a step that must be made. Because of the stories shared in this study, it is evident that teachers in today's culture must be prepared to handle more than just classroom management situations. Perhaps, these seemingly unusual situations have

always existed but in a different form. Now, however, they rear their heads openly and unashamedly.

This is a significant study because it will add to the discussion of teacher education reform. It will draw attention to a small crack that seems to be a stumbling block for all first-year teachers. From these respondents, I have found too many similarities of experiences to dismiss affective/emotional preparation for teachers as a viable and useful tool. Education should be at the forefront of our social needs, and it begins by acknowledging that emotions fuel the fires of sociological situations.

Recommendations

I recommend that more research be done about the inclusion of affective preparation in teacher education programs. Future studies must determine what it is and how best to implement it. This study does not answer these questions. Its purpose was to find out what emotions exist in the professional lives of first-year teachers. It is imperative that more research is carried out to begin formulating ways to acknowledge, incorporate, and build on this emotional base in teacher education.

Based on my findings, I recommend along with stronger affective teacher education curricula that the mentor teacher's role be more defined and utilized. From the data received, it seems certain that some mentoring programs are not strong in organization and goals for their mentors. It must become more than what the majority of the respondents termed "an extra paycheck for the mentor." Too many times, their mentors would stroll into the respondents' classrooms and simply confirm that all was well. Once that was done, the mentors exited not to be seen until weeks later. As well, all the respondents spoke of how they believed that the mentors did not really seem to

understand the role of mentor. It is probable that state education departments need to reassess the mentoring programs in existence currently. From this assessment, changes and improvements could be implemented. Universities and school districts need to take the lead in this process since they are the ones who are directly involved with the teachers.

It is recommended that first-year teachers be given a voice to release their lived experiences. How this is to be done must be determined by research and study. As well, not only can universities help, but also school districts. If there are staff development programs, then it is a possibility that something could be designed for the needs of first-year teachers. Both universities and local schools can work together to achieve goals. All school districts have at least one university within a reasonable distance. Accessing these knowledgeable faculties to come and share would be low cost. The seminars or workshops could be considered professional development programs that could be designed specifically for the first-year teacher.

It is recommended that the dramatic representation of the findings be presented as a stage play and videotaped in order to distribute copies to teacher education departments to use in the preparation of teaching. Also, the videos could be made available to school districts as an aid for their first-year teachers.

It is recommended that acknowledgement be given in teacher preparation to the teacher as human and not just a content-loaded instrument of knowledge. The needs of teachers must go beyond instructional skills in order for the teacher to be able to fully explore themselves as teachers in a classroom. Only by acknowledging their humanness with all of its imperfection will first-year teachers be given a more even playing field in which to discover themselves as teachers.

Concluding Comments

I really began this study almost 18 years ago during my first year of teaching. The entire process has been a healing one for my soul and emotions. The absurdities that I endured seemed to be much more volatile than those of the teachers I interviewed, but, nevertheless, their stories helped me to put closure upon the pain of my past. In doing so, I have been able to recount the joys of my past teaching experiences. Some had been long forgotten until I related with my interviewee's stories. I find myself now smiling more about the past and enjoying my present students.

It was my intention to call attention to what I have always believed to be a problem in teacher education, the lack of empathy toward first-year teachers and their stories. I am gratefully pleased that my research data supported my questions, and that this study might be a stepping stone for more in-depth research. That was always my goal, to add to the knowledge base. I knew that this study was not to be one that revealed great and mighty insights. Yet, as I watched my subjects self-discover themselves, it turned out to be big and mighty insights for them. For those moments, I am truly grateful that this study existed for them if for no one else.

I must confess that I did not receive my teacher education from my bachelor's degree. I received it while pursuing the doctorate. Words are not available for me to express how incredibly good it felt for me to release the old and to refill with the new and fresh. My own insights have changed and matured. I owe this personal refreshing not only to my professors, but also to the interviewees of this study. Their trust in me has greatly added to my perception of worth as a teacher. I do have something to add to the community called *education*. In my own small way I must acknowledge to myself that even the tiniest

bit of new knowledge can be of help to future generations. After all, if teachers cannot perceive and embrace new knowledge, who can?

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APPENDIX A**CONSENT FORM FOR A STUDY REGARDING
FIRST YEAR TEACHERS EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES DURING
THEIR FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING**

Dear First Year Teachers,

I am a doctoral student at Oklahoma State University who is trying to understand what first year teachers experience emotionally during their first year of teaching. During the summer of 2000 I will be talking to first year teachers to learn what they experienced during their first year of teaching. I have found that teachers enjoy the interview experience and that it typically promotes reflection about their own lives.

I will ask you to chronicle some of your experiences in written form. These stories will be useful to you during two semi-structured interviews. I have made up questions for the first interview and will ask the same questions to every first year teacher who agrees to participate in the study. You do not have to answer any question that you do not want to. The interviews will take approximately 45-60 minutes each. The second interview's questions will be created from the data of the first interviews yet will still be uniform and asked of all the participants. I will ask your permission to tape record it, so that I will not miss anything you say. I will also give you the option to give me permission to videotape your interviews to assist me in understanding your emotions as you tell your stories. All the names of the first year teachers who agree to be interviewed will be changed, so that no one else will be able to find out which teacher said what. Also, the names of any schools, cities, districts, and events will be changed to enforce anonymity; all tape recordings and any video recordings will be kept confidential and locked in a secure place. I will not interview anyone until I receive a signed consent form. If, at any time, any teacher wishes to discontinue participation, all that is required is notifying me. Not participating in the project will not jeopardize teachers' future relations with Oklahoma State University or their standing with their schools.

I hope that you agree to participate in this study. I think that finding out what you as a first year teacher believe to be examples of emotional experiences will help college pre-service teacher programs and students.

Sincerely,

Susan Vineyard

FIRST YEAR TEACHERS' CONSENT

I have read and fully understand this consent form; by signing it, I give my permission to participate in this research project concerned with emotional experiences of first-year teachers. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I will not be penalized if I choose not to participate. I also understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and end my participation in this project at any time without penalty after I notify the project director. If I have any questions, I will contact Susan Vineyard at (580) 233-5755 or Sharon Bacher, IRB Executive Secretary, Oklahoma State University, 203 Whitehurst, Stillwater, OK 74078 at (405) 744-5700.

CONSENT:

I have read and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

Date: _____ Time: _____ (a.m./p.m.)

Signed: _____

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject or his/her representative before requesting the subject or his/her representative to sign it.

Signed: _____

APPENDIX B**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FIRST YEAR TEACHERS**

1. Did your teacher education courses discuss emotions, feelings, perceptions and teaching?
2. Tell me about a specific negative experience.
3. Tell me about a specific positive experience.
4. Overall, how do you think you handled these situations?
5. How do you feel now as you recall these situations?
6. How did you cope?
7. Did your teacher education program help to prepare you for these situations?
8. How do you think other first-year teachers view personally charged experiences in teaching?
9. Did these experiences affect the way you view teaching?

APPENDIX C

Oklahoma State University
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 5/11/01

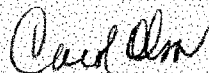
Date : Thursday, May 11, 2000

IRB Application No: ED00270

Proposal Title: AN ANALYSIS OF FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS AND WHAT THEIR STORIES REVEAL
ABOUT THE AFFECTIVE EMOTIONAL PREPARATION OF NEW TEACHERSPrincipal
Investigator(s) :Susan Vineyard
1915 W. garriott
Enid, OK 73703Pam. Brown
234 Willard
Stillwater, OK 74078Reviewed and
Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) : Approved

Signature :



Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance

Thursday, May 11, 2000

Date

Approvals are valid for one calendar year, after which time a request for continuation must be submitted. Any modifications to the research project approved by the IRB must be submitted for approval with the advisor's signature. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. Approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. Expedited and exempt projects may be reviewed by the full Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX D

The Voices Identified

1. Female, 43 years old, taught 2nd grade in a public school, educated in a public school, married, parent.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 1, 8, 9

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 1, 2, 12

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 5, 6, 11, 20, 28, 34, 44, 50, 51, 45

2. Male, 26 years old, taught high school PE in a public school, educated in a public school, married, parent.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 16

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 8, 17

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 4, 19, 30, 31, 59, 60

3. Female, 22 years old, taught 2nd grade in a private school, educated in a private school, single.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 15

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: None

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 2, 3, 18, 35, 43, 49

4. Female, 25 years old, taught 3rd grade in a public school, educated in a public school, married.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 6, 12, 14

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 13

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 17, 32, 42, 56

5. Male, 25 years old, taught middle school PE in a public school, educated in a public school, married, parent.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 11, 13

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 7, 14

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 1, 16, 24, 37, 41, 54, 55

6. Female, 34 years old, taught 4th grade in a public school, educated in a public school, married, parent.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 5

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 6, 15

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 7, 13, 14, 21, 23, 36, 47, 52

7. Female, 23 years old, taught 5th grade in a public school, educated in a public school, single, parent.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 3, 17, 18

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 9, 16

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 8, 33, 48, 58, 61

8. Female, 23 years old, taught 5th grade in a public school, educated in a public school, married.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 2, 10

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 3, 4, 5

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 12, 15, 22, 40, 46, 53, 57

9. Female, 43 years old, taught high school business in a public school, educated in a public school, married, parent.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 4, 19

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 10

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 9, 25, 26, 39

10. Female, 42 years old, taught high school vocal music in a public school, educated in both a private and public school, single.

Act I, Scene 2

Voice #: 7, 20

Act I, Scene 3

Voice #: 11

Act II, Scene 1

Voice #: 10, 27, 29, 38, 62

VITA

Susan Gay Vineyard

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: SHINY APPLES AND FUZZY WORMS: AN ANALYSIS OF
FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS AND WHAT THEIR STORIES
REVEAL ABOUT THE AFFECTIVE EMOTIONAL
PREPARATION OF NEW TEACHERS

Major Field: Curriculum and Instruction

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Carnegie, Oklahoma, on April 22, 1961, the daughter of Cecil and Carlene Perkins and sister to Michael Wade Perkins. Married to Edwin Roy Vineyard, August 1, 1987.

Education: Graduated from Alva High School, Alva, Oklahoma in May 1979; Received Bachelor of Arts Education degree in Speech/Drama from Northwestern Oklahoma State University, Alva, Oklahoma in August 1983. Completed the requirements for the Master of Education degree with a major in Theatre Education at Northwestern Oklahoma State University in May 1987. Completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 2000.

Experience: Taught high school speech, drama, and English at Western Heights High School in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, August 1983 to May 1984; taught English, speech, and drama at Helena-Goltry High School in Helena, Oklahoma, August 1984 to May 1985; directed theatre program at Northern Oklahoma College in Tonkawa, Oklahoma, August 1985 to May 1996; taught English and speech at Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa, Oklahoma, August 1985 to May 1996. Employed as speech, English, and humanities instructor at Northern Oklahoma College in Enid, Oklahoma, August 1996 to present.

Professional Memberships: Oklahoma Association of Community Colleges, Higher Education Alumni Council of Oklahoma, and Kappa Delta Pi.