

MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF
STUDENTS IN CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES
CUSTODY RESIDING AT ONE EMERGENCY YOUTH
SHELTER

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
July, 2006

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my deepest, sincere appreciation to my major advisor, Dr. Ken Stern for his intelligent supervision, support and guidance, as well as his encouragement when the process was rough going. My sincere appreciation extends to my other committee members Dr. Ed Harris, Dr. Barbara Carlozzi, and Dr. Robert Davis, whose guidance, assistance and empowerment were also invaluable.

Moreover, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Loma County Youth Services, the local public school system, and the Department of Human Services for providing me the opportunity to conduct this study.

Special and deeply felt thanks go to the Loma County Youth Services Shelter, to the staff for their support and encouragement. Thanks also to the children who call the Shelter home.

Finally, I would like to thank the College of Education for their support during these three years of study.

PREFACE

This study was conducted to provide knowledge pertinent to improving the educational outcomes for students who were in the custody of child protective services due to issues of abuse and/or neglect. The four students participating in this study were placed in at the Loma County Youth Services (LCYS) emergency youth shelter by the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare, when the research was conducted. All four were placed in permanent state's custody because of being victims of abuse and/or neglect.

The LCYS was the logical site to conduct this study, as some custody youth not only receive residential services in protective emergency shelters; they also receive educational services on-site. The four students were asked to share stories of their educational experiences since being taken into child protective custody. The researcher then asked the students to share their thoughts, beliefs and opinions about school, teachers, and if they believed their educational experiences helped or hurt them thus far in their lives. The students' stories indicated oppression and a lack of advocacy for their educational well-being.

The current LCYS instructors hired by the local school district, as well as three former LCYS instructors, were also interviewed. These individuals were asked to share their thoughts, beliefs and opinions about the educational experiences of students they have taught at the LCYS. LCYS instructor information was requested, as public school teachers at regular sites have no way of knowing which of their students have been

victimized by abuse and/or neglect. LCYS instructors have one-on-one experience educating students who have been victimized by abuse and neglect.

The researcher found positive educational practices such as one-on-one student teacher interactions and validation of the student's efforts by the instructor. Lacking at the Shelters educational site were appropriate materials, equipment, and supplies. The students were educated by Shelter instructors only for three hours daily. The Shelter instructors also appeared to lack understanding on the issues that abused and/or neglected youth have encountered both before and after being taken into the custody of the State, and how these issues affect educational outcomes. The instructors indicated the students were brought to the Shelter without educational records or other documentation needed to ensure the educational services provided to the students met their educational needs. The instructors also reported the Local Educational Agency (LEA) did not appear vested in Shelter education and that Shelter students were not offered the same opportunities for learning as other students enrolled in the district. The instructors also expressed concerns over their well-being and indicated they were not awarded the same pay or benefits as other instructors within the district.

The Shelter students, while indicating feeling safer at the Shelter school site than at a regular site, also indicated frustration concerning the lack of up-to-date books and equipment and not having access to classes and activities available to other students in the district. Shelter students expressed concerns over falling behind their peers while attending Shelter school and what they were learning at Shelter school was not what they would be learning at their regular sites.

Although the researcher, a childhood survivor of abuse and neglect herself, addressed her bias under the Role of the Researcher in this study, she struggled to separate herself from the research, suggesting the long term effects of abuse and neglect on educational endeavors are present in abused individuals long after the abuse has ended.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much remains to be known about the educational experiences of children under the custody of the state. What is known is that alarming numbers of children are being neglected and abused. The detrimental long-term effects of child abuse and neglect span the gamut of individual and social disorders. According to research by the National Research Council (1993) child abuse and neglect experiences are contributors to many problems and disorders among children. It would appear these effects have consequences not only for the children, but for our state and nation as well. Research is needed to understand ways, if any, that educational systems can help these children. The following national data was condensed from *Current Trends in Child Abuse Prevention, Reporting and Fatalities: The 1999 Fifty State Survey (2001)*:

- An estimated 3,244,000 children were reported to the Child Protective Services (CPS), a 1.6 percent increase in reports since 1998.
- An estimated 47 of every 1,000 children were reported as alleged victims of child maltreatment, a 4 percent increase since 1995.
- Approximately one-third of all reported cases of child abuse and neglect were substantiated.
- Cases were substantiated for 1,070,000 children, a rate of 15 per 1,000

- Of the substantiated cases, 46 percent were due to neglect, 18 percent physical abuse, 9 percent sexual abuse, and 4 percent emotional abuse and domestic violence. Other forms of maltreatment including the combination of both abuse and neglect, threat of harm, and abandonment, accounted for the remaining 23 percent.
- The types of child maltreatment most frequently substantiated remained relatively constant from 1995-1999.
- Nearly four children died every day as result of child abuse and neglect.
- Children younger than five years of age accounted for approximately 80 percent of the child maltreatment-related deaths.
- Children younger than one year of age accounted for two of every five maltreatment deaths among children less than 5 years of age.
- Substance abuse was listed by 85 percent of the state CPS liaisons as one of the leading two presenting problems among families reported for maltreatment.
- Poverty and economic restraints (44 percent) was the other leading problem.
- Domestic violence and parental capacity and skills were also listed as presenting problems (22 percent each).
- Child abuse and neglect cost the nation more than \$94 billion per year in direct (immediate needs) costs (\$24,384,347,301), and indirect (long-term and/or secondary effects) costs (\$69,692,535,227).

Oklahoma's Status

Oklahoma is not an exception to the problem of abuse and neglect. The Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) accepts and investigates allegations of abuse. Each year the Division of Children and Family Services within DHS publishes *Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics*. This document presents data on child abuse and neglect: reports of abuse and neglect received by DHS, reports accepted for investigation or assessment by the department, and confirmed investigations and assessments.

Table 1: Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics

Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations/Assessments, Oklahoma, 1996-2000.			
State Fiscal Year	Investigated/Assessed	Confirmed	Confirmation Rate
1996	40,916	11,646	28 percent
1997	48,399	13,627	28 percent
1998	61,709	16,710	27 percent
1999	57,026	16,217	28 percent
2000	62,023	14,273	23 percent

Numbers reflect only cases for which investigations or assessments were completed, not cases that remained open.

(1997-2001)

If an abuse or neglect case has been confirmed and the need for protection warrants it, children are removed from their home and placed in protective state's custody. Because of the magnitude of the problem there is a shortage of foster care placements available for the youth once they have been removed from their homes, requiring that these youth be placed in emergency youth shelters until a longer term placement becomes available.

According to Judge Robert M. Murphy in a brochure published by the Oklahoma Bar Association (2004), legal steps must be taken to ensure the rights of the youth and the parents before a child is taken into state custody. Murphy states that when the state

requests to take a child into its custody the court must make a finding that "continuation in the home is contrary to the welfare of the child."

Statement of the Problem

The literature confirms that one major problem for custody youth is their educational well-being. Research shows that children in the state protective custody have:

- Higher rates of grade retention (Smucker, et al., 1996; Brown, 2000; Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000; Sawyer & Dubowitz, 1994)
- Lower academic skills as measured by standardized tests (Burley & Halpern, 2001; Heath, et al., 1994) and
- Higher absentee and tardy rates (Blome, 1997; Cook, 1991; Cook, 1988; Ayasse, 1995; Barth, 1990; Choice, et al., 2001)

A 2001 study of more than 4,500 custody youth in Washington public schools found that custody youth scored 16 -20 percentile points below non-custody youth in state-wide standardized tests at grades 3, 6, and 9. Twice as many custody youth as non-custody youth had repeated a grade, and only 59 percent of custody youth versus 86 percent of non-custody youth who were enrolled in the 11th grade completed high school the following school year. Particularly striking in this study was the fact that a youth's custody status alone is associated with a 7-8 percentile-point gap in standardized test scores (Burley & Halpern, 2001).

Ayasse (1995) argues that the school experiences of custody children are defined by high mobility and resultant neglect of their educational needs as well as a lack of a consistent educational advocate in their lives. He states that changes in placement often

necessitate changes in schools, and the custody child must adjust to new expectations and curricula, new friends and teachers, and new school settings.

The above studies indicate that it is difficult to meet the educational needs of custody youth. Research on the difficulties associated with meeting the educational needs of youth being schooled at local emergency youth shelters is extremely limited to non-existent. Despite increasing attention to the problems of child abuse and neglect and the multifaceted consequences that accompany the problem, the educational needs of youth who are in the custody of the State of Oklahoma, and the nation as well, remain unaddressed. With the federal legislation No Child Left Behind and state pressures for accountability, public schools are being forced to obtain high standards and goals. Appearing to fall between the cracks in this current milieu are children in state custody who end up in emergency shelters because they are victims of abuse and /or neglect.

Theoretical Framework

Following the advice of Wilson (1994) and Westbrook (1993), the theoretical base for this research was drawn from multi-disciplinary exploration. The theoretical framework was developed by integrating research on Empowerment, Social Cognitive Theory of Personality, and Servant Leadership.

Empowerment is an individual process by which one gains control over his life (Labonte, 1995). Empowerment's belief is in change and self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1982), the concept of self-efficacy supports the theoretical basis for empowerment strategies. Freire's work (1972) with the oppressed supports the need for oppressed individuals to become empowered. Social Cognitive Theory speaks of learning and relearning behavior; this concept is also a base for empowerment concepts. Abused

and/or neglected children have been modeled aggressive ways to handle stress and to cope with their problems by observing their abusers cope in this way (Bandura, 1982).

Children who are victims of abuse and/or neglect often times feel oppressed (Ayasse, 1995). Freire's concepts on training educators to empower individuals who have been oppressed are consistent with Bandura's observational learning concepts. Both Bandura (1977) and Freire (1972) point out that oppressed individuals need to learn to develop a sense of personal control over their lives. Freire's ideas on dialogue, praxis, and lived experience are in line with Social Cognitive Theory in that they stress development of personal control over one's life. Servant leaders listen intently; they develop foresight through an understanding of past and present realities, and lived experiences; they point out consequences of good and poor decisions of the individuals they serve. (Spears 2004).

Public school teachers can be advocates for children. Teachers utilize concepts of servant leadership as they work one on one with the students in their classrooms.

Teachers point out consequences of good and poor decision making. Public school teachers are role models for students and can empower students to become self-efficient.

By integrating research on empowerment, social cognitive theory of personality, and servant leadership, the researcher attempted to illustrate how these concepts can be used by educators to facilitate better educational outcomes for students who are victims of abuse and/or neglect and are in the custody of the state.

Research Questions

Examining the educational experiences of youth in the custody of the State of Oklahoma because of abuse and/or neglect is critical to understanding the current level of

educational offering. Public schools are responsible for providing the educational services for these students but, given the many demands upon educators and the extremely limited resources, are these students receiving appropriate and equitable learning opportunities? The overarching questions that will guide this inquiry are: 1) How are the educational needs of youth in one emergency youth shelter and in the custody of the state of Oklahoma being met? 2) How is shelter education for abused and/or neglected youth in this shelter similar to or different from other forms of public education? 3) How do these youth appear to be responding to their educational experiences? 4) And, how can a shelter child's relationship with a public school teacher facilitate greater academic success for the child?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the educational experiences of youth who are in the custody of the State of Oklahoma because of abuse and/or neglect. Public schools are responsible for providing the educational services for these students, but given the many demands upon educators and the extremely limited resources, these students are receiving limited and possibly insufficient learning opportunities.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms are defined:

Basic Needs: What a child needs from the environment to grow into a functioning adult (Maslow, 1943).

D.H.S.: Department of Human Services, the state agency charged with investigation and protection of alleged child abuse and/or neglect cases.

D.H.H.S.: Department of Health and Human Services, the federal branch of government that over sees states Departments of Health and Human Services.

Educational Needs: What a custody youth needs from the educational system and the community to ensure learning. Examples include a safe physical and psychological learning environment, understanding and acceptance, positive regard, as well as proper functional materials and equipment (Timbers, 2001). For the purposes of this study, educational needs will also include instructional time, up-to-date and appropriate materials and equipment, and educational advocacy.

O.J.A.: Office of Juvenile Affairs, the state agency charged with providing probation services and other legal interventions to youth who are experiencing legal problems.

State Custody: Those youth who become wards of the court after being removed from their families.

Youth Shelter: A private, non-profit residential home that provides emergency housing to youth in the state of Oklahoma, who are experiencing difficulty in their current home settings (Loma County Youth Services, 2005).

I.R.B.: Institutional Review Board, the university agency that determines if adequate provisions have been made for the protection of human subjects.

Significance of the Study

There appear to be gaps in the current literature as specified in Chapter II on ways the educational environment could facilitate abused and/or neglected students to reach their educational potential. Research needs to be conducted and results presented to

policy makers so that public policies for both the educational system and the child welfare system could be made to help these students. Research also needs to be presented to public school personnel at all levels to inform the educational system and those responsible for the education of public school students on the unique circumstances of students who have been victimized by abused and/or neglected.

Typically, students of varying ages are placed together in any given shelter's educational environment. Conceivably, the age range can be wider than typically found in the regular public school or in an alternative public school. Also, while a fair percentage of the students at the Shelter have an Individualized Educational Plan, transmission of the records is not prompt enough to be of substantial value to the shelter teacher(s). Highlighting the multitude of problems and issues with these students' educational experiences may be a result of this study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To create a more complete understanding of factors affecting the educational outcomes of abused and/or neglected youth, literature pertaining to the education of youth residing in foster care homes is provided. An extensive review of the literature yielded a paucity of information regarding the educational experiences of state custody youth residing in emergency youth shelters. Attempting to develop some kind of context in which to conduct this study, this review was widened to include youth residing in foster care homes to determine their educational experiences, the barriers and the facilitators. First, existing data collected on youth in foster care is provided, followed by a review on the educational experiences of these youth. Secondly, studies based on empowerment thought, concepts of Servant Leadership, and Social Cognitive Theory of Personality are discussed.

Barriers to Achieving Educational Success for Foster Care Youth

According to Mushlin (1998), foster care is intended to provide a temporary safe haven for youth whose parents are unable to care for them. The foster care system was designed to protect youth by affording them stability, security, and support necessary to address the problems that caused them to be placed into the system initially. *Time* magazine featured an investigative article titled, "The Crisis of Foster Care," describing several states' problems with their foster care systems (November 13, 2000). The foster

care population was described as “America’s generation of lost children, forsaken and forgotten” (Roche, 2000, p. 73).

Education Week (September 13, 2000, p. 12) quoted Rudolph Crew, former superintendent of schools in New York City: “The issue has not reached full maturity in terms of being part of the education agenda.” Describing the lack of focus on the education received by foster children in California, a high California Department of Education official [not named] in this same article stated that this population has been treated educationally as “throw-away kids.”

Youth removed from their homes and placed in protective state’s custody have suffered a range of assaults on their well-being: factors such as pre-natal exposure to maternal alcohol and drug abuse; abuse and neglect in their birth homes; and separation from their birth families which in turn can lead to issues of grief, loss, depression, and the inability to form healthy attachments. These youth are likely to or will experience multiple changes in foster homes and schools (Ayasse, 1995; George, et al., 1992; Heath, et al., 1994; Schwartz, 1999).

Ayasse (1995) argues that high mobility and resultant neglect of their educational needs as well as a lack of a consistent educational advocate in their lives define the school experiences of youth in foster care. Changes in placement often necessitate changes in schools, and the youth must adjust to new expectations and curricula, new friends and teachers, and new school settings.

School personnel are oftentimes unaware that a youth is in the custody of the state and most do not understand the educational implications of foster care placement (Choice, et al., 2001; Schwartz, 1999). State social workers, foster parents, group home

employees and judges who are entrusted with the welfare of the youth too often lack the awareness and training that these youth need to advocate for their educational well-being (Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000; Allshulter, 1997; Timbers, 2001).

Ayasse (1995), points out:

When a child is placed in foster care, his or her care is entrusted to a new family and often a new school whose knowledge of that child's development may be sketchy or nonexistent. Social workers most often assume that the school or the foster parent will handle the task of attending to the child's educational needs. However, the school system often assumes that a parent or responsible adult who is knowledgeable about the student and who can take an active part in assisting the child with school requirements and advocating for special needs accompanies each student. Combining these false assumptions with the trauma foster children experience before, during and sometimes after they are placed in a new home is a recipe for disaster. It is no surprise that foster children have higher rates of school failure, behavioral problems, and high drop out rates. (p.214-5)

The literature confirms that a major problem for foster care youth is their educational well-being (Barth, 1990; Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000; Blome, 1997; Heath, et al., 1994). A 2001 study of more than 4,500 custody youth in Washington public schools found that custody youth scored 16 -20 percentile points below non-custody youth in statewide-standardized tests at grades 3, 6, and 9. Twice as many custody youth as non-custody youth had repeated a grade, and only 59 percent of custody youth versus 86 percent of non-custody youth who were enrolled in the 11th grade completed high school the following school year. Particularly striking in this study

was the fact that a youth's custody status alone is associated with a 7-8 percentile-point gap in standardized test scores (Burley & Halpern, 2001).

Special Educational Services and Mental Health Concerns

Timbers, (2001), and Schwartz, (1999) suggest that when a youth is in foster care placement as well as special education, a vulnerable sub-group is formed. Although federal policy has committed to meeting the needs of diverse and underserved populations, it rarely addresses the issue of students with disabilities who are also in out-of-home placement. Problems such as insufficient cross training within the social service and educational systems, mobility and multi-placement issues, and lack of advocacy plague most youth in foster care. For youth in foster care who are also in special education, these issues are even more acute.

One main factor driving the special education system is parental advocacy (Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000). It depends on home, school and interagency collaboration or a multi-discipline prospect to make it work. Youth in foster care do not have parents to advocate for them.

Research (Timbers, 2001; Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000; Heybach & Winter, 1999, Choice, et al., 2001; and Weinberg, 1997) suggests that the stories of youth in foster care who are in special education classes are stories of unserved or underserved children with lost records, lack of communication between agencies, and confusion over the roles of birth parents, foster parents and social workers. Heath, et al., (1994) suggests that youth in foster care are being left behind because of being underserved and unidentified. He suggests school professionals are confused over appropriate special education interventions for foster care youth.

In 1990, a study of former foster youth found that each of the youths had high depression scores, reported ongoing problems with depression, or had been in a mental hospital (Barth 1990). Another study (George, et al., 1992) indicates that in Illinois, children in foster care systems who were in special education suffer disproportionately from behavioral and emotional disturbance as a primary handicapping condition, with more than half receiving services under this category, compared with 10 percent for the non-out-of-home placement, special education population. A 2001 study of 243 foster children ages 4-17 in Washington found that more than half of the youth had at least a mild impairment in behavioral functioning, and nearly half had moderate or severe impairment (Berliner & Fine, 2001). Because youth in foster care are oftentimes victims of abuse, neglect and separation from bio-families, the chances of emotional and behavioral disturbance increase, which, in turn, increase the chance for difficulties in the educational system (Ferguson, 1999).

Communication and Coordination between Systems

Smuckers (1996), Weinberg (1997), and Choice, et al. (2001) state that a lack of communication between the child welfare and education systems undermines efforts to find youth in out-of-home placement so that they can be assessed and served. Because of the lack of coordination and communication between these two systems, these youth may not have the chance for implementation of individualized educational plans (IEPs), advocacy for their needs to be met, appropriate transition planning, or attention to their mental and physical health concerns.

Two factors that contribute to poor coordination among systems are: 1) insufficient knowledge and training in both the child welfare system and the educational

system, and 2) the absence of mechanisms that provide for systematic, continuing communication between the two systems. Educators receive little, if any, training at either the pre-service or the in-service level on the foster care system and the educational needs of these youth. Social workers, other child welfare staff, and foster parents, on the other hand, have little formal training on the educational needs of foster care youth or on how to conduct advocacy within the educational system. (Timbers, 2001; Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000; Heybach & Winter, 1999, Choice, et al., 2001; and Weinberg, 1997).

Communication vs. Confidentiality

Because of confidentiality laws, communication between systems can be hindered. Researchers (George, et al., 1992; Timbers; Weinberg, 1997; Jacobson, 1998; Allshulter, 1997; and Choice, et al., 2001) suggest that the overriding need of the child welfare system to focus on child protection, coupled with limitations of time and workers, are factors that contribute to the lack of communication between the two systems. Laws that protect confidentiality and hamper communication efforts bind child welfare. One study by George (1992) revealed that caseworkers for the child welfare system were able to identify only five percent of youth in foster care as receiving special education services while the school district reported 30 percent receiving special education interventions. This discrepancy indicates a significant breakdown in systems communication (George, et al., 1992). A study of foster care in New York found that 60 percent of case workers for that state were unaware of existing special education laws when they referred youth on their case load for special education services (Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000).

Records and Youth in Foster Care

The National Resource Center for Information Technology in Child Welfare, 2001, reports that youth in foster care are not reaching the standard of placement stability set by their Child and Family Service Review process. *Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2001*, states that these youth are a highly mobile population. *The Edmund S. Muskie School of Public Service, 1999*, reports in a Maine survey of 134 youth, 28 percent reported six or more placements, with the number of placements ranging from one to 49 with a median of four.

The Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000, found that for all highly mobile youth, the impact on educational achievement and emotional development can be profound, in some instances involving losses of four to six months in emotional and academic growth. Poor academic success can lead to poor emotional health according to this study.

Ayasse (1995) reports youth in foster care often make unplanned moves from school due to placement interruptions. Because of this instability and lack of a consistent education advocate in their lives, they may be under-identified as children in need of educational services. New placements do not always know that a youth has been referred, assessed, or placed in special education previously, and educational records are often delayed or lost in the transfer from one school to another, for most custody youth.

The National Resource Center for Information Technology in Child Welfare, 2001, reports the mobility of youth in foster care contributes to the significant problem of delayed assessments, absenteeism, redundant assessments, and lost or delayed records being transferred. All of these conditions affect positive educational outcomes.

Foster Care and High School Degree Attainment

Cook (1994) interviewed 810 young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 who had been discharged from the foster care system between January 1987 and July 1988 to determine their high school degree attainment. He discovered that only 54 percent of them had completed high school, compared to 78 percent of the 18 to 24-year old individuals who were not in the foster care system.

In a study looking at education and employment, Festinger (1983) conducted interviews with 201 young adults who had been in the foster care system. Her findings indicated approximately 22 percent of these youth who left foster care two years previously had not received a high school degree.

A longitudinal study by Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, and Nesmith (in press) of 141 young adults who had been out of foster care for 12 to 18 months found that 37 percent of these individuals had not received a high school degree. Blome (1997) conducted a study involving a random sample of foster care youth and a matched group of non-foster care youth to explore these two groups' educational experiences. Her work suggests that 37 percent of the children in foster care left high school before graduation.

If high school degree attainment is an indicator of achievement as the above researchers suggest foster care youth are not achieving at the same levels as those youth not in the foster care system.

Academic Achievement Levels for Foster Care Youth

Fanshel and Shinn (1978) suggest that foster care youth perform lower than average on academic achievement scores than non-foster care youth. However, the former performed equally to those youth in similar socioeconomic groups. The

researchers conducted a comprehensive five year assessment of different indicators of foster care youths' educational achievement. Halfway through the five-year period of the 123 foster care youth participating in the study, 47 percent showed improvement in their academic performance, while 46 percent showed a decline. Upon completion of the study, 58 percent showed improvement in their academic achievement, 32 percent showed a decline, yet 53 percent were performing below grade level for achievement.

Dumaret (1985) compared school failure rates among 35 adopted children, 46 children living at home with one or more biological parents who had current or past child protective services involvement for issues of abuse and/or neglect, and 21 children in the foster care system. All of the children selected for the study belonged to sibling groups. Dumaret's findings showed that 0 to 10 percent of the children in adoptive homes failed one or more of their school subjects, almost 50 percent of the children living in the home with at least one or more biological parent failed one or more subjects, and almost 100 percent of the children residing in foster care homes failed one or more subjects.

Using Dumaret's work to guide them, researchers Wald, Curlsmith, and Leiderman (1988) compared the educational outcomes between 19 children living at home and 13 children living in foster care. All of the children were developmentally comparable, were victims of abuse or neglect, and lived in similar environments. The researchers included a comparison group of children who were neither abused nor neglected. Teachers were asked to rank the school performance of nine of the children in the foster care system, 10 of the children living at home, and 41 children in the comparison group at the end of the two-year study period. The teachers report that 22 percent of the children in the foster care system were performing above average,

compared to none of the children living at home and 54 percent of the children in the comparison group. The teachers ranked 33 percent of the children in foster care, 40 percent of the children living at home, and 29 percent of the children in the comparison group as completing average work. The teachers then were asked which groups were performing below average work. The results were 44 percent of the children in the foster care system, 60 percent of the children at home, and 17 percent of the children in the comparison group were categorized as performing below average. When considering academic achievement, children in the foster care system performed consistently above the children living at home, and below the comparison group. Since the comparison group had not experienced neglect or abuse, as the other two groups had, quite possibly abuse and neglect were factors in poor academic achievement for children in the foster care system, as well as for those youth living at home.

Failure and Grade Repetition for Foster Care Youth

Youth in foster care have a greater chance of grade failure and repetition than those not in foster care. Benedict, Zuravin, and Stallings (1996) interviewed 214 individuals to identify associations between foster care placement and adult outcomes. Forty percent of the individuals were formerly in kinship care and 60 percent were formerly in non-kinship foster care. The interviews focused on education, employment, stresses, supports, and health and risk-taking behaviors. The researchers found that one-third to one-half of these individuals in non-kinship placement had failed or repeated one or more grades.

In related work by Berrick, Barth and Needell (1994), nearly one-quarter of children in kinship care and one-third of the children in non-relative foster care had failed

or repeated one or more grades. By random sample, 246 kinship providers and 354 foster family providers residing in California participated in the study. The researchers conducted a quasi-experimental, exploratory study using surveys and interviews to obtain their results.

Grade Level Performance of Foster Care Youth

Several studies show that foster care youth are not performing at grade level. English, Kouidou-Giles and Plocke (1994) identified the characteristics of the population eligible for the Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) in a descriptive study they conducted. The researchers conducted telephone interviews with youth in foster care and their caregivers, as well as a review of the youths' case records, to gather information on 431 individual foster youth who were over 16 and eligible for ILSP services. The youth had not received ILSP services at the time of contact. Almost a quarter of the foster care youth in the study were performing one or more years behind grade level. The findings also indicated that 54 percent of the foster care youth experienced disabling conditions such as behavioral and emotional disabilities. Another study by Fox and Arcuri (1980) found that 23 percent of foster care youth in their sample were performing below grade level

An extensive review of the literature did not find any specific provision in federal law for child welfare professionals to contribute their expertise about this particular group of youth to any one other than the court system or to provide advocacy for individual youth. Confidentiality could be the factor in the phenomenon. The literature would also suggest that school personnel need to pay closer attention to this group of public school students' educational outcomes.

Studies Based on the Theoretical Framework

Empowerment Concepts

Labonte (1995) and Lord (1991) define empowerment as an individual process by which one secures control over his/her life. Empowerment could be thought of as a process, similar to a path or a journey, one that develops as people work through it. Empowerment begins with an individual's self-defined needs and aspirations and then looks at resources and supports within communities that maybe available to meet those needs. Hutchison and McGill (1992) state when individuals attempt to negotiate services to feel empowered, they can find the bureaucratic systems they encountered confusing, with the road to empowerment having limited to non-existent choices, and the services the individual seeks as inflexible or unable to meet their needs. "Being made dependent on services for many or most of their needs, and being forced to have key decisions made for them, makes people feel a loss of control" (p. 134). Consequently, feelings of powerlessness could become abundant on the road to empowerment. Freire (1972) writes: "Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects" (p.66).

Labonte (1995) recognized that empowerment is dependent on the interconnectedness of various aspects of a person's life. As Labonte notes, there are multiple goals to achieving empowerment, including personal care (individual empowerment), small group development, and community organizations on local issues, advocacy, and political action. The ability for an individual to achieve empowerment can be hindered if change is needed within social support systems. Empowerment appears to

be multidimensional, as well a process. It is multidimensional in that it needs to occur within different disciplines and arenas. It is a process, as empowerment does not happen to individuals overnight. It is also a social process, because it occurs in relationship to the social systems which are involved in the individual's life. Wilson (1996) points out that organizers, politicians, and employers recognize that individual change is a prerequisite for community and social change and empowerment. Researches (Wilson, 1996; Florin & Wandersman, 1990; Speer & Hughey, 1995) believe that to create change that facilitates empowerment, individual change and social system change are needed.

Power in Empowerment

At the core of the concept of empowerment is the idea of power. Weber's Dictionary (1991) states that power is related to a person's ability to make others do what they want them to do, regardless of their own wishes or interests. Lips (1991) believes that traditional social science emphasizes power as influence and control, many times treating those individuals they are charged with helping as commodities or structures, divorced from human actions. Weber (1946) recognizes that power exists within the context of a relationship between people or things. Power is not present in isolation, nor is it inherent in single individuals. By implication, since power has to have a relationship to be created, it takes both individuals and agencies or systems to become meaningful. Empowerment as a process of change for all involved, then, becomes a concept that is meaningful.

Lukes (1994) understands that power will be seen and understood differently by people who inhabit various positions in power structures. Contemporary researchers on power have suggested that power can be shared. Feminists (Miller, 1976; Starhawk,

1987), researchers involved in grassroots organizations (Bookman & Morgen, 1984), racial and ethnic researchers (Nicolal-McLaughlin & Chandler, 1984), and others, focus on the aspect of power that is characterized by collaboration, sharing and mutuality.

Freire (1972) believes every person, however ignorant or submerged in their own culture, can look critically at his or her own world through a process of dialogue with others, and can gradually come to perceive their personal and social reality, think about it, and take action in regard to it.

Kreisberg (1992) states that power relationships should be characterized by collaboration, mutual respect for all entities involved, as well as a use of give and take, until empowerment goals are met. This type of power is "relational power" (Lappe & DuBois, 1994), "generative power" (Korten, 1987), "integrative power" and "power with" (Kreisberg, 1992). By looking at power and power relationships in this way, empowerment of individuals actually strengthens the power of all involved. Freire (1972) writes that "knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other." (p.53). Kreisberg (1992) has suggested that power as the capacity to implement is broad enough to allow power to mean domination, authority, influence, and shared power or power with. It is only with the definition of power, as a process that occurs in relationship, that all entities involved in the empowerment process have the possibility to become empowered.

Social Cognitive Theory of Personality

Bandura (1982) describes self-efficacy as the belief in one's effectiveness, or his/her ability to cope with a specific situation. This concept is part of Bandura's Social

Cognitive Theory of Personality, which supports the theoretical basis for empowerment strategies. Bandura's (1982) theory emphasizes the expectancies people have of themselves and others, including their self-efficacy and any expectations of rewards and punishments received from others for their behavior. Such self-perceptions may change over time, with varying levels of the same activity, and/or in different circumstances.

Bandura (1982) believes that human behavior is learned. Bandura feels that all people, old or young, acquire behaviors through the observation of others. They then imitate what they observe. Bandura labels this concept as observational learning. He recognized that much learning takes place as a result of reinforcement, but he stressed that all forms of behavior can be learned without directly experiencing reinforcement. Rather than experiencing reinforcement ourselves for each of our actions, we can learn through vicarious reinforcement by observing the behavior of others and the consequences of their behaviors. This focus on learning by observation, rather than through direct reinforcement, is a distinctive feature of social cognitive theory. Bandura (1977) feels most human behavior is learned through example, either intentionally or accidentally. Bandura's classic Bobo doll study demonstrates the modeling process. Bandura's study would suggest that parents who use physical punishment with their children are providing their children with models of aggressive behavior.

Bandura and Walters (1963) showed that children whose parents punished aggressive behaviors usually avoided aggressive behaviors when their parents were present, but were aggressive in their interactions outside the home. According to Hoffman (1960), when parents use threats and physical force to discipline their children, the children use these same techniques in dealing with peers (as cited in Mazur, 1998).

All of these results are consistent with the view that, when they discipline their children, parents are serving as models as well as controlling agents.

According to Schultz & Schultz (1998), Bandura's observational learning techniques can be taken from the laboratory and applied to practical, everyday problems. Research supports for individuals who are experiencing oppression, techniques from positive role models can be empowering, just by being observed.

Conger and Kanungo (1988) outline five stages for developing empowerment:

- 1) Identifying conditions that lead to feelings of powerlessness (e.g., centralized resources, authoritarianism; low-value rewards; unrealistic goals)
- 2) Implementing programs or techniques that enable others to be empowered (shared goal-setting, collaboration)
- 3) Removal of barriers (those identified in the first stage) and supplying self-efficacy information (autonomy; discretionary opportunities; learning opportunities; encouragement and support of calculated risks; mistakes tolerated/learned from)
- 4) Feelings of empowerment; effort-performance expectations increase (confidence; self-assurance)
- 5) Shared experiences and task accomplishment.

In his work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Freire makes a number of important theoretical claims that have had a considerable impact on the development of educational practices. First, Freire's (1972) emphasis on dialogue, the communications that take place between educator and students, has become a point of interest within popular and informal education. Given that informal education is dialogical, or conversational, rather than curricula based is of particular significance to Freire's train of

thought. Freire was insistent that dialogue involved respect. He believed that education should not involve one person acting on another, but rather people working with each other toward common goals, much like Kreisberg's power with.

Freire was also concerned with praxis, action that is informed and linked to values. He felt that dialogue wasn't only about communicating to develop a deeper understanding; it also involved making a difference in the world. Freire felt that dialogue and praxis enhanced community and builds social capital. He believed that community and social capital leads individuals as well as agencies to act in ways that make for justice and human flourishing.

Third, Freire's work with those educators who have traditionally worked with individuals who do not have a voice, and who are oppressed has shown great significance. Taylor (1993) stated that an important element of Freire's work is his concern with conscientization which is the development of consciousness. Taylor (1993) writes that this consciousness has the "power to transform reality" (p. 52).

Fourth, Freire's insistence on situating educational activity in the lived experience of participants has opened up a series of possibilities for the way educators can approach the practice of education. Freire looked for words that had the possibility of generating new ways of naming and acting in the world.

Fifth, Freire's use of metaphors was drawn from Christian sources. An example of this is the way in which Freire used metaphor to explain how the divide between teachers and learners can be transcended. Freire believed this learning experience is much like the Easter experience. Taylor (1993) states:

The educator for liberation has to die as the unilateral educator of the educatee, in order to be born again as the educator-educatee of the educates-educators. An educator is a person who has to live in the deep significance of Easter (p. 53).

Servant-Leadership

In 1970, Robert Greenleaf first coined the term servant-leadership in his essay *The Servant as Leader*. This term is rooted in the notion that people first choose to serve and then lead for the collective greater good. Greenleaf (1970) states:

The servant-leader is servant first...It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He or she is sharply different from the person who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

Spears (2004) identified ten essential characteristics of a servant-leader:

1. Listening intently, receptively and with reflection; listening to identify and help clarify the will of the group.
2. Empathy and understanding of others; acceptance and recognition of others' unique gifts and spirits; assumption of good intentions of others.
3. Healing self and others.
4. Awareness, both self and general.
5. Using persuasion as opposed to coercive compliance.
6. Conceptualization and the ability to "dream great dreams."

7. Foresight through an understanding of the past, present realities and consequences of decisions on the future.
8. Stewardship—holding something in trust for another.
9. Commitment to the growth of people.
10. Building community. (p. 7-11)

Servant leaders could help in the modeling of appropriate behaviors for abused and neglected youth. Servant leaders approaches as identified by Spears (2004), could help abused and neglected youth to grow into fully functioning adults by the modeling of appropriate ways to interact with others.

Court Appointed Special Advocates

According to information from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) web site (2004), CASA programs provide abused and/or neglected children nation wide with a consistent person to follow their case throughout the court system. CASA uses trained community volunteers who commit to follow the life of the child's case. The National CASA was formed in 1982, six years after Superior Judge David Soukup of Seattle, Washington saw a recurring problem in his courtroom. Soukup believed in criminal and civil court cases, even though there were always many different points of view, when he walked out of the court room at the end of the day that he had done his best, and could live with the decisions that he had made. The one exception was when he was involved with a child as he was trying to decide what to do to facilitate the child's growth into a mature and well adjusted adult. Many times Soukup believed that he did not have sufficient information to allow for a right decision to be made in behalf of the child. He wondered if he had been given all the information concerning the child's

case and if he had made the correct ruling on behalf of that child. To ensure that he had been given all the facts and that the long term welfare of each child was represented, the Seattle judge came up with an idea that has changed the America's judicial procedure as well as the lives of millions of children in the custody of the court. He obtained funding to recruit and train community volunteers to step into the courtroom on behalf of abused and/or neglected children. These advocates, CASA volunteers, give voice to children who have been abused and/or neglected in the court system. CASA volunteers are servant leaders.

Summary

A review of the literature suggests that children who are from stable and secure environments tend to perform better in school than do children who reside in foster care homes. Literature suggests that most youth in out- of- home placements are not receiving the educational services needed to ensure positive outcomes. Twice as many custody youth as non-custody youth had repeated a grade. Regarding high school degree attainment, 22-46 percent exited the foster care system without a high school diploma. A large percentage of foster children have failed or repeated at least one grade, and many foster children are not performing at grade level.

Youth in foster care who are in special education classes are underserved children with lost records, lack of communication between agencies, and confusion over the roles of birth parents, foster parents and social workers. Special education is built on parental advocacy. Youth in out-of-home placement do not always have a parental advocate.

Findings regarding the academic performance of children in kinship placement are mixed. One study showed that children in a placement with a relative were more

likely to repeat a grade than children in a home without a care giver that they are related to. Other studies found the opposite to be true.

Children residing in foster care homes have mental health issues. Studies show that because youth in foster care are oftentimes victims of abuse and neglect and separation from bio-families, the chances of emotional and behavioral disturbance increase, which, in turn, increases the chance for difficulties in the educational system.

Regarding school records, foster children need to have them transferred from their former school to their new school. When foster children move to a new residence, they oftentimes move to a new school district. Many times their school records are delayed in following them.

Because of confidentiality laws, communication between systems can be hindered. Child welfare laws protect the identity of children in the state's protective custody. This lack of communication, at times, is a factor in foster children not being referred for special education services.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on the philosophical orientation, called phenomenology, which focuses on individuals' experiences from their perspectives. The researcher desired to study the educational experiences of students in the custody of the State of Oklahoma because of abuse and/or neglect and the experiences of teachers in this program. Four students placed at an emergency youth shelter were selected for interviewing and observation on a first come, first asked basis once being placed in the emergency youth shelter. These students were asked their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about schools and teachers, and whether or not they believed they were receiving a good education since being in the state's custody. The current teacher hired by the local school district, as well as three former teachers who had experience at the emergency youth shelter, were interviewed concerning their thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about the educational experiences of abused and/or neglected youth. A review of the literature suggested that the educational experiences of custody youth were different from the experiences of youth who are not in the custody of the State. The researcher looked at the words of the research participants to gain a better understanding of this phenomenon.

Authors (Berendt, 1992 and Dillard, 1985) note good observation includes all the physical senses, particularly hearing and seeing, but also touch, smell, and taste, empathic human sensitivities, mastery of language, and spiritual awareness. Observation could

then be said to be a whole-person activity. Humans, young and old, rich and poor, listen and watch for signals that can be related to from personal experiences. If humans do not relate to an experience, more likely than not, the observational information will be ignored. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) discuss a continuum of observation from total observer to total participant. They note that each inquiry requires the inquirer to find an appropriate role to play along that continuum. The researcher observed interactions between the current educator at the LCYS School and her students as she taught.

The researcher desired to create a holistic picture to understand the educational experiences of youth who have been abused and/or neglected and who were currently in the custody of the state officials. The researcher's data were the words these individuals used to describe their knowledge, opinions, perceptions and feelings of their educational experiences, rather than numbers. No attempt was made to manipulate the environment. The researcher's desire was to examine the ways the individuals attached meaning to their educational experiences.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative methods:

[involve] the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials—case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts—that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (p.3)

Qualitative methods allow the research process to remain flexible—something vital in the understanding of positionality and the role of the researcher. Qualitative

approaches allow for time—time to pause and to take a second look at the meaning of the data collected.

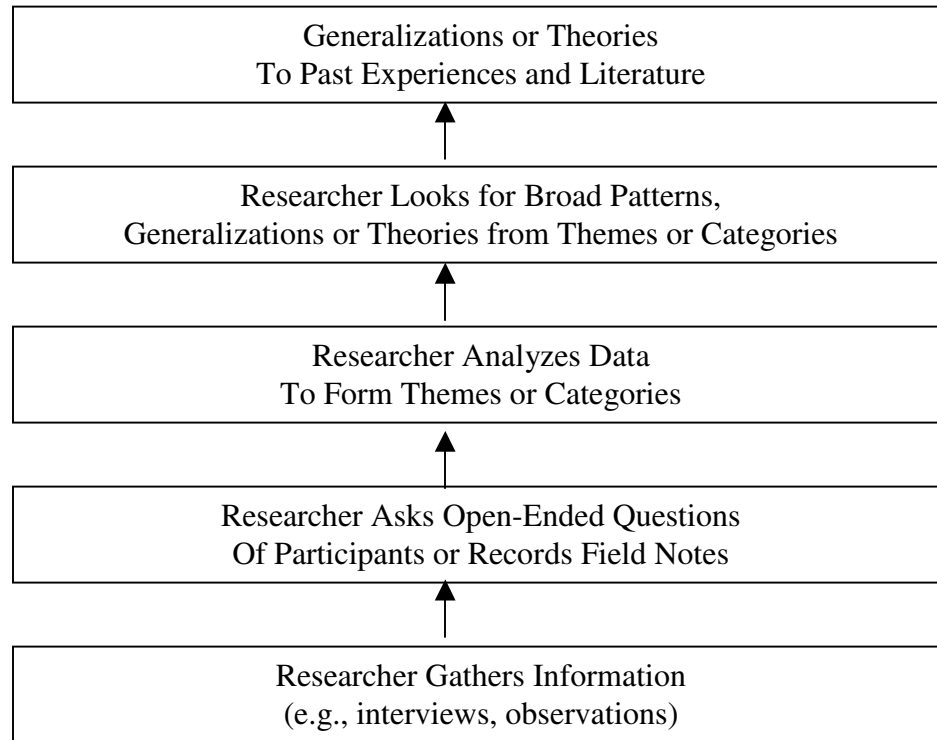
Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 19) offer five reasons for conducting qualitative research:

- 1) The conviction of the researcher based on research experience
- 2) The nature of the research problem
- 3) To uncover and understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known
- 4) To gain novel and fresh slants on things about which quite a bit is already known
- 5) To give intricate details of phenomena that is difficult to convey with quantitative methods.

Punch (1998) explains that qualitative studies use an inductive process, building from the data to broad themes to a generalized model or theory. Creswell (2003) illustrates this concept:

Table 2: The Inductive Logic of Research in Qualitative Study

(p.132)



Creswell explains that the researcher begins by gathering detailed information from participants through interviews and observations. Participants are then asked open-ended questions concerning the phenomenon being studied, and/or the researcher reviews records and field notes. Next, the researcher analyzes the data and attempts to identify patterns, themes or related information. Broad patterns, theories or generalizations can then be developed and compared with personal experience or with existing literature. This development of themes and categories into patterns, theories, or generalizations is seen as a valid end point for qualitative studies. At this point, the researcher is prepared to suggest what could be added to existing theory or to form new theory about the phenomenon.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to “pattern theories” as an explanation that develops during qualitative research. Unlike deductive form found in quantitative studies, these “pattern theories” or “generalizations” represent a connected thought or a way to link parts to a whole. Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Lincoln and Denzin, 1995).

Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) argue that the goal of understanding a phenomenon from the view of the participants and its particular social and institutional context is lost when textual data are quantified. Creswell (2003) writes, “Qualitative inquiry employs different knowledge claims, strategies of inquiry, and methods of data collection and analysis” (p.179). Rossman and Rallis (1998) understand that the researchers look for involvement of their participants in data collection and seek to build rapport and credibility with individuals in the study.

Research Methodology

The researcher attempted to describe and understand the educational experiences of the youth and the current Shelter instructor as well as three other former instructors by interviews. The current Shelter instructor was observed as she taught the youth at the Shelter setting. According to Jacob (1987), the ethnographic study includes in-depth interviewing and continual participant observation of a situation.

Rapport was developed with the youth in Shelter placement as well as with the instructors so the researcher could gain creditability and build knowledge claims. Rapport was developed by using basic client-centered counseling techniques such as

unconditional positive regard, asking open ended questions, and showing a non-judgmental attitude towards the youth and the instructors. The researcher shared stories about experiences as a mom, foster mom, student and wife using humor and empathy. Openness and concern for the youth and the instructors was shown by taking an interest in their world and by showing a sincere concern for their well being.

Auto-ethnography

For Denzi (1989), cited in Reed-Danahay (1997), an auto-ethnography is characterized by a blend of autobiography and ethnography, where the writer does not adopt an “objective outsider” viewpoint. It differs from other research by incorporation of elements of the researcher’s own life experience when writing about others. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) cite as evidence Kenyatta (1938), Tung (1930), Nakeane (1970) and Yang (1972) as indigenous anthropologists writing ethnographically about their own cultural group.

Ellis and Bochner (2000) believe that reflexive ethnographies focus both on the ethnographer’s own culture or sub-culture and those of the culture being studied. At times, the researcher’s culture is the same culture as the one being studied. The researcher uses his/her own experiences to investigate the self and self-other interactions. They maintain that auto-ethnographic research is a full insider type of research.

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is the study of the lived experiences from the unique perspective of the individual who is engaged in the experience, according to Thibodeau and MacRae (1997). It is a theoretical perspective where the researcher is concerned with the way the

participants views the world (vanManen, 2000) and their perceptions of it. The researcher looked for unique educational experience from the participant's perspective.

Loma County Youth Services

Loma County Youth Services, Inc. (LCYS) (name changed to ensure confidentiality) is a private, non-profit agency with a 30-year history of providing counseling, case management and emergency shelter to youth ages 10-21 and their families. The agency's motto is "Empowering Youth and Families to lead healthy and productive lives."

According to an agency brochure, there are many reasons the agency exists:

- Loma County ranks in the top 20 counties in Oklahoma for child abuse and neglect confirmations. Many of these children are removed from their homes and need a safe place to stay. Loma County Youth Services operates the only emergency youth shelter in Loma County. Each year, LCYS provides shelter for approximately 250 young people.
- Many families with adolescents need counseling but cannot afford the cost. Loma County Youth Services offers the only free individual, family and group counseling services for teenagers in Loma County.
- Some families lack transportation to access counseling. Each year Loma County Youth Services provides home-based services to approximately 150 children and families.
- A local survey conducted in May 2001, indicated that 37 percent of high school seniors in Loma County admitted to getting drunk in the last 30 days. Twenty-one percent of high school seniors have used marijuana in the last 30

days. Loma County Youth Services provides the only free outpatient substance abuse counseling for adolescents in Loma County.

Organizational Quality

In an agency brochure published by the *Oklahoma Association of Youth Services*, LCYS is described as being dedicated to the welfare of the children it serves. A commitment to improving the quality of the youth's life is the basis for its mission. The purposes of LCYS are clearly stated in verbal communications with the youth, the guardian, with other staff and with community agencies. Its mission is communicated in writing by the use of agency letterhead, agency brochures and newspaper articles. LCYS' code of ethic includes rules of professional conduct. LCYS, governed by a board of directors made up of community volunteers, is responsible for the executive director of the agency who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the agency.

Emergency Youth Shelters in Oklahoma

In a brochure published by the *Oklahoma Association of Youth Services*, entitled "Sheltering Oklahoma's Youth," 31 designated Youth Services Agencies operate emergency residential services for youth throughout Oklahoma. Twenty-eight youth service agencies operate emergency youth shelters and three youth service agencies operate host homes. Shelters provide a safe place for youth to reside until more stable housing can be found. All youth services are committed to enhancing the quality of life for Oklahoma youth. Services are provided to all 77 counties in Oklahoma in one form or another.

The LCYS emergency shelter is a safe, comfortable, and protective environment for youth who are unable to remain in their home because of family crises, abuse, neglect

or delinquent behaviors. LCYS emergency youth shelter provides a wide variety of services for at-risk youth. The basic components of emergency residential services are housing, counseling, education and recreation services. The Shelter is governed by the same guiding principals as Loma County Youth Services. All policies and procedures are outlined in the agency's policy and procedures manual and apply to both branches of the agency.

Role of the Researcher in Studying the Educational Experiences

Because the researcher worked as a therapist at LCYS, it is important to examine how this fact could and did influence this research study. The researcher worked primarily as a therapist for the LCYS headquarters, which is two miles from the shelter. Thus, she did not see the youth on a daily basis. The youth workers who provided care to the youth knew and trusted her; the youth themselves previously witnessed her presence in and out of the shelter. The researcher was not an unknown person who could not be trusted.

As an insider, removed from the day-to-day interactions of the Shelter, the researcher was able to engage in dependable and credible research by using two qualitative research forms. The first form was simply a yellow legal pad with a line drawn down the middle. At the top of the paper, on the left hand side, the words, Direct Observations, were written. On the top right hand side of the yellow pad, the words, My Feelings, were written. This form was used during observations of the students and the teacher in the shelter school setting. Only those observations that I directly observed were written in the left hand column. My feelings about what was being observed were jotted down under the right hand column. The second qualitative form was used for the

development of themes. This form was divided into three sections. The first one was labeled, Pre-identified Themes. This section was for prior knowledge obtained through the review of the literature. The second section, Emerging Themes, were themes the researcher saw developing as the research continued. The information for this section was obtained through the interview or observation process or both. The third section was titled Interpretive Themes and consisted of my interpretation of the interview or observational data.

The researcher provides her professional experience in youth work as follows: She is a doctoral student in the College of Education, having previously earned a master's degree in counseling; a Licensed Professional Counselor and a National Board Certified Counselor with eight years experience counseling youth, most of whom were victims of abuse and or neglect. The researcher, a former elementary teacher with three years teaching experience, is the parent of four children. Along with this, she is a foster parent with seven years experience in parenting children who have experienced abuse and neglect. The researcher herself is a victim of years of abuse and neglect. She was unable to graduate from high school, making it only to the ninth grade before becoming a statistic... a high school drop-out. She is the only female in five generations to earn a General Educational Equivalence (GED) or a high school diploma. Following along the generational patterns set by her ancestors, she married at age 16, her mother being 17 when marrying, and her grandmother being 15. Educated individuals were labeled "educated idiots" by her family's line of descent, as education was of little to no value to them.

Researchers far more established than this one have struggled with the crisis of representing a group in research with whom they are affiliated. Butler (2001) writes of her difficulties in addressing the issue of group membership and research within that group. In her work relating to the experiences of the visually impaired, she felt the need to explicitly state that she too was visually impaired making her a part of the group she researched. While in some respects she considered herself an insider in the community she studied, she understood that “power relations between researchers and those they research are too complex, working on too many different levels, to cover in any detail even in a lengthy thesis” (p. 264). In essence, the researcher could not change the fact that some of the research “subjects” may have been given an opportunity to witness her presence from time to time at the Shelter. This researcher in no way acted as a therapist for these youth. Most youth in Shelter placement are never referred for counseling services. The researcher also cannot ignore that she too was once, one of these children.

The fact that the researcher’s identity has been interwoven throughout her life cannot be separated from her, or from the research she chose to do. What she is, what she does for a living, what she will become, and what she chooses to write about are factors in who she is as a person. To lose that identity out of her research is more of an ethical concern than to keep it in.

The researcher’s role in this research effort was not that of a totally objective observer, but rather that of a reflexive auto-ethnographer who used her personal experiences to gain a better perspective on the group. Ellis and Bochner (2000) describe this approach as one that allows researchers to use “their own personal experiences in the

culture reflexively to bend back on self and look more deeply at self-other interactions” (p. 740).

Richardson, (1989) states that insider research is as much a means of understanding the subject under inquiry as it is an exploration of self. It may be seen as something like this:

The Starfish Flinger

As the old man walked the beach at dawn, he noticed a young man ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally catching up with the youth, he asked him why he was doing this. The answer was that the stranded starfish would die if left until the morning sun. “But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish,” countered the other. “How can your effort make any difference?” The young man looked at the starfish in his hand and then threw it to safety in the waves. “It made a difference to that one,” he said.

Author unknown

Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest that "constructions are, quite literally, created realities. They do not exist outside of the persons who create and hold them; they are not part of some 'objective' world that exists apart from their constructors" (p. 143). Guba and Lincoln (1989) go on to say:

A construction once formed is likely to maintain itself...Constructions, like other forms of knowing such as theories, are able to 'wall off' contravening evidence, by their very nature. The problem of inducing change is thus not a matter simply of raising consciousness or introducing new rational considerations but a matter of coming to grips with the problematic nature of constructions (p. 145).

According to Boyle (1997), there are several methods for obtaining information, including the following: observation, interview and questionnaires. With any method there are advantages and disadvantages as summarized in the following table:

Table 3: Advantages and Disadvantages of Common Methods
For Obtaining Evaluation Information

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Observation	Ease of use; direct observation of evidence relating to system effectiveness and usability; flexibility	Information provided may only reflect superficial behavior and may not take into account underlying issues; more sophisticated observation methods may also be more costly.
Interviews	Ease of administration; useful in formative evaluation; ability to reduce qualitative information; often adds to the effectiveness of other methods	Difficulty in comparing results; unrepresentative samples; interviewer bias; different levels of prior knowledge among those being interviewed
Questionnaires	Ease of administration; ability to ask open and closed-ended questions; valuable for summative evaluation; comparatively easy to analyze	Usually unable to probe respondents for explanations or further information; may only provide superficial information; summarization of results may obscure important variations within the data

Data Collection Procedures

In this study, interviews and observations were conducted with four youth placed at the LCYS Shelter to gain their perspectives, thoughts, opinions, and beliefs on their educational experiences since being in the custody of the state. These youth were removed from their original placements, usually biological parents or other guardian placement, because of concerns of abuse and/or neglect. The youth were selected to participate in the study on a first come first asked basis shortly after being placed at the Shelter. Four youth, the current public school LCYS Shelter instructor and three former LCYS shelter school instructors were interviewed concerning their opinions, thoughts,

and beliefs about the youths' educational experiences. Observations were made of the current Shelter instructor as she taught the youth at the Shelter school "site."

Interviews and observations were conducted with the current public school teacher whose duty was to educate the youth at the Shelter, to gain her perspective on educational issues of youth who are in the custody of the state. Three public school teachers who previously taught at the Shelter were also interviewed.

In-depth tape-recorded interviews were used to collect data along with classroom observations. Interviews were conducted before observations. Interview questions were written after an extensive review of the literature had been completed. A pre-ethnography was also conducted to help ensure the researcher would gain insight on suitable and relevant questions.

According to Kvale (1996), the narrative interview is the most commonly accepted method of qualitative data collection and is especially suited to illustrate how individuals experience and make sense of various life events and experiences. Kvale (1996) contended that "the outcome of the interview depends on the knowledge, sensitivity, and empathy of the interviewer" (p. 105). The researcher attempted to conduct the interviews in a sensitive manner, conveying an attitude of interest, openness, trust, and respect. Paraphrasing and open-ended questions requiring more than a yes or no answer were used to deepen the exploration of issues raised by the youth and the teachers.

Pre-Ethnography

Before researching these subjects, a pre-ethnography was conducted consisting of one interview with a student over the age of 21 who had been in the custody of the State,

using the study's interview questions, and one interview with a teacher who has current experience working with students who have experienced abuse and neglect, using the study's original interview questions. The pre-ethnography's purpose was to ensure a smooth and quality interview process for the actual ethnography. The researcher modified the actual interview process after asking those participants for feedback on the interview experience.

Interviews:

Spradley (1979) lists several differences between a friendly conversation and an interview:

It is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants. Exclusive use of these new ethnographic elements, or introducing them too quickly, will make interviews become like formal interrogation [like the typical structured interview]. Rapport will evaporate, and informants will discontinue their cooperation. At any time during the interview it is possible to shift back to a friendly conversation. A few minutes of easygoing talk interspersed here and there throughout the interview will pay enormous dividends in rapport. (pp. 58-59)

Spradley (1979) suggests the researcher should build rapport with interviewees by letting them talk about whatever they want at first, then moving into an exploration phase in which the interviewee values the inquiry as much as the inquirer does. They are working together to teach the inquirer about the interviewee's world, and the interviewee helps originate questions rather than only respond to the inquirer's question.

Participants

Four out of five students residing at the LCYS and in DHS permanent custody were recruited through personal invitation by the primary investigator. The youth, state caseworker, and youth's attorney or Court Appointed Special Advocate (C.A.S.A.) were asked to give consent and/or assent for participation in the study at the time or shortly after the time the youth was accepted for placement at the LCYS. The state caseworker acted as the legal guardian for the youth on the worker's case load, making the state caseworker one of the individuals who had legal status to authorize consent for the custody youth to participate. If this worker were unavailable for consent, the researcher was able to gain consent by court interventions, using the youth's attorney, or by the youth's C.A.S.A. worker if the youth had been appointed a C.A.S.A. by the court system. The attorney was appointed to the youth once being placed in the state's custody. The youths, the youths' caseworkers, youths' attorney or C.A.S.A., were asked for consent or assent on a first come, first asked basis until all willing participants had given consent and/or assent to participate (See Attachment 2). Ages of the students ranged from 10-17. Grade levels were from the 4th through 10th grade. All students were female.

The current LCYS instructor, an employee of the local school district, was recruited through personal invitation after consent by the local school district was given to conduct the study. Five former LCYS instructors were sent letters asking for their willingness to participate (See Attachment 1). Addresses and names of former Shelter instructors were made available to the primary investigator via shelter records. Former Shelter teachers were sent a letter in October, 2005 asking for their input on the subject

matter and requesting that they contact the researcher by phone at LCYS or at the researcher's home phone number.

The current LCYS instructor had 30 plus years teaching experience, with three years teaching at the LCYS. She was asked to participate near the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year, when her teaching responsibilities began at the Shelter. She held a bachelor's degree in elementary education with emphasis in mental retardation and held a master's degree in learning disabilities. Although she had taught kindergarten through adults, most of her teaching experiences were in special education. She indicated she had taught in various situations: different areas, different size school districts, and different socio-economic levels because her husband was military, requiring the family to move often.

Two of the three former LCYS instructors held bachelors degrees only: one in secondary education and one in elementary education; the third held elementary certification as well as a master's degree in school counseling. Two of the three were female and one was male.

The public school teacher responsible for the education of Shelter students is hired by the local education agency (LEA). Since the LEA is the employer of the Shelter instructors, it is responsible for teacher pay and any benefits that the instructors may receive. The students are enrolled as students of the LEA. The LEA is responsible for providing all educational materials for the Shelter students, for monitoring and evaluating the educational services the Shelter students receive, and also for monitoring and evaluating the Shelter instructor. The Shelter instructor had total responsibility for lesson

planning, meeting PASS objectives, state developed standards, and other mandates.

Shelter students are taught by the shelter instructor for three hours a day only.

The state social worker is responsible for enrolling custody youth in school if they are being moved from one placement to another. An example of this would be a youth being moved from one foster home placement to a shelter. If a custody youth is in a stable placement and not in transit, the foster parents or other legal guardian enrolls the child in school. Many youth placed at the LCYS are in transit situations and are from towns or counties other than the town in which the Shelter is located. Most are placed at the LCYS Shelter because of a lack of shelter bed placements or foster care homes in the counties from which they originate. A youth may live in a town in Loma County not where the shelter is located. Youth from Loma County and other counties attend school at the Shelter. The state social worker is the person who makes the decision where the youth will attend school. LCYS staff has no control over this decision and lack information or knowledge regarding the decision to educate some youth at the Shelter and not others.

Observations

Berendt, (1992) and Dillard, (1985) note that good observation includes all the physical senses, particularly hearing and seeing, and also touch, smell, and taste, empathic human sensitivities, mastery of language, and spiritual awareness. Observation could then be said to be a whole-person activity. Humans, young and old, rich and poor, listen and watch for signals that can be related to from personal experiences. If humans do not relate to an experience more likely than not, the observational information will be

ignored. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) discuss a continuum of observation from total observer to total participant. They note that each inquiry requires the inquirer to find an appropriate role to play along that continuum. The researcher observed interactions between the current educator at LCYS emergency shelter school and her students.

Because of the transient nature of three of the four participants in this study, the original plans to observe interactions between the Shelter students and the Shelter instructor over a three month period of time had to be modified. Only two observations were possible. The researcher attempted to find other participants for the study, but was unsuccessful due to the strict requirements set by the IRB. Because the researcher had been an employee of Loma County Youth Services for the past eight years, she knew Loma County youth residing at the Shelter. The IRB set the guideline that the researcher conducts the study using participants unknown to her. Loma County youth in Shelter placement generally reside for longer periods of time, at the Shelter, then out-of-county youth. Three of the four participants were out-of-county youth. The first observation took place October 24, 2005 and the second the next day.

Setting

This study was conducted at the LCYS Shelter. Situated on the edge of a city of 40,000 residents, it is licensed to house a maximum of 17 youth between the ages of 10-18 at any given time. Two hundred seventy-five youth called the Shelter home during the 2004 calendar year. Many youth housed at the Shelter are victims of abuse and neglect. Approximately 70 of these 275 received educational services at the Shelter for school year 2004-2005. The Shelter was the logical site to conduct this research as public school

teachers at regular school sites have no way of knowing which of their students have been victimized by child abuse and/or neglect. Since student participants live at the Shelter, access for interviewing did not violate confidentiality laws by having the youth singled out for the interview process.

The Shelter is located in a rural setting, near this mid-size Oklahoma city, and sits on four acres of land. The Shelter, in reality, is a house, a reasonably attractive seven-bedroom house made of robust and sturdy brick. Nestled in a grove of oak, pine, and elm trees, the Shelter appears more like a retreat-type facility than a Shelter for abused and homeless youth.

The Shelter school “site” is part of the multi-purpose room at the shelter. The multi-purpose room is about 100 yards in length and 38 yards wide. At one end of the multi-purpose room is a television set, a pool table, living room furniture, a desk and the LCYS director’s office. The other end of the multi-purpose room is used as the Shelter school. In the “site” are several bookcases and two round tables with approximately six chairs around each table. Obsolete computers, lining the far wall, were donated several years ago by community individuals. A multi-purpose room is partitioned off for the purpose of providing educational services for the youth. The partition is in reality nothing more than an accordion-type room divider made of a vinyl material and placed on metal tracks attached to the ceiling. The partition blocks the Shelter’s television set and the front part of the multi-purpose room where the LCYS staff complete the paperwork required by state mandates. This partition also blocks the director’s office. Although the view is blocked, nothing separates the youth and the shelter staff from the sounds that filter back and forth from school to Shelter, Shelter to school.

The nearest public elementary school is approximately two miles from the shelter; some shelter youth are bused by the LEA to that school, but others are not. A middle school (sixth and seventh grades) is also located adjacent to this elementary school. Some Shelter youth are educated at this site. The state social worker decides where the youth are educated. State social workers from all over Oklahoma place youth in the LCYS. After placement, they are enrolled in school to comply with the compulsory attendance law. Those enrolled in the Shelter's class are taught only three hours a day. Neither the Shelter staff, nor the Shelter instructors are told what criteria are used by the state social worker to determine where the youth will attend school.

When youth are brought to the shelter by the state social worker, or by the police, a common way to transport custody youth, the school records are not with the child. The Shelter instructor is uninformed of the youth's educational status. The Shelter instructor does not know if the child should receive special education services, where the student is academically, and other information about the student's education that would benefit the instructor in developing an appropriate educational plan.

LCYS policy states the maximum length of time to house youth in the Shelter is two weeks. Because of a lack of foster home placements for the youth, most custody youth remain for longer periods of time in emergency youth shelters throughout the State. The state social worker is responsible for residential placement of the youth. In 2002, one youth was educated at the Shelter school site for 200 consecutive school days. The length of time for students to be educated at the Shelter can vary from one day to several months, with the average length being 30 consecutive school days.

Data Analysis Procedures

Interviews were transcribed verbatim using a transcriber with awareness of the confidential need of the participants. Schatzman and Strauss (1973) claim that qualitative data analysis primarily entails classifying things, persons, and events and the properties which characterize them. Merriam (1988) and Marshall and Rossman (1999) contend that data collection and analysis must be a simultaneous process in qualitative research. Jacob (1987) states that data analysis by ethnographers is achieved through the use of index cards and codes. Qualitative researchers use these codes to identify and describe patterns and themes from the perspective of the participants (Agar, 1980). The data were organized categorically and chronologically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded. A list of major themes that surfaced was addressed, discussed and analyzed.

Strategies for Validity and Reliability

The “trustworthiness” of the findings was ensured based on the four criteria identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

- 1) Credibility. This criterion is an assessment of the believability or credibility of the research findings from the perspective of the members or study participants. The inclusion of member checking into the findings, that is, gaining feedback on results from the participants, is one method of increasing credibility. Credibility is analogous to internal validity, the approximate truth about casual relationships, or the impact of one variable on another. Member check—two participants, one youth and one teacher, were asked to review a summary of a transcribed tapes to ensure validity of the study.
- 2) Transferability. Refers to the degree that findings can be transferred or generalized to other settings, contexts, or populations. A qualitative

researcher can enhance transferability by detailing the research methods and contexts that underlie the study. Transferability is analogous to the external validity.

- 3) Dependability. Pertains to the importance of the researcher accounting for or describing the changing contexts and circumstances that are fundamental to qualitative research. Dependability may be enhanced by altering the research design as new findings emerge during data collection. Dependability is analogous to reliability, the consistency of observing the same finding under similar circumstances. The researcher read and reread data looking for central tendencies, coding the data until themes emerged.
- 4) Confirmability. Refers to the extent that the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others. Strategies for enhancing confirmability include searching for negative cases that run contrary to most findings, and conducting a data audit to pinpoint potential areas of bias or distortion. Confirmability is analogous to objectivity, the extent to which a researcher is aware of or accounts for subjectivity or bias. The researcher addressed subjectivity throughout the research process. Research logs were kept to ground personal feeling from observations.

Merriam (1988) states the strategy to achieve external validity is to provide rich, thick, detailed descriptions to ensure that anyone interested in transferability would have a framework to make comparisons. LeComp and Goetz (1984) state several techniques used to ensure reliability in qualitative research. They believe it is the researcher's responsibility to provide a detailed account of the focus of the study, what the role of the

researcher is to be, the informant's position and basis for selection, and the context in which data will be collected.

Ethical Issues and Approval to Conduct the Study

Research, (Locke et al., 1982; Marshall and Rossman, 1989; Merriam, 1988; and Spradley, 1980) addresses the need for ethical considerations. In any research, the researcher has an obligation to respect the participants. According to Spradley (1980), participant observation invades the lives of those being observed. Safeguards need to be employed to protect the rights of those who agree to participate. The first step to accomplish adequate safeguards was ensuring approval from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study. All research objectives were stated verbally and in writing so that the participants would be clear on the purpose and intent of the study, as well as how the research data was going to be used. The youth in the custody of the state of Oklahoma and the youth's case manager, CASA worker, or attorney, were asked to sign written permission agreements to participate (See Attachments 2). Third, all participants were informed of all data collection questions (See Attachments 3A, 3B). A summary of the transcriptions, written interpretations and reports were made available to all informants if they requested them. The participants' rights, interests, and wishes were considered when decisions were made regarding reporting of the data and, all participants' identities remained strictly confidential.

Approval of the Institutional Review Board

The IRB works closely with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and other federal government mandates to ensure that all research involving human subjects does not harm the participants. The researcher completed an application

process complying with the mandates, policies, and laws that ensure the safety of the subjects involved.

The IRB regularly reviews requests for approval to conduct research that involves vulnerable categories of subjects, such as children, prisoners, pregnant women, or handicapped or mentally disabled persons. Children fall under the special vulnerability section, making consideration of involving them as research subjects particularly important. To safeguard their interests and to protect them from harm, special ethical and regulatory considerations are in place for reviewing research involving children. Because the subjects in this study were children and wards of the state, greater federal safeguards had to be guaranteed.

In all cases, the IRB must determine that adequate provisions have been made for soliciting the assent of children and the permission of their parents or guardians. Because the children in this study were wards of the state, adequate provisions for gaining assent and consent for the youth to participate were required. A full-board review of the application was needed to address these concerns. The status of the subjects required compliance with 45 CFR 46 Subpart D, section 409:

- a) Children who are wards of the state or any other agency, institution, or entity can be included in research approved under §46.406 or §46.407 only if such research is:
 - (1) Related to their status as wards; or
 - (2) Conducted in schools, camps, hospitals, institutions, or similar settings in which the majority of children involved as subjects are not wards.

If the research is approved under paragraph (a) of this section, the IRB shall require appointment of an advocate for each child who is a ward, in addition to any other individual acting on behalf of the child as guardian or in loco parentis. One individual may serve as advocate for more than one child. The advocate shall be an individual who has the background and experience to act in, and agrees to act in, the best interests of the child for the duration of the child's participation in the research and who is not associated in any way (except in the role as advocate or member of the IRB) with the research, the investigator(s), or the guardian organization.

To address this ruling, the IRB required that an advocate be present during the youth assent process. The researcher presented the assent form to the youth in the presence of the advocate, and then left the room. The advocate remained with the youth and asked if all of his/her questions were answered. Then the advocate witnessed the youth's assent. The youth were then presented with a card containing the contact information of the advocate and the IRB chair so they would know who to contact and how if they had any questions or concerns.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is especially useful when attempting to understand research participants' experiences or meanings assigned to their world. It can be thought of as a process of intuitively analyzing and interpreting data. Starting after the interviews have been transcribed, it is used to identify themes or units of meaning within data that have been collected.

The construction of themes for this study was done in a systematic way, starting with immersion, which involved the researcher becoming familiar with the transcribed

texts by reading and rereading them several times (Kvale, 1996). Next, from the transcribed interviews and observations, examples of experiences and meanings were listed. This information is presented in the form of direct quotations or paraphrased common ideas. Aronson (1994) states these examples essentially entail the generation of categories. Next, the researcher took what she understood and interpreted from the data, and placed it into categories and themes.

According to Aronson (1994), the themes that emerge within the analysis form a comprehensive picture of the collective meaning and experiences of the participants. In this study, four identified themes formed a coherent pattern when threaded together. The data were read and reread, categories that did not fit, or seemed to be less useful, were set aside for possible future research studies. Kvale (1996) sees the reading and rereading as a way to establish the stability of the themes. Maione & Chenail (1999) also see the value of reading and re-reading as a general qualitative methodology that allows for the development of themes. Data were read and reread in this study, forming categories and themes until saturation was reached. Relationships between categories were constructed and a more holistic impression of the results was generated.

According to Chenail:

Qualitative researchers have a habit of focusing on what is familiar and central to the study at hand...What may be missed through this study of inquiry is an opportunity for investigators to know what might not be known to them prior to the study...Also, the margins of a project often provide some of the most interesting and informative patterns for investigators if they include a curiosity for

the exception in their work and a hesitancy to explain quickly that which might turn out to be unexplainable. (p. 44)

Last, the themes were related to the literature and by referring to the literature the researcher expanded the information, allowing and influencing inferences to be drawn from the data.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

According to Lofland (1974), data collection and analysis strategies are similar across qualitative methods, but reporting the findings is oftentimes diverse. The results of this study are not found in a scientific report full of numerical data; rather, the results are presented in a thick, rich, descriptive, narrative format.

The contents of this chapter will include: interviews with the Shelter instructors, interviews with the Shelter students, and observations of the interactions between the students and teacher at the Shelter setting. Using the instructors' and youths' interview protocols as a guide, the researcher collected data that are presented here as the word of the participants. The interview information from the instructors is presented first, followed by the youths' interview information. Lastly, observational data between the Shelter teacher and the students is presented using a thick, descriptive, narrative format.

Instructor Interviews

Shelter Teacher Interview Protocol Question (a)

The interviews began by asking the four instructors (Susan, Lori, Mary, and Sam) to talk about themselves. They were asked how long they had taught school, how long they had taught at the shelter, why they choose this type of work, what motivated them to continue, and if teaching at the youth shelter was what they expected. These questions were asked to build rapport between the interviewee and the researcher.

Susan

“I have been teaching nearly 30 years. I took some time off, you know, for children and family. I have done mostly special education, regular education, and have taught from kindergarten through adults.” Susan indicated she had taught at the Shelter for three years. When asked why she had chosen teaching as a career, Susan stated, “You might not believe this is true, but I had some rather poor teachers in the past and I vowed and declared that, if I did become a teacher, I would not be like some teachers that I had.” She reported teachers from her past were “devastating and demoralizing” to their students, indicating, “They treated children so poorly, so unfairly, and I would say almost abusive.” When asked what motivated Susan to continue teaching, she responded, “I love it. You think it would maybe crazy but I absolutely love this. I enjoy it.” Susan was asked if teaching at the Shelter was what she expected. She responded that her experience as a special educator helped her with Shelter teaching but she does not receive the support [from the LEA] that she needs. Susan indicated, “Because it would be like, ‘what am I doing,’ ‘I am here,’ ‘what do I do,’ and there is nobody here to ask, tell or whatever.”

Lori

When asked about herself, Lori indicated that she was the mother of two biological children, she had adopted a child eight years ago, and she was currently in the process of adopting another child. She indicated her father had been a sergeant in the Army and her mother was an English teacher, then a school counselor. Lori reported, “This is my third year to teach and I taught two years at the Youth Shelter.” Lori was asked why she chose this line of work. She reported:

I came by it quite naturally with my father, being a master sergeant and working with young people, and my mother being a school teacher and then a counselor and working with young people and she particularly worked with at risk youth, so I think it came naturally.

Lori reported she is motivated to continue teaching because, "I really feel like the youth in our society don't have much of a say. They need to be empowered." When asked if teaching at the Shelter was what she expected, Lori stated, "You know it is going to be different with different kids. It is going to be different with the kids who remained at home who never were in the system and these kids." She went on to say:

It is kind of like trying to take a pot that has been unfired and using it in your day-to-day life, you know you can't carry water in it or even put it on the stove and use it to cook with, it's not going to work very well.

Mary

Mary began by telling the researcher she had been a teacher for 15 years. She reported, "Part of that time I was a school counselor and I taught mainly learning disabilities at several different levels and at different schools and, additionally, I was a school counselor for about four years and that is more or less my background." She indicated she taught at the Shelter for one year. Mary reported:

I guess I am just kind of a natural born teacher. I started teaching Sunday school at about age 16 and you know I have always thought maybe I went into the special education area because I did have a sister who was disabled. She has several different disabilities due to a brain tumor, but I don't know that I

consciously decided to do that [teach] per say, but I think that is probably why I got pushed in this direction.

Mary was asked what motivated her to continue teaching. She reported her past experience with her sister was a factor, indicating she did not have a conscious desire to teach when she was growing up. When asked if teaching at the Shelter was what she expected, Mary reported:

I don't think you could ever totally know what to expect with some of the kids that come in [to the Shelter]. Every time you think you've about seen it all someone else will come in, another situation, another form of abuse or neglect or something that you haven't seen.

Sam

Sam described himself in this way: "I am 26 years old and I come from a family of educators. I graduated in December of 2002 from Oklahoma State University with a degree in education." He went on to say:

My whole family is involved in education and, since I graduated in December, there were not a whole lot of job opportunities just because it was right in the middle of the school year. I happened to be getting married; I needed a job fast.

Sam indicated he taught only six months at the Shelter, from January of 2003 to May of 2003. He reported three years current teaching experience. When asked why he chose to teach, Sam reported, "I really enjoy working with children and getting across the importance of Social Studies." He indicated he was motivated to continue teaching because he cared about the students and he cared about the area he taught. Sam was asked if teaching at the Shelter was what he expected. He reported, "Since my mother

taught special education for 18 years, I have looked at education differently my whole life and so I knew that children need an opportunity and a chance to learn.”

Shelter Teacher Interview Protocol Question (b)

The researcher asked the four instructors the following question, “All of us who have taught have students who stay with us, so to speak; those students who remain in our thoughts and minds even if they are no longer physically present in our lives. Can you think of such a student?” This question was asked to examine the teacher/student relationship.

Susan

Susan told a story of a former student, “The reason I think about him is because I knew him before he came here. At the high school in the afternoon, I know this is totally different, but he is one high school student who sort of attached himself to me.” Susan went on to say:

He would come see me a lot at the high school. We would talk and I would help him out with work over the summer. When I came out here and here he was at the shelter, I thought what is he doing here?

Susan reported, “He is now in another shelter, in another town. Now, it’s as if he doesn’t care anymore and I fear he may drop out of school.” Susan indicated, “This child hurt beyond his capability. You know. A lot of sadness there. A lot of anger. He is not getting the help he needs and I have seen him just deteriorate over the last few months.”

Lori

Lori stated:

Well this one young man that I am thinking of really stole my heart and he is probably now about 14 maybe 13. He had been in and out of the Department of Human Services custody for several years; he had been in the shelter several times.

I taught him here at the shelter several times, and he would draw these really negative pictures, daggers and all of this anger stuff on his pictures. He loved to learn and he wouldn't do anything to get negative attention from me; however, he did it throughout the shelter. I just thought of planting seeds and that is what I tried to do with him. I tried to do everything with him emotionally.

She continued:

I mean here at the shelter the basic food need gets met. That is not a problem. That was never a worry. He had all the good food that he could eat and I don't remember him having any eating issues whatsoever, but he would get negative attention every chance that he could.

Lori stated this student was an on-going part of her thought processes because:

I felt that I had reached him some how. I think by looking in his eyes, because it was like when he would be going somewhere, maybe to a new foster home, I would give him a hug and tell him to try to do well at the new placement, but then it was just like 'see you next time.'

Mary

Mary told a story of a student who made her feel special.

One thing that was really kind of special to me was one of my former students came up to me in a grocery store and said, "I am so sorry I acted so badly in your

classes. You were so good to me and so patient with me and I was just going through a lot at that time,” it really made me feel good that she sought me out to talk to me.

Mary indicated she worries about her students:

Some of them I know have been arrested and are in the prison system and that is always troublesome to me. I don't take responsibility for that in any way, but I always wondered if myself or someone else could have done or said anything that might have made a difference. But I think, you know, for the most part I feel like I did the best I could under the circumstances I had and the knowledge I had at the time.

Sam

Sam tells a story of a student he found very confusing, “Right whenever I think we would have a good relationship and everything he would just kind of flip out.” Sam indicated a team approach with a principal and counselor could have benefited this student. Sam felt, “He was obviously very frustrated.” Sam went on to say:

He was really, really wanting to see his step-mother, and there were kind of some issues there and so, one time, whenever we had a break, he was wanting to use a phone book and I said, “No, let’s go outside and play basketball” or something like that, trying to kind of redirect him. He was like, “No, I need to use the phone.” I was like, “now is not a good time” So I just kept trying to not say “no” kind of redirecting. He was very frustrated.

Shelter Teacher Interview Protocol Question (c)

The researcher asked the teachers to respond to the following questions:

The Shelter has many youth who have received educational services on-site. Most of these youth come to the Shelter with unresolved issues that may impact their educational development. What do you find to be the most effective way to educate these students? How do you handle behavior problems, if and when they arise? What concerns you the most about this population of students?

Susan

Well, sometimes it takes you a little while to determine what might be going on. So, depending on how they come to me the very first part of the day, I can usually look in their face and see if there is anger there, sadness, depression, tears, and sometimes you have to learn to read those faces, because they don't always talk and a lot of them shutdown and are not going to say anything.

Susan indicated, "Usually I have to sort of, play it by ear. I have to make a judgment call sometimes. Okay, what are we going to do, education right now, or are we going to do something else first. Maybe we better do something not to do with school." Susan indicated many Shelter students "really don't like school." She handles this problem by:

So, first of all I try to talk about them and get the basics. I say, "Well the judge shouldn't have let you go, and we don't start right off with school. A lot of times we just talk about what things are happening and/or, by the way, did you hear this on the news, did you watch the TV?" So, I try to make them feel comfortable, that I am not going to be the tyrant. Some students are very resistant to authority figures. I usually do a little bit of reading the newspaper, watching TV and the news because a lot of them [the students] don't know what is going on in the outside world.

Lori

Lori stated kindness is the key to helping Shelter youth. She reports, Those kids do so, so well with a teacher who is kind. With a teacher who gives them their emotional needs, that gives them their emotional strengths that say ‘You’re a good person.’ You know, let that kid lean up against you and give them a hug. You’re going to have to reach the kids where they are and, if you listen to them, they will tell you where they are.

Lori continued, “My honest struggle ever with children's behavior whether at home or in the classroom or at the shelter, the only struggle ever is motivation.” Lori believes

That is the only thing, motivation. They are motivated to be bad, because this enables them to get attention. It is almost like a snowball effect, the more you discipline them the more they require it because they are getting their attention needs met that way.

She indicated the best way to control behavior was, “A role model, I don't know how we can pull it off, but it takes a village [for the Shelter students].”

Mary

Mary indicated the best way to work with the Shelter students was:

Well, just the one-on-one contact I think is important. You know, I think any kind of education when your adult/child ratio is small, the better the situation is. I also try finding what they’re interested in and trying to tie it into all the subjects, helping them to see how they use a particular set of information in life, help them apply it to their life, application is important.

Mary spoke about unresolved issues, saying:

It is just kind of hard to get them to see that they can rise above it. I think that is good to do. I think, if they can see people as examples that have risen above their situation in life or at least if they can experience a mentoring type relationship.

Mary gave the following example to clarify her point:

Like, a particular child saying their interested in carpentry. You could show him or her that they need to learn how to measure and calculate and so forth to do that particular job. I think this is an effective way of doing it.

Sam

Sam found the lack of consistency of the Shelter student population somewhat difficult to manage. He stated:

You don't know how many or how long [the students will be in Shelter placement] as it changes daily. I don't think it was ever the same any day, so you cannot go in with that hard and fast lesson plans or anything like that or you would really be frustrated and disappointed.

He continued:

The best thing that I have found was to have a lot of different things ready to do because I did not know if there would be one child or hundreds of children or just whatever. Would they be a fifth grader or would they be a junior in High School. So I would try to have as many different things as I could. The other thing was, I would kind of put it on them and gave them as many choices as I could.

Sam indicated he asked the youth questions, "Like, what do you feel you need to be working on right now? Do you need to be working on your times table? Do you need to be studying history? Do you need to be working on reading?"

Sam indicated this approach worked for him because:

I think, for one thing, those kids have been told “NO” so much that it kind of put them a little bit on my side and the other thing is that it gave them more choices and that is something I am sure they don’t get a lot of either. So, I think both of those things kind of set up the day to be a little bit better.

Shelter Teacher Interview Protocol Question (d)

The researcher asked this final question to ensure that the interviewees had been given an opportunity to disclose all information they felt relevant to their Shelter teaching experiences. The question was stated as, “Is there anything else that you would like to tell me? General concerns about the youth? How could systems—child welfare and educational systems— work to improve educational outcomes? What do you see that could help these students in general?”

Susan

Susan had concerns about the LEA’s lack of regard for the Shelter students’ well-being:

If you’re going to have school out here all day, [this is not happening currently, as students are taught by the teacher for three hours a day only] you have got to make sure we have books. I don’t have every grade level book. You know, or the books that we use in [the local public school setting]. I don’t have every social studies book used here. I don’t have every English book that is used here. Every reading book either.

She went on to state:

I am using old math books; I am using one from a couple of years ago. I know it is basically the same thing, but it is not the new one that they are using now. Now years ago when I asked for books I learned my lesson I don't ask very often now for books.

Susan had concerns for her own well-being stating, "I don't know how to explain this. I am a teacher, but I am not paid like other teachers in the district. It is set up more like a substitute hourly wage." She stated she does not receive benefits as other teachers in the LEA receive.

Lori

Lori stated concerns for the Shelter students' future. She felt poverty was at the root of the problem. She indicated:

A Department of Human Services custody youth is going to feel different, inferior, and society makes them feel that way. You know, what person of any standing would put themselves in the shoes of that person walking through those doors [at the department of Human Services] asking for food stamps or any other kind of help. They just don't do it.

Lori believed public officials do not care about the future of individuals such as the Shelter youth saying:

When we go to the voting polls, look at who's in office. They don't listen, they don't care, they're not looking out for them [the poor] and I don't know necessarily that they don't care so much; it is that they are totally ignorant. They are totally ignorant. They do nothing that brings them into contact with those people [the poor]. That is why they're so shocked at Hurricane Katrina, the

horrible way those people were treated. They can't imagine being treated that way themselves.

Lori stated:

So the kid turns 18. So they're no longer in the Department of Human Services custody, but what about that baggage they picked up, where does it go? When do they [the Shelter students] get to feel like they have a say or that they're equal?

Mary

Mary, like Susan, had concerns that the LEA does not treat students or employees equal. She stated:

You know one thing I have found frustrating as a teacher out here, as I am just looking at these books, those are the same books. They are leftovers nobody wanted and I think that, if there was a good curriculum going, that it would help. And, I know the teacher who is currently teaching is also a teacher at the high school and does have access to materials that I personally did not and I am sure that probably does help because she can bring materials from her classroom there and work with the kids.

Mary went on:

In fact, one of the reasons I no longer teach out here, is I was spending so much time looking for materials outside my paid time that it got to a point where it just was not a feasible thing for me to continue to do.

I think that a good curriculum out here with updated materials, attractive materials would help. When I look at these computers, these are the same old ones. They are outdated and, most of the time, they don't work or a lot of the time they don't

work and that is frustrating to the kids and frustrating to the teacher and I think if they had good equipment, good materials and of course a good teacher the students would do better.

Mary continued:

You can take lousy material and, if you have a good teacher, you might have some success, but I think it would be very helpful to have good materials that are attractive to the kids that are easy to use. I ended up using a lot of adult education materials because I have a good friend who is the director of adult education and she sort of punted a few things to me which she had multiple copies of and, in fact, a lot of those kids probably would have qualified for adult education anyway or eventually would.

Mary asked, "How do you motivate someone that has already decided they're not going to work? You know, I don't know." Mary stated concerns over low pay, lack of benefits, and lack of support by the LEA.

Sam

Sam stated:

I think that is when you got to get with your counselor or some other teachers or the administration and try to set up a situation where they can have success. You know it is not just about whether or not they pass or fail; you might have to figure out a way for them to get some help.

He would like to see more involvement from others, to ensure the Shelter student's success.

Student Interviews

Shelter Student's Interview Protocol Question (a)

The interviews began by asking the four students (Karen, Britney, Tina, and Anna) about themselves. They were asked: How old are you, what grade are you in. What do you liked to do? How long have you been at the Shelter? What, if anything, did they like about being placed at the Shelter? If you could, what would you change about the Shelter? These questions were asked to built rapport and trust between the interviewee and the researcher.

Karen

This was Karen's first time at this Shelter. Karen stated:

I am 17 years old and in the 10th grade. Well, I was born in Clinton, Oklahoma. I moved around a lot. I have two sisters. I have one older sister and one younger sister. I moved to Sand Springs two years ago and then I moved to Tulsa, then Catoosa, and then here.

She reported, "I like to do a lot of things." She told the researcher that she liked country music and she had been placed at the Shelter for six days. "I like it at the Shelter, I am treated very well."

Britney

Britney indicated, "I am 10 years old and in the fourth grade." She reported she enjoys reading but she does not have a favorite author. This was Britney's first time at the Shelter. She had been there "a couple of days." Britney stated, "They let us listen to music and stuff." She reported she would change bedtime, indicating, "Going to bed at 9 o'clock is too early for me."

Tina

Tina indicated, "I am 11 years old and in the 5th grade." She reported, "I like to be nice. I am a hard worker. I try to be respectful as much as I can and I like helping people." She reported, "I like to go to the movies. I like going skating. I like going swimming. I like to paint." She indicated she had been at the Shelter two weeks and this was her first time there. Tina reported she likes the Shelter, "Because you can do anything that we ask to do. They let us do it. They let us go outside when we ask and at the other Shelters they don't let you do anything." Tina stated there wasn't anything about the Shelter that she would change.

Anna

Anna stated, "I am 16 years old. I am in the tenth grade. I like to sing, dance, playing basketball, and learning. I have been at the youth shelter for two weeks." She indicated, "I have been here four times," when asked if she had been to the Shelter before. Anna reported, "I like almost everything. It is not strict at all. You can do whatever you want. They don't say anything. There is a pool table. There is a computer. You can go outside and play basketball. I like the staff, some of them anyways," when asked about her Shelter experiences thus far.

Shelter Student's Interview Protocol Question (b)

The following questions were asked: "Tell me about school. How do you feel about your education so far in your life? How has going to school helped or hurt you? How could the people who work in schools understand you better? What worries or concerns you the most, if anything, about schools?"

Karen

When Karen was asked about school, she responded, “I would rather not go to school. Then again, what kid wants to go to school?” She indicated she had learned from school and school had helped her, but stated, “I get bored at school.” When asked how the people who work in schools could understand her better, Karen indicated she was “not sure.” Karen indicated she moved often while with her family and while in the custody of the state. She reported each school had different books and ways of teaching. She reported becoming behind in school, but was able to maintain in math, a subject she likes. Karen worries about not graduating from high school. “I am only a sophomore now. When I turn 18, I will be at the end of my sophomore year.”

Britney

“The first time I went to school, I was really happy. I was waiting to go.” She reported, “Other than school, I would probably be out there doing some stupid stuff. Since I got into school I wouldn't be out there smoking or nothing. So that is how school helps me.” She continued, “My principal, counselor and teachers” were people in schools that understood her and helped her. She indicated, “School worries me.” When asked what about school worried her, she said, “Sometimes these girls beat my friend up.” Britney also stated, “I worry about having to go to school with a black eye and sometimes I tell people it came from a door.”

Tina

When Tina was asked about school she indicated, “It is fun.” Tina stated she does not believe schools understand “how I feel.” She stated, “They ask us sometimes why I am hurt and I tell them and they still don't understand it.” Tina indicated while she likes

going to school, moving often makes school hard for her. She replied, “Schools hurt me because I have no choice on where I go to school.”

Anna

“I have been in several different schools.” She reported that she went to Tulsa and she just moved from Tulsa. She went to Cushing, to Pogue, and to Morrison. “I have been to a lot of different schools. I have been to the Stillwater school and, out of all the schools I have been to, I think Ripley was the best just because it was a smaller school. I played basketball there and I started there in basketball.”

Anna indicated a smaller school is the best ‘fit’ for her. When asked about her education thus far in her life, Anna stated

I am in the tenth grade. It is not really good this year because I had some difficulties. I have not been to school for like two months.

Going to school has helped me a lot. I used to hate school when I was little, but now I love it. I mean, if the situation was better, then I would still be in school right now and doing things other kids do.

She said:

How would they understand me better? Let’s see, well, I am like a quiet person and whenever I have a question I just raise my hand and I am like yes over here. I mean they understand me; it is just whenever it comes to tests that I take and I study; study and study but still don't pass the test. I could study, study, and study and still not pass it. I have stuff memorized, but they do the questions all backwards as how they have it. Yes, I don't like that.

Shelter Student's Interview Protocol Question (c)

The Shelter students were then asked the following questions: All of us who have been to school have adults who work for school systems who stay with us, so to speak; those teachers, coaches, principals, custodians, or others involved with schools that remain in our thoughts and minds even if this person is no longer physically present in our lives. Can you think of a person? Tell me about this person. Why is this person important to you? What did this person do that made him or her special to you? Is there anyone who did not treat you well? Who was this person? How were you treated?

Karen

“My first grade teacher. Well, she understood me and my problems. She was like really nice to everybody and then one day out of the blue her husband kills her.” Karen reported a short time after this she was moved to a new home. She indicated she was unable to finish her first grade year at this school, but her teacher had remained in her thoughts. She reported the school did not address the death with the students. When asked how she had learned of her teacher's fate, Karen responded, “Well, I think it was on the news. But, she lived 24 hours after it happened. She was shot and I will never forget that.” When asked if any one at school had treated her poorly, Karen responded, “This one girl that wanted to pick a fight with me.” She reported she was beaten-up by this person on the way home from school. She indicated she told her babysitter but did not tell the school or her foster mother.

Britney

In second grade my favorite teacher was Mrs. Armstrong. She was there to help kids that really grow up real hard, to help them with their anger. She had some

little fake dollars. We got dollars we could get into the treasure box. She would have snacks and stuff.

Britney reported a difficult time with her first grade teacher, indicating, "I didn't like my first grade teacher. Because she used to laugh about me like I wasn't like everybody else and then she used to treat me really bad."

Tina

Yes, my teacher Mr. Parker. He always cared and would try to get us inside Department of Human Services and when we came back he gave us some money and he did everything he could for us and he is one of the good teachers. He had been working at the same school for 25 years.

When asked to describe a person from school she felt close to, she indicated it was Mr. Parker, her 5th grade teacher. When asked if anyone at school did not treat her well, Tina indicated,

There is a girl name Terry who don't treat me well because I got mad at her because she said my daddy molested me and I haven't ever seen my father in years because he died five years ago and she told the whole school that I got molested by him and then she said that I go to her house and I steal food and I don't, so I got pretty mad and we almost got into a fight but I just cooled myself off.

Tina said she talked to a counselor at school who helped her.

Anna

Anna spoke of her math teacher as her favorite teacher. This was last year, when Anna was in the 9th grade:

Yes, she broke it down; she took her time and, if she had any questions, she went back over it. But I never had any questions, because she broke it down right the first time and you get attached to the way she breaks it down and I could see and I could hear things and be able to understand it.

When asked if anyone at school mistreated her, Anna reported, “Mrs. Mason. Because, okay, I was in the first grade and she asked me a hard, like an eighth grade question and I didn't know it and she sent me back to kindergarten.” She felt she was treated unfairly by this person.

Shelter Student's Interview Protocol Question (d)

The students were then asked: Is there anything else you would like to tell me? What could the people in your life do to improve your situation? How could the child welfare system and the educational system work to improve your educational experiences? What worries you about your future?

Karen

“We [Karen and siblings] moved so much that I got behind.” She felt moving was the reason she was behind in school. She worried because she will be 18 and only in the 10th grade. Karen reported when she turns 18, she will be moving to live with an aunt. She indicated this person lives in Missouri, and she cares about her. Karen also indicated she was depressed and believes DHS had done nothing to help her with this problem, yet reported DHS has done a good job meeting her basic needs of food and shelter. [Based on my experiences, I found myself questioning the veracity of this comment as Karen had just disclosed that DHS had not helped her with her problems.]

Britney

Britney indicated she had moved many times. She does not get to see her brothers and her sisters. She reported, “I am separated from my other brothers and sisters and I worry about them.” She would like to be closer to her siblings and to remain in one school. She felt DHS could do a better job.

Tina

Tina would like to have more contact with her step-mother and her siblings. She reported, “Whenever I call my step-mother, she tells me to keep my head up and I will get through this and she is trying to get me back, me and my little sister and that is how I get a better feeling and stuff.” She indicated her family keeps her “encouraged.” She reported, “Keeping my head up is like get through it and get out of here.” This advice was from the family she cared about. She would like to reside with her step-mother, but indicated this is not possible as DHS will not allow for this to happen.

Anna

Anna reported, “I am going into nursing. But people say my voice is beautiful, so why not just get into singing, and I would make it.” She indicated that her sister cares about her. She reported she is able to maintain in a placement longer when she is with her sister. She indicated she had relayed this information to her DHS caseworker and to the judge. Anna knows these individuals hold the key to her placement and worries she will never be placed in a “good” home with her sister. She indicated that DHS has not helped her in achieving her goals.

Student and Teacher Descriptions

The students at the shelter look much like other teenagers. If not in the Shelter facility, one would be unaware that these youth are victims of abuse and/or neglect and were being housed in an emergency youth shelter. By all accounts, these youth are homeless.

Tina, the youngest of the three Shelter students, appeared to be around ten and was of average height and weight. She had shoulder-length medium-brown hair, matted, and in need of a good brushing. When she smiled, dimples formed on each side of her face. Her eyes were light brown. She was dressed in blue jean Capri pants, ankle socks and a blue tee-shirt with writing on it. Her fingernails were painted in a French manicure style.

Anna appeared to be 15 or 16 years of age. Her medium curly, brown hair with blonde streaks added reached her shoulders. Her skin was light, and blemish free. Her eyes were huge, round, and hazel. She was about 5'2" tall and slightly overweight. She wore a tight, low cut, tee-shirt, low-rider blue jeans, and tennis shoes. She had on brown eyeliner, tan eye shadow, blush, lip gloss and mascara. She smelled of a flowery fragrance. [I know it was her as the only time I noticed the odor was when she walked by me on her way to the pencil sharpener.]

Another female student, Karen, appeared to be the oldest of the group. She was around 16 or so years of age, with small delicate features and small thin lips. Her hair was light brown. It was parted in the middle with curls around her small pointed chin. Her eyes were small and appeared blue; she had light brown lashes and brows. Her most prominent feature was her nose, somewhat bent in the middle. At about 5'5" she had

small build. She wore blue jeans and a yellow striped tee-shirt along with leopard print house shoes.

Susan, the teacher, was about 45 years of age. She had blonde hair, medium length (just below the ear), straight, and cut in a pageboy-bob like style. She wore reading glasses whenever reading was required. Slim and attractive, she appeared to take care of her health.

Classroom Observations

Because of the transient nature of the four participants, the original plan to observe interactions between the Shelter students and the Shelter instructor over a three month period of time was impossible to achieve. Only two observations were possible over a two day period. The first observation took place October 24, 2005 and the second on the next day. The observations were made after the students had been interviewed. October was the intended starting month for the observations with the ending date originally stated as the middle of December. Only one of the original four student participants was attending Shelter school by the end of October, making more observations impossible.

October 24, 2005
8:20 -11:30

8:20 A.M., October 24, 2005. Previously, I had made arrangements to observe the public school teacher as she taught the youth in Shelter placement. [Some youth, but not all, attend public school while in Shelter placement; thus, the need for a Shelter teacher. The youth's state caseworker decides which youth attend public school and which attend Shelter school.] A staff member smiled and greeted me. I thanked her and settled myself towards the back of the multi-purpose room. [When the back part of the

multi-purpose room is partitioned off, it becomes the school room where the youth are educated from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on regular school days.] The partition is, in reality, nothing more than an accordion-type room divider made of a vinyl material, placed on metal tracks attached to the ceiling. The partition blocked the Shelter's television set and the front part of the multi purpose room where the Youth Guidance Specialists (specialists) do the majority of the required paperwork. The partition also blocked the director's office. Although the view was blocked, nothing separated the students and teacher from the sounds that filtered back and forth from school to Shelter.

The Shelter's three students who were not in public school on this day, Anna, Karen and Tina, ranged in age from 10 to 17 years. [All were homeless and currently in the custody of the state.]

At the beginning of this school day, the students were anything but quiet. Banging, drumming, hitting, and talking were the norm. Anna hit the table with both fists. Tina dropped her pencil and crawled under the table to retrieve it.

The teacher called the class to order, telling the youth it's time to "get serious and do their schoolwork." The three students responded and took a chair around the tables that had been placed in a 10' x 20' section of the Shelter—the section that was partitioned for school purposes.

The Shelter instructor visited with her students about their grade levels [what grade they were in, if they receive special education services, where they attended school before coming to the Shelter, and if their school had block schedule or regular scheduling] and what they had been learning in their previous schools. All three students disclosed different levels and three different math curricula. The Shelter instructor

indicated to the researcher as she observed “I use leftover books, I buy my own materials, I beg, borrow and ask for free samples to get the materials I need, and it's not really what I need.”

The teacher passed out math books. Anna commented that the math books were old and outdated. Tina asked the teacher questions: “Is there a better way to do negative numbers? What is a negative number, a no number? Who cares?” [The student appeared frustrated, her voice tone high and full of emotion]. “Listen guys, give her a break. I had problems with negative numbers too, when I was her age,” commented Anna, who was older. [This older female student appeared to have empathy for the struggling student]. “Yeah, guys give me a break,” responded Tina.

Tina appeared to be approximately 11 years old. She laid her head on the table. Students laughed, so the teacher redirected. Wiggles and squirms. Pencils banged on books. Tina continued to struggle with the math assignment. She placed her hands on her face, stared straight ahead and sighed. “I can’t do this. What does this mean?” Anna, sitting next to Tina, asked her if she could help her. Tina nodded her head yes, smiled and the two of them began working together. Tina began erasing. As she erased, she talked under her breath, burst out laughing, then refocused on the math assignment as if ready to try again. Anna continued to help. The room became quiet. All three students focused on their math assignments. The teacher walked around the room, making herself available for help.

Karen stood up, sat back down, and stood up. She scratched her head with a pencil. Anna, in cotton socks, a tee shirt and jeans, got out of her seat and threw away a

piece of gum she had been chewing. The teacher, without saying a word, made eye contact with the youth. Anna dropped her eyes and returned to her seat.

It is now 8:55. Karen and Anna appeared to have finished the math assignment. Tina moved her math book to the side and laid her head down on the table. The teacher asked Tina if she was okay. Tina nodded affirmatively. The teacher brought over a small white erase board and began to explain to Tina that negative numbers were not that difficult. Tina made a comment about someone she had a “crush on.” The teacher redirected saying, “It’s time to do math.” The teacher encouraged, and kept the student on task. She then moved away.

Bounce, bounce, bounce, squirm, and squirm. Tina picked up her math book and looked at it in disgust. She frowned, shook her head, and then laid her head on the table. Her left leg was moving fast as she sat. Tina remained focused for only a short amount of time. The teacher redirected the student.

“I almost died last night, no really this time I really did,” Anna stated. No one responded to her comment. [I wondered if Anna made such comments often, as no one seemed to care about her concerns, as if she had made such comments before]. Tina put her entire body on the table and anchored her legs on the back of a chair. Karen became upset with her, telling her to stop. She complied.

It is 9:30 and time for a break, the students and teacher retreat to the Shelter’s kitchen area for a snack. I walked around the Shelter schoolroom, picked up a math book and noticed it was well worn. One math book was dated 1984. I noticed the computers at the back of the room also seemed dated. The monitors were small and the keyboards appeared dingy. There were no chalkboards or desks. No teacher’s edition of any

textbooks was seen. The 'needs service' light on the copy machine was shining bright red, indicating that the machine was not working.

A state DHS worker arrived at the Shelter to sign a youth into Shelter placement. She signed the Shelter's required paperwork and departed. The youth was told she would have paperwork to fill out during the Shelter's intake process. The new youth looked confused and frightened.

The students and teacher return to the Shelter classroom setting. It is time for reading or language arts. The three students struggle with common vocabulary words. The students do not know the meanings of words, but made attempts to define the words' meanings to the teacher. The teacher encouraged, praised, and showed a nonjudgmental attitude toward the students. She did not appear frustrated by her students.

Classroom Observations

October 25, 2005
8:30-10:30

The staff member smiled and greeted me. I thanked her and settled myself towards the back of the multi-purpose room. I was seated at the back right-hand side of the multi-purpose room. The phone rang; a specialist announces in a cheerful voice, "Loma County Youth Shelter, this is Janet." The three youths, now students, did not appear to pay attention to the phone conversation. Rather, they focused on each other, chit-chatting about an outing to Wal-Mart the previous evening. The students engaged with loud, laughing, and high-pitched tones about the way Anna spent well over 30 minutes picking a pumpkin to carve into a Jack-o-lantern while at the produce section. Once back at the Shelter and the carving began, she cut her hand so severely that she was taken to the emergency room at the local hospital for stitches. Her pumpkin never was

finished. The injured youth, her face flushed with embarrassment, repeated twice to her teasers that she had not meant to do this, her shoulders shrugged, her palms upright and open, her brow furrowed and her eyes wide. “Yeah, right, we know you’re not that clumsy,” was a response from another youth, a chuckle in her voice.

The specialist on the other side of the partition mentioned Karen’s name. Karen noticed. “Shhhh.” Frozen in place, arms held about four inches from her side, her fingers wide apart and shoulders lifted, “They’re talking about me.” The other youth, all eyes focused on Karen, become still, not moving or talking. “Never mind; I can’t tell what’s going on,” was Karen’s comment after several seconds of silence. They once again began laughing, talking, and verbally communicating with each other.

The students were seated around a 5’ x 4’ foot table. Tina had the top part of her body lying across the top of the end table. Her knees were bent in the seat of the chair; her feet, clothed in white socks, waving in the air. The students were engaged in conversation, laughing, and commenting to each other about the breakfast they had been served.

The teacher raised her voice slightly and told the students they would be working on math. Karen laid her pencil on the table, became quiet, and then laid her head down on the table beside the pencil. Tina was chewing gum, chomping it hard and fast. She stood up, left the table, walked to the pencil sharpener and placed the pencil into an electric sharpener. Buzzzz. She blew on the end of the pencil, and then returned to her seat. Anna got up from her seat and sharpened her pencil. Buzzzz. A smell of flowers hit my nose as she walked by me. She looked down at where I was sitting and smiled. I returned the smile.

Tina appeared to be frustrated. Talking out loud, “Oh man, this is stupid; this is dumb,” rising both hands from her side, her fingers spread wide open. The teacher came to her side and, in a reassuring, soft voice, encouraged her “Keep on trying.” Tina crossed her arms in front of her chest. She was breathing fast and looking straight ahead. The teacher said, “We can do this together,” and sat down by the student. Tina picked up her pencil and the two of them worked a problem involving negative numbers. Tina seemed to understand. She counted on her fingers and shook her head, yes, she smiled at the teacher. The teacher returned the smile. The student laid her chin on the table and worked on the remainder of her math problems.

The room was muggy. The air felt damp and heavy. The teacher asked the students if they were hot because they were becoming restless. They wiggled and talked. The teacher quieted them by saying, “This is school, keep your voices down.” As the voices of the students grew louder, the teacher’s voice became louder. Karen placed both hands on each side of her face. She complained of a headache. Anna chimed in, saying her stomach hurt. The third was out of her seat, headed for the pencil sharpener. Buzz. “This is too hard.” The teacher asked the student in a soft, kind tone if she needed help. The teacher helped the youth. She moved on, walking around the room once again.

All three students were slumped in their seats. The teacher collected the math assignments and directed her students’ attention to a white board, attached to the wall toward the front of where the students were seated. A list of vocabulary words was written on the white board for the students to define. The students struggled with the meanings of the words. The teacher helped and encouraged.

Last Hour
10:30-11:30

Something magical happened the last hour of the observation. The teacher told the students they were going to read aloud from a Newberry Award winning book titled *From the Mixed-up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler* by E.L. Konigsburg. She said there were only two copies of the book so, as she would read aloud to them, they could follow along or read aloud themselves if they chose to. The book was about a sister, Claudia, and her brother Jamie. Claudia decided to run away from home; she planned this event very carefully. She would be going just long enough to teach her parents a lesson in “Claudia appreciation.” And, she would live in comfort---at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She invited her brother Jamie to go, too, mostly because he was a “miser” and would have money.

The two took up residence in the museum right on Claudia’s planned schedule. But once the fun of settling in was over, Claudia had two unexpected problems. She felt just the same as she did at home, and she wanted to feel different; and, she found a statue at the museum so beautiful she felt she could not return home until she discovered its maker, a question that baffled even the experts. The former owner of the statue was Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler. Without Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler’s help, Claudia might never have found a way to go home.

The story was full of humor, suspense and intrigue. Mostly, the story was about adults helping children when they were experiencing problems. Mrs. Frankweiler, the 82-year-old former owner of the statue, helped Claudia.

All students listened as the teacher read. All were vested and involved. They saw purpose in the assignment. They were given a choice to read aloud or not. All three

students chose to read aloud. Tina struggled with common vocabulary words. The youth connected with the stories of Claudia's adventure. The story had a happy ending, which could show hope to what the youth in placement appear to see as a hopeless situation. It seemed that a peace came over the students as the teacher read to them. Anxiety appeared to be gone, at least for a while.

Summary

The contents of this chapter included interviews with the Shelter instructors and the Shelter students and observations of interactions between the students and teacher as she taught at the Shelter school setting. Using the instructors' and youths' interview protocols as a guide, the researcher presented the word of the participants. The interview information from the instructors was presented first, followed by the youths' interview information. Lastly, observational data between the Shelter teacher and the students was presented using a thick, descriptive, narrative format.

Instructors' Interviews

Four shelter instructors were interviewed. The current shelter instructor, Susan, indicated she had taught for three years at the Shelter. One former instructor, Lori reported teaching at the Shelter for two years. Mary taught for one year and Sam taught for six months. Three of the four instructors indicated they were drawn to teaching because of family experiences. Two instructors, Sam and Lori, had parents and /or other family members who were educators. A third, Mary had a sister with multi-handicaps, which lead her in the direction of special educator and school counselor. The fourth believed she was born to teach. All four indicated a love of teaching and a concern for children.

The four instructors indicated confidentiality hampered collaboration between agencies. Susan, Mary, and Sam expressed concerns that the LEA was not fully involved in the Shelter's educational program. All four instructors stated concerns that the students were brought to the Shelter without school records or other information that could help the instructor in planning appropriate educational intervention for the students. All four reported communication between instructors, the LEA, and the DHS needed to be improved. The current Shelter instructor, Susan indicated, "I use leftover books; I buy my own materials; I beg, borrow, and ask for free samples to get the materials I need, and it's not really what I need."

Two instructors, Mary and Susan, indicated the district, in general, needed to be more informed about the Shelter and its purpose. These same two expressed concerns that the Shelter position did not pay as well as other positions in the district. Susan indicated concern over a lack of benefits for the Shelter instructor position.

All four instructors reported basic needs of the students were not being met; most of these concerns were related to the number of placements [in foster care] the students had experienced. Unanimously, they indicated Shelter students have emotional baggage that affects the learning experience, requiring mental health services.

All four instructors were able to identify students who had remained in their thoughts, even though these students were no longer being taught by them. All four indicated they were concerned about their students' well being.

Three instructors, Susan, Mary, and Lori, indicated that the students need stable, long term housing to succeed in the educational arena. Lori and Susan indicated a need for mentoring and role modeling for Shelter students.

Students' Interviews

The four students Tina, Britney, Karen, and Anna ranged in age from 10-17. One was in the fourth grade, one in the fifth, one in the eighth, and one in the tenth. All were female. Britney indicated she liked to paint. Tina liked to read, Anna liked to sing, and Karen liked to listen to country music. All four were able to identify advantages and disadvantages of being at the Shelter. All stated they were treated well.

All four students talked about their educational experiences. Britney and Anna indicated they like school. All reported having positive and negative experiences at schools. Three students, Tina, Britney, and Karen, indicated problems with peers at school. Anna described Shelter school as stupid and she was not learning what she needed to be learning in school. Three students stated positive relationships with primary [1-3] grade teachers. Britney reported a poor experience with a fifth grade teacher, Anna reported a poor experience with a first grade teacher, and Karen stated her first grade teacher was killed by her husband. Two students, Britney and Tina, indicated being scared of other students while in public school. Anna said she makes good grades in school.

All four students indicated they wanted a home placement with their siblings. None were currently placed with their siblings. All four were in Shelter placement because of abuse. Karen said she was going to live with her aunt when she turned 18 and Tina indicated she desired to return to her step-mother's home.

Karen said DHS was doing a good job meeting her basic living needs, while Anna stated DHS was doing a poor job meeting her basic needs. Two students, Britney and Tina, felt that DHS could do a better job meeting their basic needs. All four wanted to

maintain relationships with school personnel with whom they felt close. None were able to achieve this.

Classroom Observations

Two observations were conducted involving interactions between the Shelter teacher and her three students. More observations were desired but unable to be obtained. Because of the transient nature of three of the four participants in this study, the original plans to observe interactions between the Shelter students and the Shelter instructor over a three month period of time had to be modified. Only two observations were possible. The researcher attempted to find other participants for the study, but was unsuccessful due to the strict requirements set by the IRB. Because the researcher had been an employee of Loma County Youth Services for the past eight years, she knew Loma County youth residing at the Shelter. The IRB set the guideline that the researcher conduct the study using participants unknown to her. Loma County youth in Shelter placement generally reside for longer periods of time at the Shelter than out-of-county youth. Three of the four participants were out-of-county youth.

On October 24, the Shelter instructor was observed visiting with her students about their grade levels, if they received special education services, where they attended school before coming to the Shelter, if their school had block schedule or regular scheduling and what they had been learning in their previous schools. All three students reported being at different levels and using different math curricula. The Shelter's textbooks appeared dated, as did the computer in the Shelter classroom. The copy machine appeared to be broken. The Shelter instructor appeared frustrated by the lack of materials and equipment, as did the Shelter students.

One student appeared frustrated by negative numbers. The teacher and another student were observed helping and encouraging her to keep on trying. Even so, the student remained on task for a short time only.

On October 25, the Shelter students were observed involved in a reading or Language Arts assignment. The students were on task. The Shelter instructor was observed helping and encouraging the students. The students were quiet and vested in the learning process; all three listened as the teacher read aloud. They appeared to see purpose in the reading assignment. When given a choice to read aloud or not, all three students chose to read aloud. All were observed to be at different reading levels. Tina struggled with the most common words.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

According to Glaser & Strauss (1967), the analysis process begins while data are being collected. The researcher noticed how patterns formed from one interview to the next. These same pattern formations were also noticed when observations were being conducted at the Shelter school site. Once the interviews and observations were completed, the data were organized into patterns or themes. Strauss & Corbin (1990) state that in the analysis of the data the challenge becomes how to transform information clearly and effectively so that others can find benefit from it. To accomplish this, the Chenail Qualitative Matrix was used to ensure the relationship between the data presentation and analysis and the literature review.

After the interviews and observations were completed, the researcher formally coded the information using color codes and a computer. Themes emerged which Chenail called central tendencies, or the chunking together of the data into the participants' common themes. Range allowed for a look to determine differences, if any, within the themes.

Expected and unexpected are terms used to organize the data to present it clearly to the reader. Expected refers to data that confirmed the researcher's ideas [or assumptions] after reviewing the literature concerning the educational needs of custody youth, which was presented in Chapter II. Unexpected refers to data that the researcher

did not expect to find; it pulled away from original assumptions. The unexpected data or unexpected information was this because the literature was silent on these issues. The expected and unexpected data are discussed using the Chenail Qualitative Matrix.

When analyzing the data, four major themes emerged related to the participants' thoughts, beliefs, and opinions regarding the educational experiences of students in the custody of DHS. Within each of these themes were central tendencies describing how the data chunked together into the major themes. Also present was a range of differences within the themes, as well as expected and unexpected assumptions. The expected assumptions were made after an extensive review of the literature. The unexpected findings became apparent through the research process. The themes were: Confidentiality vs. Collaboration, Unmet Needs, Critical Relationships, and Oppression. Participants' words were used throughout the thematic descriptions and appear in quotation marks. The themes and central tendencies are identified in Table 4.

Table 4: Themes and Central Tendencies

Themes	Central tendencies
1) Confidentiality vs. Collaboration	Confidentiality hampers collaboration between agencies.
2) Unmet Needs	Unmet needs negatively affect educational outcomes.
3) Critical Relationships	A positive student/teacher relationship is critical for custody students.
4) Oppression	Both students and shelter instructors feel oppression from systems.

Theme 1: Confidentiality vs. Collaboration, Teachers' Perspective

An appropriate education for custody students is being hampered due to a lack of communication and collaboration among agencies. According to Shelter instructor Mary, "I know people say they hate meetings, but sometimes that is the only way to accomplish something."

Another Shelter instructor, Susan, spoke about a lack of communication between agencies concerning the students' basic educational needs when they are first enrolled at the youth shelter school site:

I have no idea; only what is seen. I have no records, I never see records and, when a student comes in, I just guess the age. Where do you come from, I ask. What classes are you taking? What grade are you in? From there, I try to develop some kind of program for them, while they are here. That is one thing I would like to see changed, just lack of communication.

A third instructor, Lori, thought what is needed is a team approach. "I really feel like we have to do more of a team approach and set our personal feelings aside." She believes some progress is being made in the area of teamwork.

Mary put it simply by saying, "Open communication [between agencies] is essential." Sam concurred, "You make a connection [with a student] for a day, or a week and maybe longer than a month and you just hope that you can get them caught up or they are able to get back into school."

Susan indicated that she is not only concerned about communication between agencies; she is also concerned the community in general does not know about the

Shelter or its purpose. She states, "I tell people I am working out here and they say, 'What? Where?'"

She indicated the community is not aware that child abuse and neglect requires children to be housed at the Shelter. Although not all children who receive services at the Shelter are victims of abuse, the majority are. Susan reports:

Last year, school year, 70-plus children [were educated at the youth shelter] and that doesn't include the ones that I may have had only a day or so. These are just the 70-plus that I actually wrote attendance records on. So probably it may have been closer to 100 [students] in total, but 70-plus documented.

Approximately 250 youth received housing and other services last year at the Shelter. Susan reported the length of time she provided educational services to the youth "can vary from one day to months. Probably the longest I ever had was 6 months [for one particular student]."

Theme 2: Unmet Needs, Teachers' Perspective

To learn, children must have their basic needs met. Susan told a story of a youth she taught several times at the Shelter site. "This child, hurt beyond his capability. You know. A lot of sadness there. A lot of anger. Not getting the help he needs and I have seen him just deteriorate over the last few months." She expressed concern for this student's mental health:

I think he is sick enough that he probably needs to be put in a hospital, but as he has told me in the past, "I have seen lots of counselors and I know exactly what they want me to say, so I know how to work the system." He tells me that.

Educationally, Susan reported, "It seems like sometimes we get kids and they will go right into the public school and then I will have other students for months. I had one [a student] for months and months last year." She also expressed concerns that Shelter students are educated for 3 hours a day only. She believes students could benefit from more structured educational services but was quick to add, "If you're going to have school out here all day, you have to make sure we have books."

Lori believes the Shelter does a good job of meeting basic needs such as food and housing. She told a story of a young man who "blew placements" [not following rules in foster homes or other out-of-home placements] to come back to the shelter. Lori said,

I felt like I had reached him somehow. I think by looking into his eyes, because it was like when he would be going somewhere, maybe to a new foster home, I would give him a hug and tell him to try to do well at the new placement, but then it was just like, "See you next time."

She indicated frustration by a lack of stable placements for students and stated concerns that educational records do not follow the students when they move from place to place.

Mary spoke about the high incidences of learning problems she saw in Shelter youth. She reported:

I think there probably is a higher incidence of learning problems among children who are in the system. It is kind of which came first, the chicken or the egg. You know, one causes the other and it is probably intertwined, kind of a cycle sort of a thing. You know some of the problems that you would find in a house where the Department of Human Services has had to step in. It breeds learning problems and learning problems contribute to that as well.

Mary felt the children could benefit from counseling services but did not see this happening. Mary agreed with Susan concerning the need for a longer school day. "As far as I know its three hours and I think they [the Shelter staff] justify the rest of the day by sometimes watching an educational video and they can count that [as educational time]." Sam felt, "If their basic needs have not been met, their chances of really carrying about their homework are just not there."

Theme 3: Critical Relationships, Teachers' Perspective

Susan talked about her relationships with her students. She put it this way, "I just want to hopefully make a difference." She thinks that she connects well with her students. Susan said one student told her, "You will talk to us and you usually don't fuss at us."

Mary talked about the importance of relationship building with her students: "Well, just the one-on-one contact I think is important. You know, I think any kind of education where there is a small adult/child ratio makes the situation better."

Mary also spoke to finding the students' interests" Finding what their [the students] interests are and tying the interest into the subject matter helps to build relationship." She thought this approach helped the students at the Shelter to apply information to their lives, reporting, "Application is important."

Lori also felt a relationship with the Shelter students is critical for academic success. She stated the most effective way to reach her students is to use unconditional positive hugs. She spoke about the power of positive role models in these students' lives, and believes her students need many positive people in their lives.

Sam spoke of the students he taught needing success. “The teacher is the first person to see them at the Shelter school. It is not just about whether they pass or fail. It may be up to the teacher to figure out a way for them to get some help” [other than academic].

Lori summed up her feeling by saying that the youth in our society don't have much of a say. She thinks that kids are not really being listened to, particularly those that are from a lower socio-economic group.

Theme 4: Oppression, Teachers' Perspective

Oppression is defined by Webster's Dictionary (1991) as “to worry or trouble the mind; to weigh down; to burden as if to enslave.” Themes of oppression appear in the stories of the students. The shelter teachers also spoke of the way that agencies charged with providing services to the youth oppress the youth.

The Shelter instructors saw oppression in the Shelter students. Many times the oppression appeared as anger, depression, or defiance. Susan stated that many of the students at the Shelter are very needy and very angry. Susan stated that she believes most students at the Shelter have given up.

Lori was adamant in the failure of the system. “Children,” she stated, “get put in some really crappy homes. Sometimes they even get abused in these homes. They get sexually, emotionally, physically and verbally abused.” She is convinced of the failure, but at a loss to know how to fix it. Lori believes the local school district lacks concern for the shelter students' educational well-being.

Sam shared his concerns about the turnover rate of Shelter students. He saw about 30 different students while he taught there. He told a story about a teenage girl

who was brought into the shelter by the police [a common way custody children are transported]: "She just came back here [to shelter school] and just unloaded everything." Sam indicated he tried to redirect her back to the social studies lesson.

Theme 1: Confidentiality vs. Collaboration, Students' Perspective

The four students worried they were not being heard by those in charge of their lives. They reported they felt unheard by the agencies responsible for their well being. When talking about her DHS worker, Anna said, "First of all, call me back. Just the simple fact that they have never contacted me. I call like 50 times. I cancelled my doctor's appointment because I couldn't get in contact with her." Anna stated, "But it is like I have to call them 500 times and then another 500 times just to get them to help me out."

Theme 2: Unmet Needs, Students' Perspective

Anna, Britney, Karen, and Tina spoke candidly about areas in their lives that have caused educational needs to go unmet. Anna described her Shelter school experience as kind of stupid. Materials were insufficient and the textbooks were old and out-of-date. She questioned the value of what she was learning. She worried because she was receiving no instruction in chemistry and Latin.

Britney reported being grateful for school. School is a safe haven from many potential problems. The Shelter kept her safe from aggressive peers in the regular school. Frequent moves were disrupting her life as was the separation from her siblings.

Karen was not positive. School was boring and, because she was two years behind, she would be 20 when she graduated. Karen spoke about lost hope and feeling depressed. She indicated receiving counseling services in her past and being placed on

depression medication but not currently. She stated concerns of bullying by a peer at school and reported received no interventions from the school to help.

When talking about her education, Tina stating both positive and negative experiences related to school. She believed getting an education would help her by giving her money to go to college and to get a job. She believed she had been hurt by schools because she had no choice on where she attended school. She wanted to attend the same school as her sister but knows this is not possible as she is not going to be in a foster care placement with her sister. Tina reported the memories of attending school with her sister made her sad. Tina went on to say, "They [teachers, case workers, counselors] ask why I am hurt and I tell them and they still don't understand it. I have to keep on repeating and they still don't understand."

Theme 3: Critical Relationships, Students' Perspective

The students spoke in great detail about their relationships with teachers. Three of the four participants chose to talk about primary grade teachers. Two of these students had fond memories of their teachers in the early grades, while the third had a bad relationship with her first grade teacher. One of these students described a traumatic event to a first grade teacher she cared about. The fourth student spoke of her algebra teacher in the 9th grade.

Karen told a story about her first grade teacher, "Well, she [my first grade teacher] understood me and my problems. She was like really nice to everybody and then one day out of the blue her husband killed her." She stated this event was traumatic and thoughts of her teacher have remained with her. Karen indicated no one from the school

addressed the death and reported hearing about the incident on the TV news. She reported no other teacher has impacted her life like her first grade teacher.

Britney had a favorite teacher in second grade, Mrs. Anderson. She believed Mrs. Anderson cared about her and tried to help her. "Every day I walked in she would say hi and give me a hug and stuff." She told of a treasure box in the classroom that contained prizes that could be earned. She believed this teacher taught her how to control her anger. As much as Britney's story indicated a positive relationship with her second grade teacher, she reported a difficult first grade year. She stated, "I didn't like my first grade teacher." She indicated she was not treated well by her. She disclosed her teacher yelled at her. This action made Britney feel that she did not want to be at school.

Tina told about her relationship with her fifth grade teacher, Mr. Parks. "He always cared." She indicated Mr. Parks had worked at the same school for 25 years and that he was one of the "good teachers." She believed Mr. Parks was there for her and, if she needed to talk to someone, he would take time to listen.

Anna was the only participant who chose to talk about a high school level teacher. She believed her Algebra teacher did a fantastic job teaching. Anna was particularly fond of her teaching methods. She stated she made Algebra easy by breaking down concepts into manageable steps. Anna stated her teacher would re-teach concepts if the class was having difficulty understanding.

Anna did not have a positive relationship with her first grade teacher. She believed she was treated unfairly by this person. Anna reported she was given a difficult question and sent back to kindergarten when she was unable to answer it. Anna indicated her teacher complained about her coloring, but was quick to add, "I did have coloring

problems.” Anna remembered other children in the classroom receiving cookies and stated that she never received one.

Theme 4: Oppression, Students’ Perspective

Common themes of oppression were found in the stories of the students. Anna stated she was moved often by DHS. She reported moving meant being in different schools, having to adjust to different methods and styles of teaching, making new friends, and having the difficult task of adjusting to a new foster family. She believed a small school was best for her and reported enjoying the chance to becoming successful in activities such as basketball. Tina talked about frustrations with other students and how she felt when the entire school learned of her family problems. Tina became angry when another student disclosed that Tina was a victim of molestation by her father. Tina was quick to defend her father, stating that this did not happen, as her father passed away five years earlier. Tina reported becoming angry when this same person told other students, Tina came to her house and “stole food.”

Britney was concerned for her future. She indicated she worries because, "I am separated from my brothers and sisters." She cried when talking, shaking her head as if in disbelief about her separation from them.

Karen appeared anxious about her future, "I am not sure what I am going to do yet," as she is only a sophomore and will turn 18 in the spring. She reported that at one point she had aspirations to become a first grade teacher. Now, Karen is considering dropping out of school once she becomes 18, and moving out-of-state to be close to an aunt.

Anna stated concerns for her sister, "My sister was raped in a foster home." She indicated that she does not want to be in a foster home placement without her sister being placed there also. She believed systems need to keep her and her siblings together, stating, "I don't want to be with anybody; no other siblings but mine.

All students spoke of frequent moves, loss of friends and problems adjusting. All students indicated having siblings they cared about and missed. All students appeared to have disrupted educational experiences since being in the custody of the Department of Human Services.

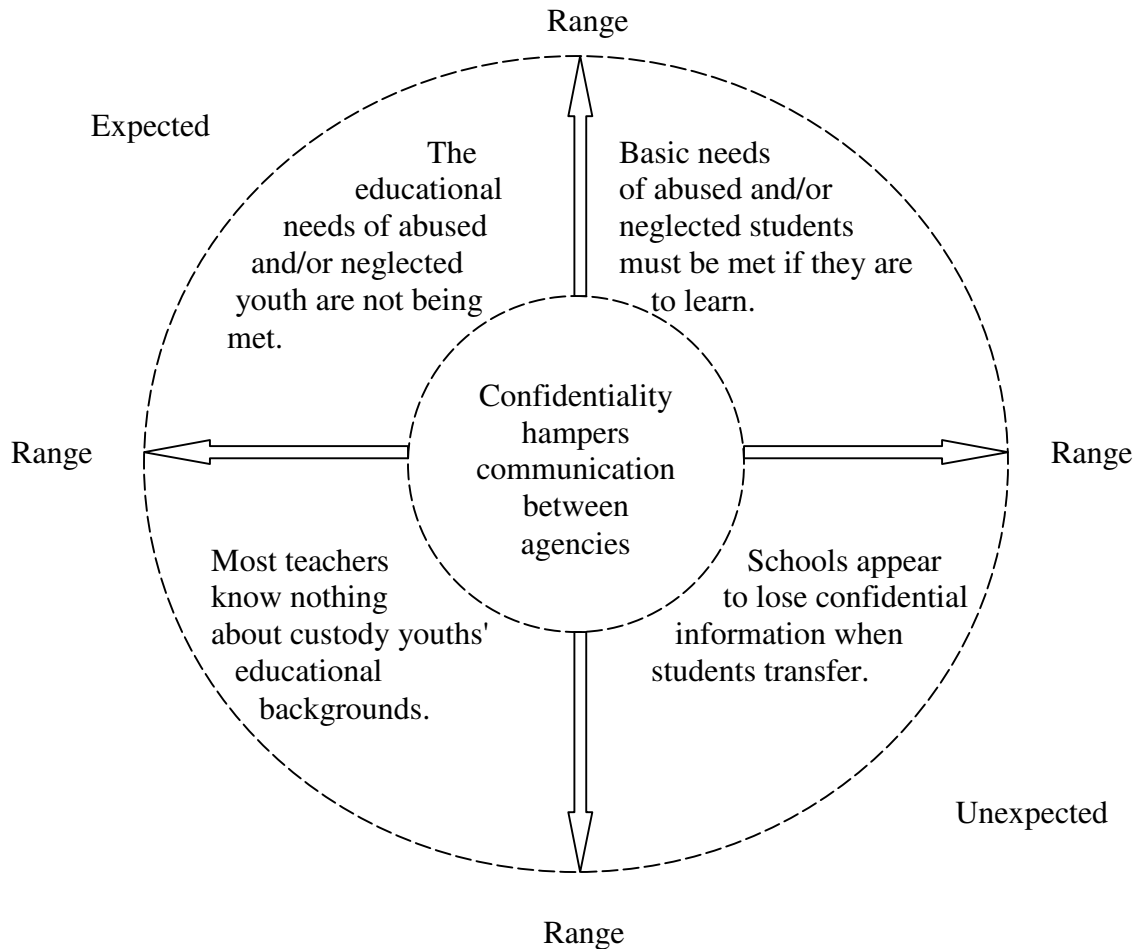
Chenail Qualitative Matrix

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Shelter Instructors

Chenail's Qualitative Matrix



In the interviews with the LCYS instructors, it became apparent they have experienced many of the same difficulties in meeting the educational needs of custody youth, as was found in the review of the literature.

Comments concerning unmet basic needs were present in all four interviews. Susan summed it up by saying, "They are lost in the system." She indicated she had

taught many students who had reached a point in their lives where they had given up. Susan went on to say her students tell her they do not care about attending school.

Lori stated unmet basic needs affect educational outcomes of custody students. She believed a lack of stable, long-term placement is the reason behind students' poor educational outcomes. Lori summed up her thoughts on the unmet needs of custody youth when she stated, "What does it do to our society to have a big block of people who have been unheard and who feel uncared for?"

Mary indicated frustration by the lack of information and knowledge concerning Shelter students. She was not given information about their personal backgrounds or any educational concerns they may be experiencing. She appeared amazed at the number of abused and/or neglected youth placed at the Shelter. Mary also felt that a lack of stable home placements factored into her students' poor educational experiences. She believed moving the students from one foster home to another had negative effects on them.

Sam reported teaching students at the youth shelter who had inappropriate behaviors. He told a story of a youth with apparent mental health issues. This student would get frustrated with school work and start biting himself and grinding his teeth. He reported, "I can still hear the grinding sound of his teeth." Sam indicated classroom teachers need knowledge of each student's background. He believed all teachers need to be aware that some of their students may not be eating, or they may be experiencing abuse or neglect. Sam stated what is going on at home will affect whether or not they care about doing their homework.

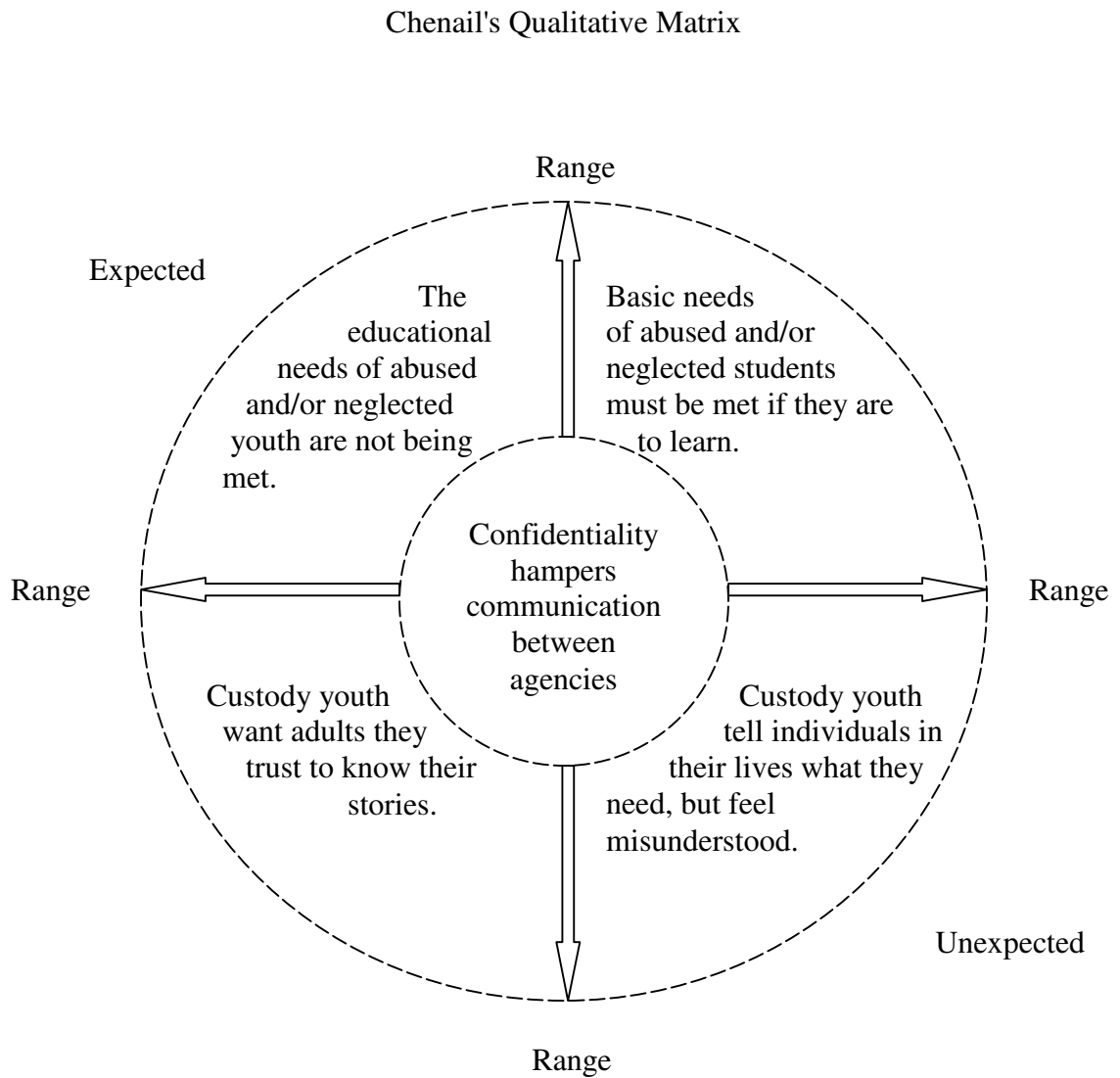
From the review of the literature and the comments of the shelter instructors, it is apparent that the basic needs of custody youth are not being met. Communication and

collaboration are needed between agencies to improve this condition. Because the children are wards of the court, confidentiality appeared to be the biggest factor in this lack of communication.

The Shelter teachers knew nothing about the educational backgrounds of their students. Mary saw delays academically and emotionally in Shelter students. She indicated past environments could be a factor in the students' educational delays. She felt all Shelter students could benefit from counseling. Sam indicated that Shelter students were brought to Shelter school with emotional baggage and no academic records.

Schools appear to lose confidential information. Multi-placements could be a factor in records not being available to the Shelter instructors. Shelter instructors indicated when students are brought to the shelter, their educational information is not with them.

Shelter Students



In interviews conducted with four students in the custody of the state, themes emerged similar to those of the instructors.

Britney spoke of not being able to keep up with her school work. She reported that in all her moves she was only able to stay caught up with school work at one school.

She also indicated trusting only one teacher whom she felt helped her while she attended that school.

Tina felt unsafe at some of the schools she attended. She told of a time that a student brought a knife to school and she felt scared. Tina felt that teachers could make a better school environment by taking all the “bad kids” out of school. Tina believed most teachers did not understand her. She reported being able to trust her fifth grade teacher at one of the schools she attended. She stated this teacher was special because every time she needed to talk he was there.

Anna had aspirations at one time of becoming a nurse. She spoke about running away from a foster home. She told a story of wanting to turn herself in to the police, but was not recognized by them until she told a police officer who she was.

Karen felt currently that both DHS and the youth Shelter were doing a good job of meeting her basic needs. She indicated they give her a place to live, food and clothing. On the other hand, she reported she did not have anyone she felt she could talk to about her depression, a condition she reported having for a long time.

It would appear that all four of the students want adults in their lives who they believe are there for them and have an understanding of their unique set of problems. It would also appear that custody youth need and want trusted adults to know their stories. As Anna stated to the judge, "Will you please let me go stay with a good foster home and will you please let my brother and sister have contact with them so I can talk to them?" Anna reported the judge said, "Your wish is granted." Anna waits for this to happen. It would also appear that custody youth are telling the individual responsible for their well-being what their needs are, but feel misunderstood. Britney stated she had told her

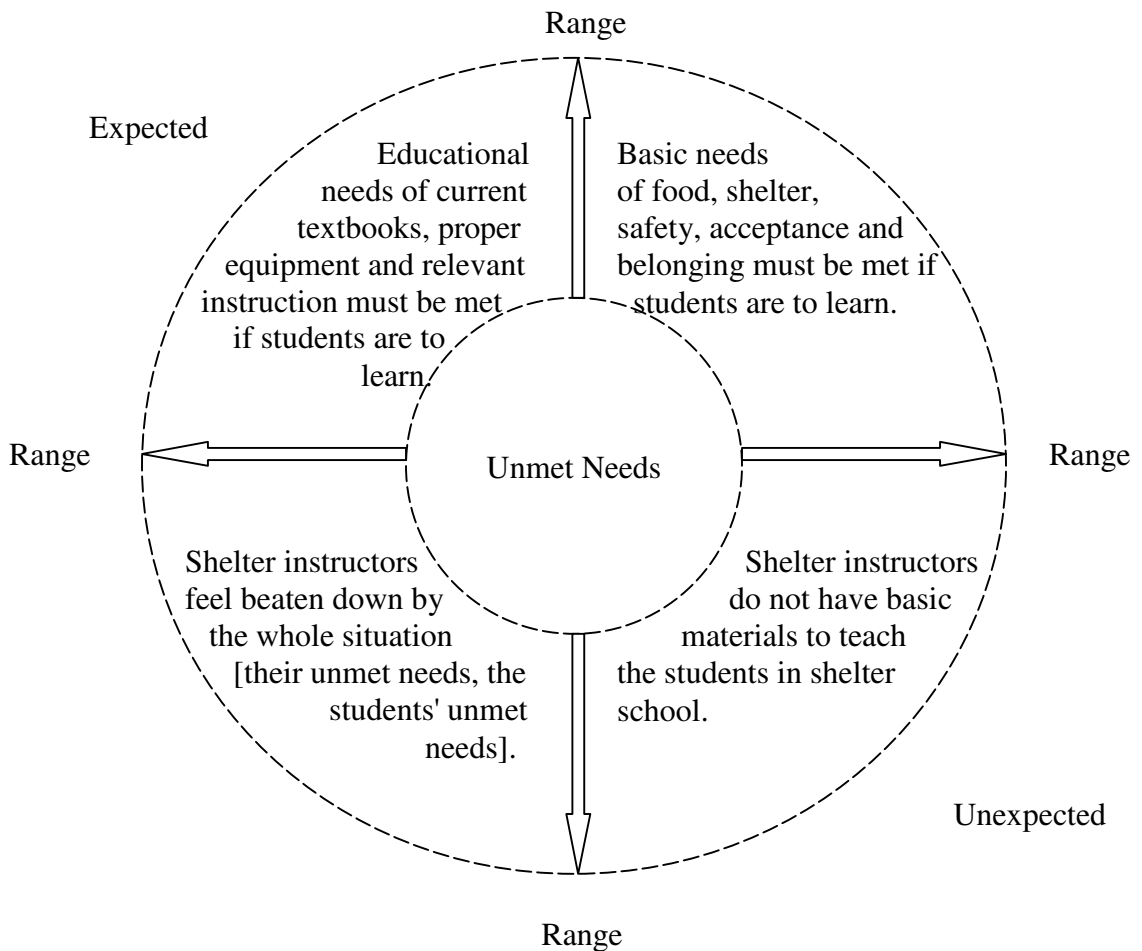
caseworker that she needed to be kept in one place. She cried as she spoke about her brothers and sisters. She indicated she was separated from her brothers and sisters and she worries about them.

Theme 2: Unmet Needs

Figure 3.

Shelter Instructors

Chenail's Qualitative Matrix



All four Shelter instructors spoke of feelings of frustration because of a lack of resources for the Shelter students. All felt the educational services for the Shelter students were different than for other students within the district.

Mary stated frustration over the old books used to instruct the Shelter students. She reported using leftover books that nobody else in the district wanted. Mary implied that equipments and supplies for Shelter students were not the same as for other students within the district. She indicated concern that Shelter students are only educated for three hours a day.

Lori felt frustrated about PASS objectives and No Child Left Behind. She believed teachable moments had nothing to do with either. She indicated she did not have the basic supplies and equipment needed to ensure the Shelter students received an appropriate education.

Sam stated frustration over not knowing how many students he would be teaching from day to day. He indicated the students could benefit from more involvement from other school personnel such as the principal and the school counselor. Sam expressed concerns that the Shelter students were not receiving the same services as other students within the district. He believes teachers, in general, need to be more aware of this sub-group of students.

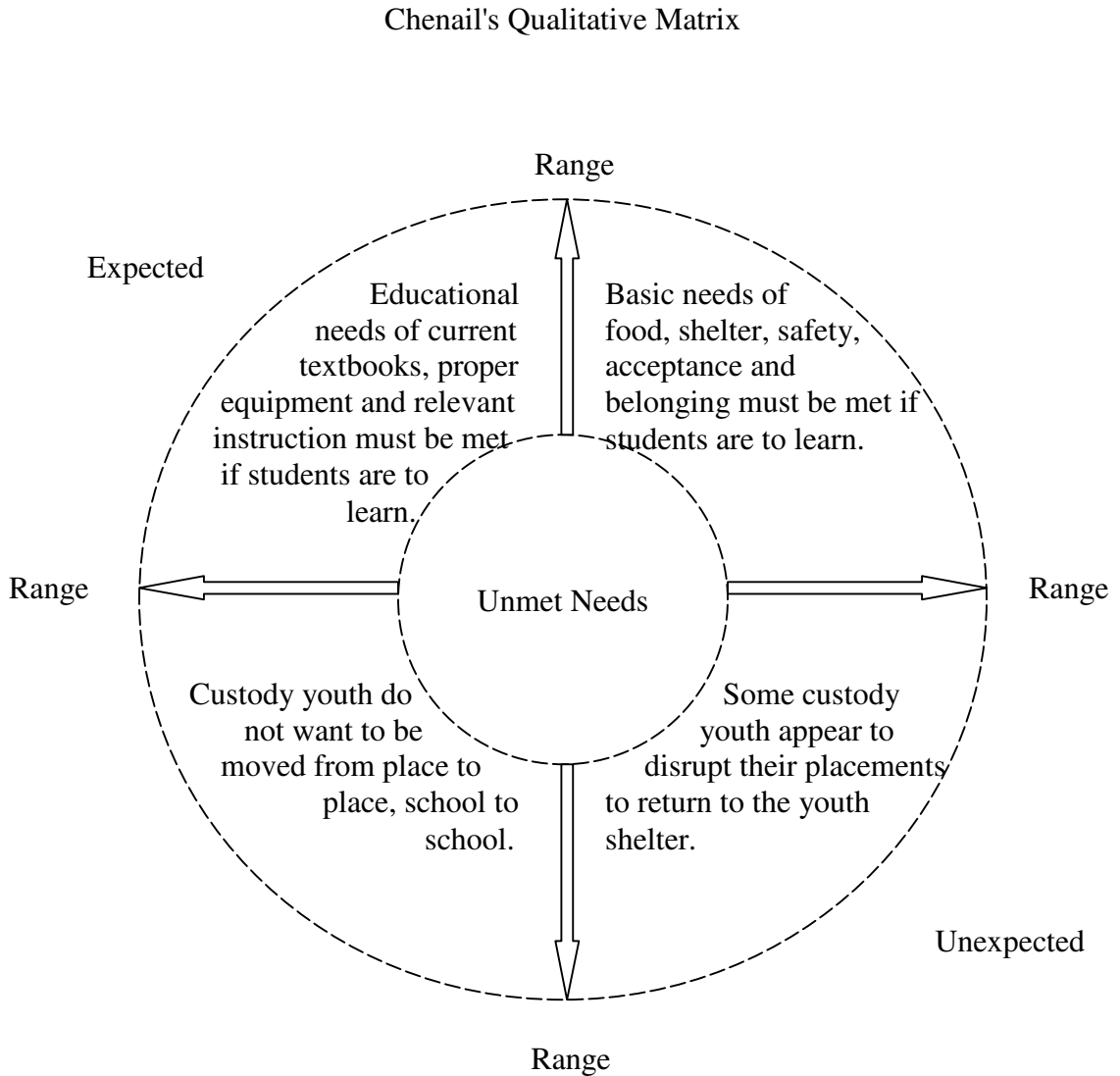
Susan spent her own time and money in hopes of helping the Shelter students. She reported the district was not aware of the unique needs of the Shelter students. She felt that the equipments and supplies used at the Shelter were not the same as those used at other sites. Susan felt the Shelter students needed to be educated for a longer period of time than three hours a day. She was quick to add that, if services were ever to be

provided for longer periods of time, the LEA would need to provide better equipment and supplies.

Theme 2: Unmet Needs

Figure 4.

Shelter Students



Shelter students appeared to have unmet needs that led to feelings of frustration. Britney stated she could not emotionally handle being moved from place to place for much longer. She indicated she did not want to move for the rest of her life. Britney told

her DHS worker to keep her in one place. She appeared depressed and worried about her siblings, stating, "I am separated from my brothers and sisters and I worry about them."

Tina spoke of an opportunity in one of her placements to talk to a counselor. She believed this intervention helped her. She indicated she was being called names by a peer at school and the counselor told her to not listen to it. Tina indicated a better ability to cope with her problems when she was placed with her sister.

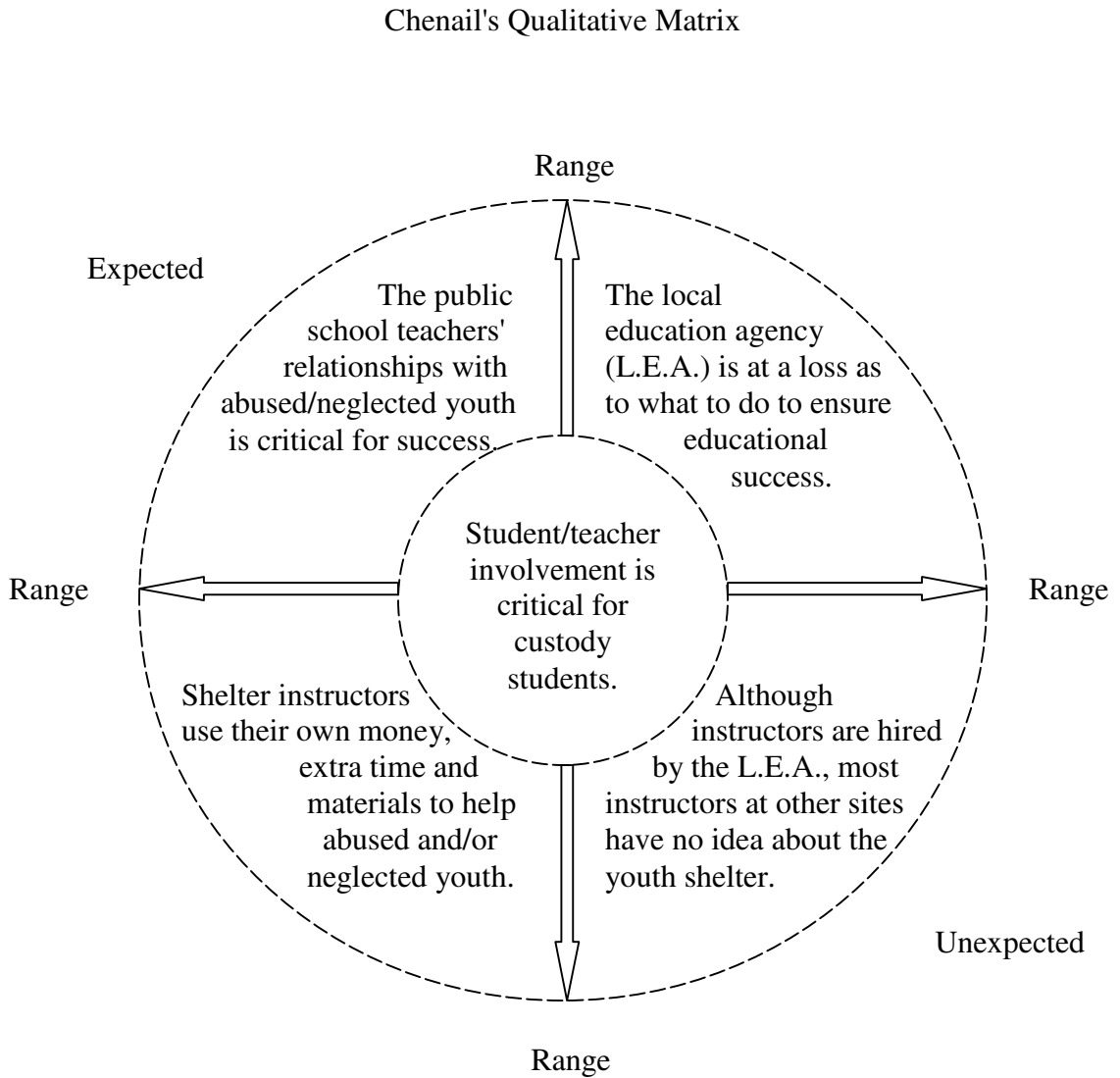
Karen reported frustration when she was moved by her DHS worker. She stated she had to change friends and schools. She reported that sometimes she would move back to the same town she started from and would go to the same school.

Anna told of a simple request she had for her judge. She asked if he would let her go to a good foster home. She also requested that the judge order her brother and sister to have contact with her, once she was in her new foster family. Anna reported the judge said, "Your wish is granted." She still waits for a foster home.

Three of four participants spoke of the importance of interaction with siblings. Karen stated she and her siblings were moved so much that she fell behind in school. She felt moving was the reason she was behind. She worries because she will be 18 and only in the 10th grade.

Some youth appeared to disrupt their foster home placements to return to the Shelter. Anna stated she had had four placements at the Shelter this past year.

Shelter Instructors



Many employees of the local educational agency appeared to be uninformed about the LCYS. Many are not knowledgeable about the job duties of the Shelter instructor, yet the Shelter instructors remained vested in the educational outcomes of abused and/or neglected students while teaching there.

Sam talked about a relationship he had with a Shelter student. He stated he felt he had made a connection with him. Sam stated he tried to figure out ways to teach the Shelter students to have success for themselves. Sam would like to see the LEA more involved in Shelter education. He felt that communication with a school counselor, some other teachers, or the administrators would be helpful in setting up situations where this could happen.

Mary indicated better communication was essential. She reported sometimes it was the only way to accomplish a goal. She felt compromise between agencies was needed for the good of the children. She did not see either communication or compromise when she was the Shelter instructor. Mary stated the reason she no longer taught at the youth shelter is because she was spending so much time looking for materials outside her paid time that it got to the point where it was not a feasible thing for her to continue to do. She would like to see the LEA provide good materials that were attractive to the students and were easy to use.

Lori stated concerns over the percentage of abused and/or neglected youth who find their way into the Oklahoma prison system. She questioned, "Who is responsible for tracking these students once they turn 18 years of age?" She also had concerns about her job duties as the Shelter instructor, stating she was very concerned when she first came to the Shelter to teach. She felt there was no one that knew what she was suppose to do and no one to show me her the way.

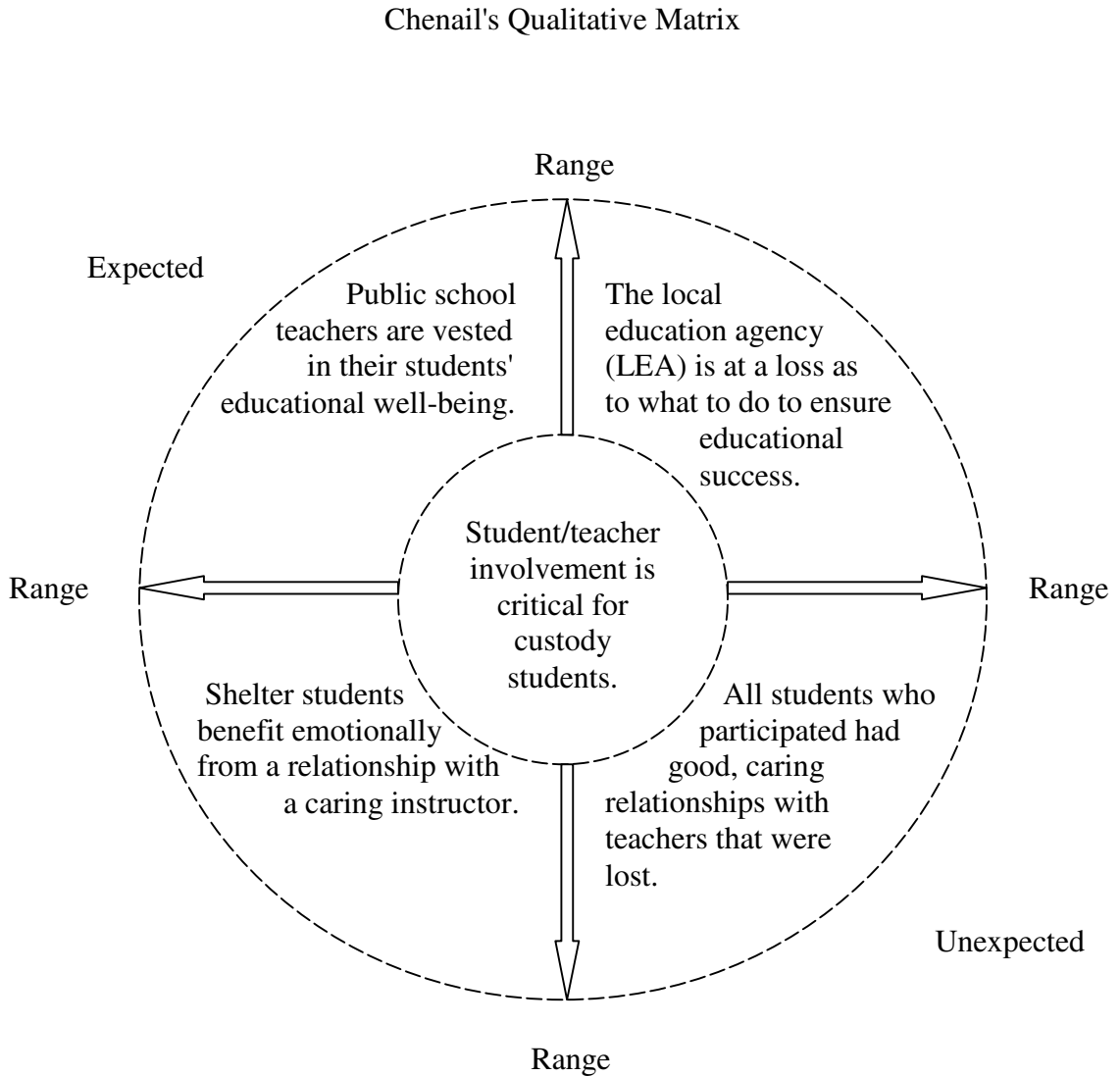
Susan was even more vocal about what she calls the internal circle [LEA]. She stated she was at the Shelter by herself and when she did ask for help, she felt like a stepchild. She indicated she would like to see the Shelter students more involved in the

activities of the regular school. All four reported some level of frustration with the local educational agency's lack of involvement in Shelter education.

Theme 3: Critical Relationships

Figure 6.

Shelter Students



All four shelter students had stories to tell about positive school personnel they felt cared about them personally and about their well-being. Three students lost these

relationships due to placement issues, moving to different homes, while another student experienced the death of her teacher.

Anna believed the teacher was critical for a good educational experience. She spoke about school systems that benefited her and those that had not. She stated smaller school systems have helped her the most. She spoke about "good" teachers taking time to call on her when she had a question and seemed to "break down" learning to ensure she was able to understand concepts.

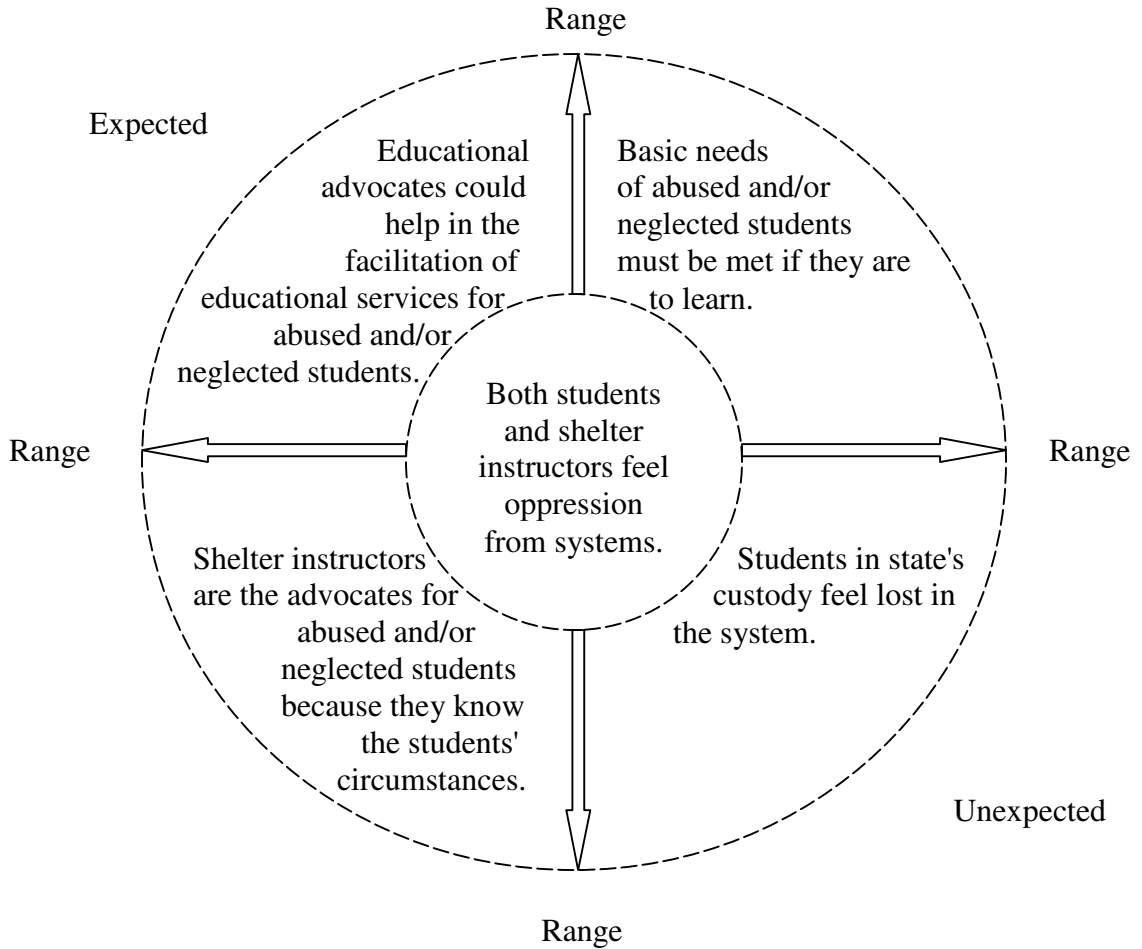
Karen talked about be bullied by another student. She reported the school did not provide any services for the students after her first grade teacher was killed.

Tina reported feeling scared at school because of "bad kids." She indicated there were many peers at school that did not treat her well. She indicated she became angry because of the way she was treated. A teacher at one school helped Tina by teaching her how to control her anger. Tina stated, "He told me to go in the hallway to cool off."

Britney stated concerns with peers. She indicated that one of her friends was assaulted by another student. Of the three students who reported being fearful, none stated they were helped with fear by school officials.

Shelter Instructors

Chenail's Qualitative Matrix



All four Shelter instructors advocated for their students while teaching at the Shelter. Shelter instructors advocated for Shelter students because they are aware of the students circumstances.

Susan expressed a desire for extra things for Shelter youth. She believed more community individuals would help the Shelter youth if they were aware of the youths'

circumstances. For now, Susan reported, she made do with what she had and she did the best she could. She indicated if something bothers her she tries to find help, reporting that she does not always get it, but believes that it is important to at least try.

Sam indicated he tried to make the best impact on Shelter students he could while he taught them. He stated it was important to keep in mind that the Shelter instructor might be one of the best persons in a Shelter student's life. He felt that by remembering this he was able to feel good about what he was doing to help the students. Sam believed the Shelter school setting provided the youth with more structure than you have at some of the regular public school sites. He indicated more training in teacher education classes was needed concerning this group of students.

Lori advocated for the students she taught as the Shelter instructor by trying to build their self-esteem. She reported seeing no self-esteem in children who feel as if they fail. She went on to say DHS custody youth are going to feel different, inferior, and she believes society makes them feel that way. She also felt DHS custody students have picked up emotional baggage because of what they have had to endure. She posed the question, when do the students get to feel like they have a say-so or that they're equal? She believed in modeling with words, actions, and positive regard, and felt this was the only effective way to teach Shelter students. Lori believed what was missing was a lack of modeling on anyone's part that, when you have a problem, you don't run away.

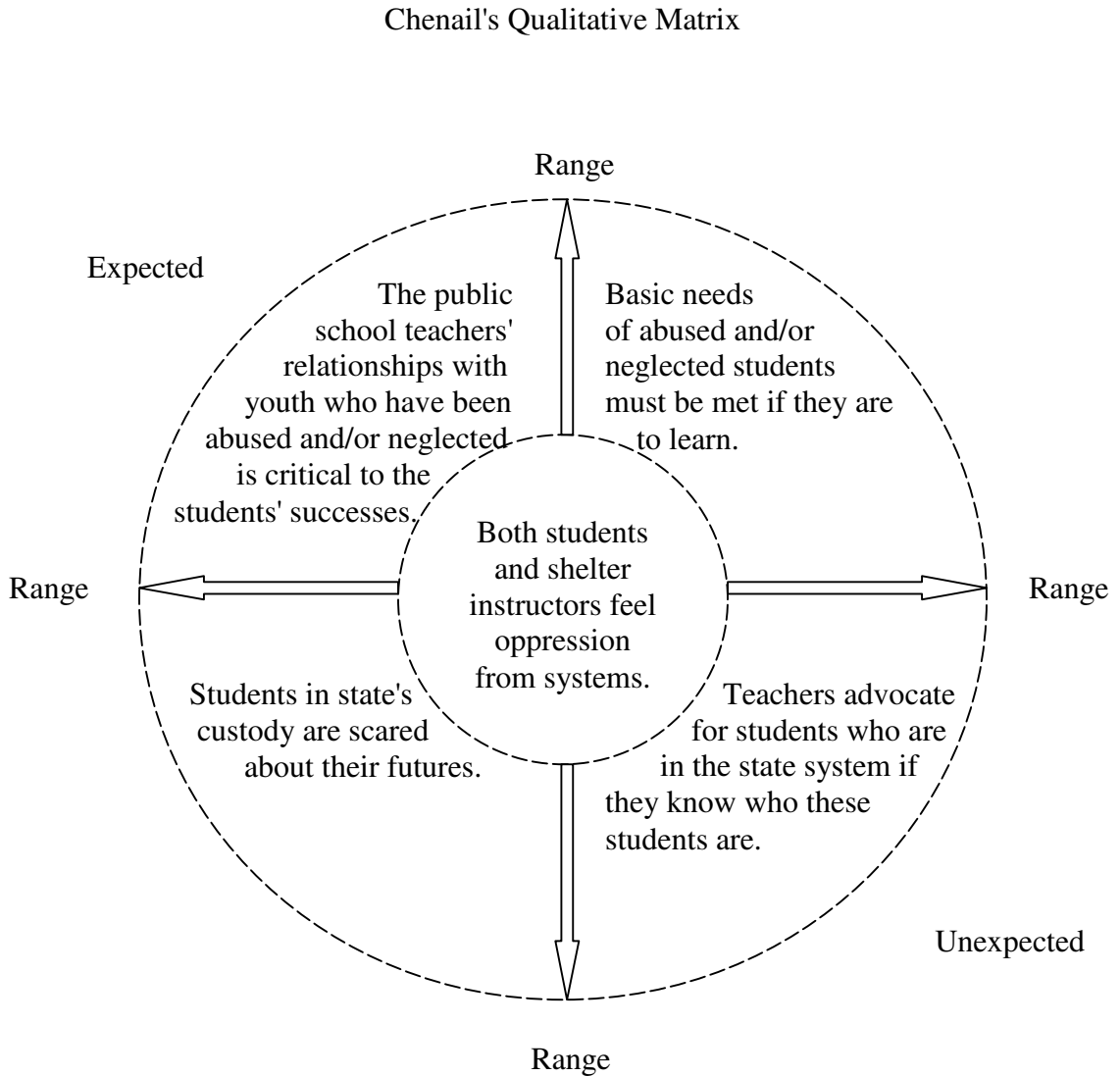
Mary advocated for a good, stable environment for the students she taught. She believed a group home would be better than moving the students from foster home to foster home. Mary stated a placement that teaches values, morals, and has expectations that children will mind would benefit the students. Mary indicated custody youth could

thrive and begin to learn some of the things they did not learn as a young child if a stable, long-term, living environment was available.

Theme 4: Oppression

Figure 8.

Shelter Students



All four shelter students told stories of school officials who advocated for them. All four students expressed concerns for their futures if conditions in their lives do not change.

Anna talked about two incidents with teachers that factored into her hating school and loving school. It appeared that Anna's teachers made the difference in both situations. She reported hating school when she was in the first grade. She told a story of a first grade teacher that did not treat her fairly. This incident has stayed with Anna for ten years. When speaking about her Algebra teacher from last school year, Anna appeared delighted. She seemed thrilled by her teachers teaching methods. Anna reported the teacher actually explained how to work the problems step by step and that she had never had a teacher such as this before. Anna indicated she observed how other teachers taught but had never experienced a teacher, teaching the way. Anna reported feeling close to this person.

Karen had fond memories of her first grade teacher. She reported at one point in time she had aspirations to teach first grade. Her statement would suggest that her first grade teacher made an impression on Karen. Karen will turn 18 in a few months. Since she is only a sophomore, it may be difficult for her to achieve her goals.

Britney's story about her favorite teacher, Mrs. Anderson, would suggest the importance of a caring primary grade teacher for custody students. Britney's story showed a public school teacher who was willing to help her students in areas not related to academics, getting help with her anger.

Tina's stories about her fifth grade teacher showed a strong, caring relationship between student and teacher. Tina felt understood when she told him she was hurting, something she felt most other teachers did not do. He advocated for Tina's well-being with other agencies.

Karen worried about her future because she will be 18 and in the tenth grade. She has goals and aspirations, but indicates she is unsure about her goals once she leaves DHS custody.

Britney worried about returning to regular school because of peer problems. She indicates being concerned about her friends being "beat up." Britney's biggest worry was being separated from her brothers and sisters. She also felt it was difficult to stay caught up with school work because of moving.

Anna appeared frustrated about moves and worried that she would not remain on track once she is allowed to return to regular public school. Tina worried that peers at school will continue to tell other students about incidents from her past. She also felt scared that she will not be in a placement with her brothers and sisters.

Analysis of the Shelter Observations

The four themes, Confidentiality vs. Collaboration, Unmet Needs, Critical Relationships, and Oppression, were present in observations made at the Shelter school setting.

Theme 1: Confidentiality vs. Collaboration

The Shelter instructor, Susan, had little to no information such as test scores, academic level, health records or grades concerning her students. During the first observation on October 24, the Shelter instructor was observed talking with her students concerning their grade levels and what they had learned in their previous schools. On this day there were two new students and one student that had being in attendance for only a short length of time, attending Shelter school. All three students disclosed they were at different grade levels and all three used different math curriculum. The instructor

appeared frustrated as she searched the room for appropriate materials. The students' DHS caseworker had not brought any information to the Shelter concerning the youths' educational histories, leaving the instructor to guess. Essentially, the youth are signed into the Shelter by the state worker with no documents or academic information. The Shelter is to determine the students' academic level, provide appropriate materials and teach the youth until they are discharged from the Shelter.

In another observation, on October 25, the researcher noted a state caseworker was unable or unwilling to participate in the educational aspects of the students. She brought a youth to the Shelter for placement without documentation. There did not appear to be any paper work of any kind. She signed the paper work and left the youth. Her presence at the Shelter was less than five minutes.

Theme 2: Unmet Needs

During a previous interview with the Shelter instructor, Susan, she indicated the math books used at the Shelter were "old." In the October 24 observation of the Shelter school, Karen, a student picked up the book and looked at the cover. She commented that the pictures in the book "seem old." The teacher stated to the student that some of the same books had been at the Shelter school since she first began teaching there approximately three years ago.

A student who was working in an Algebra II book comments that she is in "chemistry and Latin," but the Shelter school had no chemistry book or lab and no one [at the shelter] spoke Latin. The Shelter instructor made eye contact with the student saying she was "sorry." The student sighed and looked down. She stopped working for a few seconds, and then picked up her pencil to continue with her math lesson.

After several minutes, the shelter instructor, in a frustrated, pressured voice, said, "The copy machine is broken. I can't copy anything." She took a deep breath and sighs. She turned to a cabinet where textbooks were stored and pulled out two reading books.

During an observation of a Language Arts assignment, the three students struggled with common vocabulary words. The students did not know the meanings of words but attempts were made. The teacher encouraged, praised and showed a nonjudgmental attitude toward the students. She did not appear frustrated by her students, only the lack of materials available to help her students learn.

During the observation on October 25, towards the end of the school day, Anna commented, "I almost died last night, this time for real." The teacher either did not hear the student or chose to ignore the comment [I got the feeling that this was a common statement, and I wondered what was going on with the student for her to make the comment or to feel that she was in danger of dying. I thought of anxiety disorder or depression and wondered if this child was in any form of counseling].

Theme 3: Critical Relationships

A positive relationship with a caring and concerned teacher appeared critical for students in state's custody. The researcher observed the Shelter instructor interacting in positive and caring ways while teaching. In an observation of a math class, the researcher watched the Shelter instructor move toward a student feeling upset and frustrated over negative numbers. Holding on to a small dry erase board, the shelter instructor showed the student examples and offered to help her. The student shook her head yes and in a tearful, frustrated voice tone commented about the difficulty of negative numbers. The teacher encouraged, telling the student not to give up. The

student took a deep breath, letting it out slowly. She tried a problem again, stating, "I have to remember to cancel out, I have to remember to cancel out [She continued her work but appeared to lack enthusiasm or motivation, laying her head on the table, thumping her pencil]." After the Shelter instructor moved away, the student somewhat withdrew from the math assignment, laying her head on the table. She appeared to have difficulty staying on task, but was encouraged by the instructor to keep on trying, which the student did. The student continued to work on her math assignment, receiving help and encouragement as needed from the instructor.

Theme 4: Oppression

Both students and Shelter instructors appeared oppressed from agencies in charge of the students' well-being. For the students, it appeared the Shelter school is not equipped with the necessary supplies and materials needed to educate the students appropriately. This affected the way the teacher must teach. The Shelter school room was observed to be orderly. The students appeared to lack motivation, had short attention spans and only brief intervals of time on task.

During interviews, all four Shelter instructors reported a lack of communication between agencies, lack of follow up for custody students, and a lack of advocacy for the students' well being. Two instructors felt oppressed because they were paid a "substitute teacher's pay" and did not receive employment benefits, as other teachers receive in the district.

Summary

Students in the custody of the state generally do not have adults who stay with them long enough to be their educational advocates. What appeared to be missing were

persons who knew their way around the school system, who could help with the enrollment and transfer processes, and were there to monitor the academic progress and attendance of the students. State caseworkers are not educators. Educators lack knowledge of custody youths' special circumstances. For most non-custody students, parents usually assume the role of advocate for their child's educational well-being. Research shows students in the custody of the state have no parent to be this advocate.

Most students enter the child welfare system already behind in school because of abuse and/or neglect issues, frequent moves, and lack of stability in the family. Whatever the student's experience was before entering the child welfare system, to be removed from home and parents can cause serious mental health concerns. Many times, mental health issues are seen as low priority by state caseworkers, but often these concerns manifest themselves in inappropriate behaviors at school. This study shows some children become angry, others depressed. Some act out, others hold the hurt in.

Students in state's custody have worries. Most worries center around moving and grief and loss associated with leaving behind teachers, friends and "a way of doing things." Students in custody also worry about not seeing or being placed with their siblings. When students worry, they can become distracted, which makes focusing on school work a low priority.

Teachers who know of the student's unique set of problems appear to be willing to help the student, yet most lack the social histories, records and other information needed to advocate for the student's educational well-being. If teachers knew of the unique set of problems of custody students more would become involved in helping them to reach their educational goals.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Introduction

A review of the literature suggested that children from stable and secure environments tend to perform better in school than do children who reside in out-of-home placements (Barth, 1990; Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000; Blome, 1997; Heath, et al., 1994). Literature (Burley & Halpern, 2001) suggested that most youth in out-of-home placements were not receiving the educational services needed to ensure positive educational outcomes. Twice as many custody youth as non-custody youth had repeated a grade (Barth, 1990; Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2000; Blome, 1997; Heath, et al., 1994). Twenty-two to 46 percent exited out-of-home placements without a high school diploma (Festinger, 1983). A large percentage of custody children had failed or repeated at least one grade, and many of these children were found not to be performing at grade level (Benedict, Zuravin, and Stallings 1996). There is considerable research into experiences of custody, but little about the educational experiences.

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational experiences of youth who were in the custody of the State of Oklahoma because of abuse and/or neglect. Public schools are responsible for providing the educational services for these students, but, given the many demands upon educators and extremely limited resources at school

and in the community, the researcher questioned if these students were receiving appropriate and equitable learning opportunities. The overarching questions that guided this inquiry were: 1) How are the educational needs of youth in one emergency youth shelter and in the custody of the state of Oklahoma being met? 2) How is shelter education similar to or different from other forms of public education for abused and/or neglected youth? 3) How do these four Shelter students appear to be responding to their educational experiences? 4) How can a Shelter child's relationship with a public school teacher facilitate greater academic success for the child?

Students in state's custody were found to be underserved children with lost records. A lack of communication among agencies was prevalent, and confusion existed over the roles of birth parents, foster parents and social workers. Students in out-of-home placement do not have parental advocates making educational interventions more challenging.

Findings regarding the academic performance of students in kinship placement were mixed. One study, Wald, Curlsmith, and Leiderman (1988), showed that children in a placement with a relative were more likely to repeat a grade than children in a home without a caregiver to whom they are related. Other studies found the opposite to be true. (Berrick, Barth and Needell, 1994).

Research Process

Interviews and observations were the two primary sources of data for this study. Youth were removed from their original placements, usually biological parents or other guardian placement, because of concerns of abuse and/or neglect and placed in a Shelter. They were selected to participate on a first come, first asked basis shortly after being

placed at the Shelter. The four youth, the current public school LCYS Shelter instructor, and three former LCYS shelter school instructors now employed by the LEA were interviewed concerning their opinions, thoughts, and beliefs about the youths' educational experiences. Also, observations of the current educational setting occurred during lesson time.

In-depth tape-recorded interviews were used to collect data prior to two classroom observations. Interview questions were developed after a review of the literature. A pre-ethnography helped the researcher to gain insight into appropriate and relevant questions.

Findings

Research question 1: The educational needs of the four youth currently residing at the Shelter and in the custody of the State of Oklahoma are not being met. Using data from interviews and observations for this study, it became apparent that the educational needs of these youth are not met. Lacking at the Shelter's educational site were appropriate materials, equipment, and supplies. The students were educated by Shelter instructors only for three hours daily. The Shelter instructors also appeared to lack understanding on the issues that abused and/or neglected youth have encountered both before and after being taken into the custody of the State, and how these issues affect educational outcomes. The instructors indicated the students were brought to the Shelter without educational records or other documentation needed to ensure the educational services provided to the students met their educational needs. The instructors also reported the LEA did not appear vested in Shelter education and that Shelter students were not offered the same opportunities for learning as other students enrolled in the

district. The instructors also expressed concerns over their well-being and indicated they were not awarded the same pay or benefits as other instructors within the district.

The Shelter students, while indicating feeling safer at the Shelter school site than at a regular site, also reported frustration concerning the lack of up-to-date books and equipment and not having access to classes and activities available to other students in the district. Shelter students expressed concerns over falling behind their peers while attending the Shelter school. What the Shelter students were learning at Shelter school was not what they would be learning at their regular sites.

The research process showed the Shelter instructors lacked appropriate materials. Observations of the classroom setting showed obsolete textbooks and faulty equipment. Educational records were absent when the youth was signed into Shelter placement. In interviews with the instructors, it was disclosed that, most times, the instructors did not receive records about the youths' education backgrounds for the entire time they were in Shelter placement. Custody students need to have their school records transferred from their old school to their new school. School records did not follow the student at the rate they were being moved to new placements. When foster children moved to a new residence, they often moved to a new school district. Records appeared to be lost. Most times there are multiple age level learners in one classroom setting. Teachers appeared frustrated because of low pay. A lack of appropriate materials and poor equipment were cited as main concerns by the Shelter instructors. The Shelter instructors were frustrated about the educational services provided by the LEA. They were also frustrated about what they saw as unequal treatment between Shelter instructors and other instructors in the district. All of these concerns factored into the turnover rate of Shelter instructors.

Because of confidentiality laws, communication between systems was found to be hindered. Child welfare laws protect the identity of children in the state's protective custody, a factor in meeting the educational needs of students in custody. In conducting the interviews with the students, it was apparent that the educational needs of these four custody youth were not being met at other sites throughout the state as well. All four students disclosed disrupted educational attempts, revealed oppression by systems in charge of their well-being, and expressed a need for individuals to remain in their lives long enough to advocate for their well-being. All four needed to feel empowered.

Empowerment is an individual process by which one gains control over his life (Labonte, 1995). Empowerment's belief is in change and self-efficacy. All four students need to learn to be self-efficient. None appear to have been taught the necessary skills to develop into self-efficient adults, at the Shelter site or at regular public school sites.

On a more positive note, the researcher was able to find the educational practice of validation of the students' efforts by the Shelter instructor; unfortunately, these four youth will leave the protective environment of the Shelter, not allowing for the relationship between teacher and student to remain intact.

Research question 2: How is shelter education similar to or different from other forms of public education for abused and/or neglected youth? Shelter education was found to be significantly different from other forms of public education for the four research participants. The four students were isolated from regular school activities, interventions, and peers. There were no extracurricular activities for Shelter students. Teachers were not available for subjects that older students were taking such as Latin, or may have wanted to take. The students were held to no educational standards. There did

not appear to be any educational accountability for the students or the instructors.

Students did not appear to be tested on their knowledge. The Shelter school setting was also used for other shelter activities, which is confusing to the students.

The Shelter school setting is oppressive to students. The materials were dated and the equipment was old. Shelter students were with the Shelter instructor only for three hours a day. According to Freire (1972), students need support to develop skills to live as independent adults in the world. Dialogue, the communications that take place between educator and students, and emphasized by Freire (1972) does not have time to flourish, in the half days of instruction. While it became apparent that the Shelter was meeting the basic needs of food and shelter, the students' educational needs were left unaddressed.

Research question 3: How do these four youth appear to be responding to their educational experiences? The youth appeared to have many concerns that affected their educational experiences. Placement issues such as frequent moves to new foster homes, a lack of educational advocacy, and mental health concerns were main factors in disrupted educational experiences for the students while in Shelter placement as well as at other sites. Students in state's custody had worries. Most worries centered on moving and the grief and loss associated with leaving behind teachers, friends and "a way of doing things." Students in custody also worried about not seeing or being placed with their siblings. The youth indicated a desire to be placed with their siblings, but none were. This may help explain why focusing on school work was a low priority. Out-of-home placements increased the chance of emotional and behavioral disturbances, which in turn increased the chances for difficulties in the educational system. Whatever the students' experience was before entering the child welfare system, to be removed from their home

and their parents appeared to cause serious mental health concerns. Many times, mental health issues were seen as a low priority by state caseworkers; often, these mental health concerns manifested themselves in inappropriate behaviors at school. Some students become angry, others depressed. Some acted out, others held the hurt in.

According to Bandura (1982), human behavior is learned. All people, old or young, acquire behaviors through the observation of others. They then imitate what they observe. Bandura, labeling this concept as observational learning, recognized that much learning takes place as a result of reinforcement, but he stressed that all forms of behavior can be learned without directly experiencing reinforcement. Rather than experiencing reinforcement for actions, humans learn through vicarious reinforcement by observing the behavior of others and the consequences of their behaviors. Youth in the custody of the state have been modeled inappropriate ways to deal with stressful situations. They need positive interactions with individuals who are willing to show them healthier ways to cope with painful situations. These individuals need to serve the youth by interacting with them in ways that are positive and to show appropriate coping skills when situations turn stressful.

Freire's (1972) emphasis on dialogue, suggests that modeling of appropriate behaviors, as well as involvement between student and teacher, could help a Shelter student to become more successful. Informal education is dialogical, or conversational, rather than curricula based, and are of particular significance to Freire's train of thought. Freire was insistent that dialogue involved respect. He believed that education should not involve one person acting on another, but rather people working with each other toward common goals, much like Kreisberg's "power with."

Research question 4: How can a Shelter child's relationship with a public school teacher facilitate greater academic success for the child? Students in the custody of the state generally did not have an adult who stayed with them long enough to be their educational advocate. Placement was the main factor in this finding. Students were moved from one residential setting to another; bonding and advocacy did not have time to develop. The youth indicated strong relationships with public school teachers who they felt cared about them as individuals and about their educational success. None were able to continue these positive relationships because of frequent moves from school to school. What appeared to be missing was someone with knowledge of the school system who could help with enrollment and transfer processes, and who could monitor the student's academic progress and attendance. All students in the study needed an advocate to ensure they were receiving necessary services to grow into educated, well-adjusted members of society. Nothing in the study suggested they had such a person. As custody youth being moved from placement to placement, the chance of forming an attachment with a trusted adult was diminished.

Servant Leaders are individuals who listening intently, who are committed to the growth of people, and who build community. Public teachers can be Servant Leaders to abused and/or neglected students.

State caseworkers are not educators. Educators lack knowledge on the unique set of circumstances affecting custody youth. For most non-custody students, usually a parent assumes the role of advocate for their child's educational well-being. Students in the custody of the state have no parent to be their advocate.

Teachers who knew of the student's unique set of problems appeared to be willing to help the student, yet many lacked the social histories, records and other information needed to advocate for the student's educational well-being. This appeared to be true regardless of where the youth attended school.

Conclusions

The impact of child abuse and neglect often is discussed by research in terms of physical, psychological, behavioral, societal, and educational consequences. In reality, however, it is impossible to separate them completely. Physical consequences of abuse can lead to cognitive delays and emotional difficulty. Mental health issues often manifest as acting out behaviors or as depression and worry. All of these factors contribute adversely to how the child does in the educational arena.

Research question 1: The educational needs of the four youth, placed in the Shelter under the state were not being met. The educational experiences of the youth at this Shelter were found to be detrimental to quality learning. Inadequate materials, lack of records, high teacher and student mobility, and a wide range of students' educational level result in minimal learning for the Shelter's youth. Shelter students were educated by the Shelter instructor only for three hours a day, approximately three to four hours shorter than those at most public school sites.

Research question 2: How is shelter education similar to or different from other forms of public education for abused and/or neglected youth? The educational experiences of students in Shelter placement are not the same and are not equal to non-custody students' educational experiences. Instructors are not prepared in teacher education programs on appropriate educational interventions for this group of students.

Students in state's custody experience frequent moves, lack educational advocates, and are isolated

Research question 3: How do these youth appear to be responding to their educational experiences? Custody youth are not responding positively to the educational interventions being provided to them. Students in custody worry, mostly about grief and loss. This may explain why school work becomes a low priority.

Because of past abuse and/or neglect issues, custody youth have mental health concerns. If a student is depressed, worried, or angry, school becomes of less importance. Freire (1972) believes that all persons, however ignorant or submerged in their own culture, can look critically at their own world through a process of dialogue with others, and then gradually come to perceive their personal and social reality, think about it, and take action in regard to it.

Research question 4: How can a Shelter child's relationship with a public school teacher facilitate greater academic success for the child? The Shelter students expressed caring and appropriate relationships with teachers; if relationships could have continued, the students' chances of academic success would have increased. Custody youth have no parents to act on their behalf. A vested, concerned public school teacher could help fill this gap by becoming Servant Leaders to abused and/or neglected students.

Recommendations

Practice Recommendations

Because shelter students are taught by the shelter instructor for three hours a day only, more instructional time is needed. Supporting this recommendation is also the fact

that students have a wide range of academic ability and learning experiences. The LEA needs to ensure adequate materials, equipment and space. Instructors need to be qualified to teach such a diverse group of individuals. The LEA is responsible for the teachers and the students. Since the Shelter turnover rate is high, the LEA needs to investigate the cause(s).

Child Protective Services' main mission is the physical safety of children. Child welfare specialists are not trained educators. Emergency protective youth shelters' mission is to meet the basic needs of shelter, food and safety of children. The shelter site was never intended to be a public school setting for abused and neglected students. Since educational systems educate, and educators are the experts in this arena, they need to be addressing the educational needs of abused and neglected students in child protective custody.

Abused and neglected students need educational systems, child welfare systems, and community agencies working together harmoniously to feel empowered. The ability for an individual to achieve empowerment can be hindered if the social support systems need change. All systems need to be collaborating and communicating about what they are doing and how they are helping these students if their educational needs are to be met. Hutchison and McGill (1992) state that when individuals attempt to negotiate services to feel empowered, they can find the bureaucratic systems they encountered confusing. Labonte (1995) recognized that empowerment was dependent on an interconnectedness of various aspects of a person's life. Labonte (1995) and Lord (1991) define empowerment as an individual process by which one secures control over his/her life. Shelter students need to be modeled appropriate ways to gain healthy control over their

lives. One-on-one interventions with a positive, caring role model in the form of a teacher, a community advocate or a mentor should be used for the students at the shelter.

Policy changes are needed, including an educational information form to be completed by the State caseworker and given to the adult registering the youth in school. If this adult is the caseworker, this person needs to give the form to the school upon registration into school (see attachment 4).

Shelter instructors were not prepared to deal with the immense educational needs of abused and/or neglected students. For all educational systems, in-service and professional development training on traumatized youth is needed. Schools need to form a multi-disciplinary team meeting for each custody youth enrolled in public school. Those to be included at the meeting would be the student's regular educator, school counselor, school administrator, state caseworker, special educator if one is warranted, foster parent and educational advocate. Staffing with the above mentioned individuals on an as-needed basis needs to be ensured. Progress reports need to be sent to the state caseworker on the youth's progress every two months. Reports need to be completed by the educator responsible for the youth's education.

Community agencies could help in educational successes for abused and/or neglected youth. One example would be a pilot program working between CASA and educators to ensure all needs of custody youth are met. CASA programs provide abused and/or neglected children nation wide with a consistent person to follow their case throughout the court system. CASA uses trained community volunteers who commit to follow the life of the child's case. CASA volunteers are Servant Leaders. The term Servant Leader is rooted in the notion that people first choose to serve and then lead for the collective

greater good (Greenleaf, 1970). The educators/mentors for such programs as CASA could be recruited at Oklahoma Retired Educators meetings, through public service announcements, and through the educational system.

Research Recommendations

Custody students need a stable, secure living placement. They are moved too often; this factors into lost school records and a lack of communication and collaboration between agencies. The students in the study stated they were frustrated about placement issues, all desired to be with siblings in a stable environment. More research needs to be conducted as to why youth are "blowing placements" when they say they want a secure placement.

The public school sites the participants chose to talk about in this study have the materials, equipment and classes that the participants indicated they needed and wanted. The disadvantage of these school sites is that some of the public school teachers lacked patience, understanding and training on ways to educate students in the regular classroom who are victims of trauma. Research needs to be conducted on how or why teachers make a positive difference with traumatized students, and how these teachers know what to do. Research also needs to be conducted on how abused and neglected children are taught in regular school.

A survey-type, quantitative study would increase information and numbers concerning this sub-set of public school students and needs to be conducted to obtain more information. Custody information could be obtained by the DHS and survey instruments could be mailed to all custody youth on their educational experiences since being in the custody of the state. This study would widen the information obtained

directly from custody youth on their educational experiences, and could be used to enhance educational outcomes for this group of students.

This study needs to be repeated in other shelters throughout Oklahoma so that congruity and a strategy for setting higher educational standards for all custody youth could be achieved. This information could be used by both the educational system and the child welfare system to improve the quality of educational interventions for custody youth. The information could also help by making educational services provided more uniform for all youth residing in shelters in Oklahoma.

Final Comments

Public schools are responsible for providing the educational services for custody students, but given the many demands upon educators and the extremely limited resources at school and in the community, it appeared that these students were not receiving appropriate and equitable learning opportunities. Additionally, there does not appear to be any specific provision in federal law for child welfare professionals to contribute their expertise about this particular group of youth or to provide advocacy for individual youth. It would appear that confidentiality is protected over providing appropriate educational services. Child welfare laws and educational laws that protect confidentiality appear to hamper youth in foster care from receiving educational services they may need.

Most students spend more time in the educational environment than in the home environment during the school year. For students who are being abused and/or neglected who do not have the safety of a protective shelter and remain at home where the majority of abuse occurs, educational environment becomes even more critical. Schools need to

remain safe. Teachers are the eyes and ears of child protective services. They need to report to child protective services what they see. It is a matter of life and death for some children and is required by law.

The impact of child abuse and neglect often is discussed by research in terms of physical, psychological, behavioral, societal, and educational consequences. In reality, however, it is impossible to separate them completely. Physical consequences of abuse can lead to cognitive delays and emotional difficulty.

Mental health experts, school psychologists, school counselors and special educators need to rethink the categories they assign to abuse students. Far too many have been given the label of ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder or Conduct Disorder and placed in special education classrooms for emotional disturbances. Assessors and those who assign diagnoses need to look for trauma issues more closely. A proper diagnosis of a mental health concern such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or an adjustment disorder could be a more appropriate diagnosis and needs to be ruled out. Although these students do need extra school-based interventions, this could be accomplished in the form of more support for the classroom teacher to keep the student in the least restrictive environment of the regular education classroom setting.

School administrators could benefit from in-services programs on behavioral techniques that redirect inappropriate behaviors of acting out youth. Administrators need interventions that are structured, fair, make sense to the student, and that re-teach maladaptive behaviors. Interventions such as spending time with the youth, being a good role model, and engaging the youth in beneficial dialogue would be examples of positive behavioral interventions, and would better serve the educational needs of abused and/or

neglected students. These concepts should be based on respect. Respect for the youth should be modeled by the administrator regardless of the offending youth's violation.

Freire (1972) was insistent that dialogue involved respect, believing education should not involve one person acting on another, but rather people working with each other toward common goals, much like Kreisberg's (1992) "power with."

Child protective services' main mission is the physical safety of children. Child welfare specialists are not trained educators. Educational systems educate. Public educators are the experts in this arena. School officials are the individuals who need to be addressing the educational needs of abused and neglected students in child protective custody.

Because of the researcher's experiences and now because of this research, the struggle to separate the person from the research was a continuous one. Individuals who have survived an abusive childhood may well struggle emotionally when they hear the stories of oppression and alienation that abuse brings into a child's life. It is the researcher's hope that others who have experienced the tragedy of childhood mistreatment will find a way, an outlet, to let others know that abuse issues have long term consequences. Only by telling the stories of those who have survived and the stories of children who have not, can a society alleviate the oppression of abuse and/or neglect.

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APPENDICES

Attachment 1

Dear:

I am presently involved in a research study looking at the educational needs of youth in the custody of the Department of Human Services. I am interested in how systems can work together to improve educational outcomes for custody youth. This information is valuable to both the child welfare system and the school system.

Research shows that the educational outcomes for state custody youth are poor. This study can contribute to our knowledge base to improve outcomes for the youth in the custody of the state in such areas as grade retention, drop-out rates, and as a way to ensure youth have the skills they need to be fully-functioning adults. I would value your input.

This study is titled, "Meeting the Educational Needs of Students in Child Protective Services Custody at One Emergency Youth Shelter". Since you have taught at the Payne County Youth Services shelter in the past, I would like to interview you concerning your thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about educational experiences of youth that you taught.

I will be the primary investigator for this study and it is being conducted to fulfill the dissertation requirements for my doctoral degree. Please contact me at the following phone numbers (405) 377-5196, (405) 377-3380, or (405) 614-0131 to discuss this more fully. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Linda Poe MS, LPC, NCC

Meeting the Educational Needs of Students in Child Protective Services Custody at One Emergency Youth Shelter

Date _____

Dear Shelter School Instructor:

I am presently involved in a research study looking at the educational needs of youth in the custody of the Department of Human Services. I am interested in how agencies can work together to improve educational outcomes for these youth. This information is valuable to the child welfare system, school system and other agencies that are involved in the youth's education. Research shows that educational outcomes for these youth are poor. This study can help to improve educational outcomes in such areas as grade retention, drop-out rates, and as a way to ensure that these youth have what they need educationally to be fully-functioning adults. I would value what you have to say about this issue.

This study is titled, "Meeting the Educational Needs of Students in Child Protective Services Custody." I would like to interview you concerning your thoughts, opinions and beliefs about the educational experiences of the youth. I will also be observing some youth as they interact with you at the Payne County Youth Services shelter school setting. You should not reveal information that is not relevant to the youth's educational experiences. Confidentiality is the duty to keep private what is shared with me. However, in a few situations I am legally and ethically bound to break confidentiality. These times include:

1. If the youth tell me that they are being abused or have been abused in the past.
2. If the youth appears in my judgment to be in danger of hurting themselves or someone else.
3. If the youth and their guardian request in writing, that I release information to someone else or
4. If a court of law tells me I have to release the information to them.

Because the youth are in the custody of the state of Oklahoma, certain Federal and State mandates must be followed. To address this, the Internal Review Board (IRB) requires that an advocate be present during the youths assent process. Shelia Kennison, an IRB member and Assistant Professor at Oklahoma State University has agreed to be the advocate for this study. Sue Jacobs, IRB Chair and a Professor at Oklahoma State University will be the alternate advocate in case of scheduling problems. Both of these individuals, as well as the primary investigator and her advisors contact information will be added to the youths' contact list at the youth shelter. Contact information for Dr. Kennison will be given to the youth and the shelter staff at the time the youth assents. The youth will be able to access these individuals if any questions arise only concerning the research process.

I will be the primary investigator for this study and it is being conducted to fulfill requirements for my doctoral degree. My supervising professor is Kenneth Stern, Associate Professor at Oklahoma State University. I will also be interviewing several youth, and two to three former shelter teachers at the shelter concerning their thoughts, opinions and beliefs about the youth's educational experiences since being in the custody of the state. One follow-up interview with a shelter instructor and two follow-up interviews with two of the youth will also take place. A member check, which is having members of the study check the researchers work, consisting of a summary of a transcribed tape by one of the youths interviewed and one of the teachers interviewed, will be obtained by the researcher, to ensure that an accurate account of the information has been obtained. I will begin the interview process in October, 2005. These interviews will be audio taped. All tapes and other information gathered for the study will be kept at the Payne County Youth Services office, 2224 W. 12th, in a locked file cabinet in a special locked container only to be used by the researcher. When no longer needed, data will be destroyed. Observations of your interactions with the youth will begin in October. All names and identifying characteristics of participants will be changed to protect anonymity and confidentiality.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you choose to participate in the study you are free to withdraw permission at any time. You may also decline to participate. You will not be penalized for withdrawing or declining. If at any time during this study you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may contact:

Sue Jacobs, Chair
Institutional Review Board
415 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University,
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-5700

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact Linda Poe, or my supervising professor, Kenneth Stern, at the following addresses or telephone numbers. Thank you for participating.

Sincerely yours,

Linda Poe, M.S., L.P.C., N.C.C.
2224 W. 12th
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074
(405) 377-5196

Kenneth Stern, Ed.D.
O.S.U. College of Education
311 Willard Hall
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74075-4045
(405) 744-8929

Please indicate whether you wish to participate in this study by checking the statement and signing your name. Please sign both copies and keep one copy for your records.

_____ I wish to participate.

Shelter Instructor's Signature

Shelter Instructor's Printed Name

Date

Attachment 3A

Shelter Teacher Interview Protocol

- a) To begin with, tell me about yourself.
- How long have you taught?
 - How long have you, or did you, teach at the Payne County Youth Services shelter site?
 - Why did you choose this line of work?
 - What motivates you to continue?
 - Is teaching at the youth shelter what you expected?
- b) All of us who have taught have students who stay with us, so to speak; those students who remain in our thoughts and minds even if they are no longer physically present in our lives. Can you think of such a student?
- Tell me about this student.
 - What has happened that has made this student an ongoing part of your thought processes?
- c) The shelter has many youth who have received educational services on-site. Most of these youth come to the shelter with unresolved issues that may impact their educational development.
- What do you find to be the most effective way to educate these students?
 - How do you handle behavior problems, if and when they arise?
 - What concerns you the most about this population of students?

- What do you see as the main barrier, if any, to achieving academic success with these students?

d) Is there anything else that you would like to tell me?

- General concerns about the youth.
- How could systems—child welfare—educational systems—work to improve educational outcomes?
- What do you see that could help these students in general?

Attachment 3B

Youth Interview Protocol

- a) To begin with, tell me about yourself.
- How old are you? What grade are you in? What do you like to do?
 - How long have you been at the youth shelter? Is this your first time here?
 - What, if anything, do you like about being placed here? Is there anything you would change if you could?
- b) Tell me about school.
- How do you feel about your education so far in your life?
 - How has going to school helped or hurt you?
 - How could the people who work in schools understand you better?
 - What worries or concerns you the most, if anything, about schools?
- c) All of us who have been to school have adults who work for school systems who stay with us, so to speak; those teachers, coaches, principals, custodians, or others involved with schools who remain in our thoughts and minds even if this person is no longer physically present in our lives. Can you think of such a person?
- Tell me about this person.
 - Why is this person important to you?
 - What did this person do that made him or her special to you?
 - Is there anyone in the school whom you can remember who did not treat you well? Who was this person and how were you treated?
- d) Is there anything else that you feel you would like to tell me?
- What could the people in your life do to improve your situation?

- How could the child welfare system and the educational system work to improve your educational experiences?
- What worries you about your future?

Attachment 4

Educational Information

Caseworkers can copy this form on agency letterhead and give it to the adult who is registering a foster child for school, once it is filled out.

Date: _____

Child: _____ Age: _____ DOB: _____

Medicaid #: _____

New Address: _____

Previous School: _____ Current Grade: _____

Previous School Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Check one: General Ed _____ Special Ed _____ Gifted Program _____

State Caseworker/Contact: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Foster Parent(s): _____ Phone Number: _____

Date of Placement with Foster Parent: _____

Interaction with Biological Parent (circle one): Permitted Limited None

Other Relevant Information (IEP to be attached if student has one):

Attach to immunization record and birth certificate.

Attachment 5

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, October 04, 2005
IRB Application No ED068
Proposal Title: Meeting the Educational Needs for Students in Child Protective Custody

Reviewed and Processed as: Full Board

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 10/3/2006

Principal Investigator(s)

Linda C. Poe
1509 S. Berkshire Dr.
Stillwater, OK 74074

Ken Stern
311 Willard
Stillwater, -OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 46 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 415 Whitchurst (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Sue C. Jacoby, Chair
Institutional Review Board

VITA

Linda C. Poe

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FOR STUDENTS IN CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES CUSTODY AT ONE EMERGENCY YOUTH SHELTER

Major Field: School Administration

Biographical:

Education: Received Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from Saint Mary of the Plains College, Dodge City, Kansas 1987. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree in Counseling and Student Personnel at Oklahoma State University in July, 1995. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 2006.

Experience: Program director for Payne County Youth Services, Stillwater, Oklahoma, Victim of Crime Act (VOCA) grant.

Professional Memberships: Licensed as Licensed Professional Counselor from Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in 1997.

Licensed as a National Board Certified Counselor, Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1997.

Member of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society since 2004.

Name: Linda C. Poe

Date of Degree: July, 2006

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: MEETING THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS FOR STUDENTS IN CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES CUSTODY AT ONE EMERGENCY YOUTH SHELTER

Pages in Study: 166

Candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Major Field: School Administration

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to look at the educational needs of youth who are in the custody of the State of Oklahoma because of abuse and/or neglect issues from the perspective of the youth themselves as well as the teachers who had been hired to them. All participants in the study were either students in an emergency youth shelter that provides emergency services to abused and/or neglected youth or were educational instructors at the emergency youth shelter's school site. Observation and interviewing of the four shelter students, one current instructor, and three former shelter instructors were used to test major assumptions.

Findings and Conclusions: The educational needs of students in the custody of the state are not being met at the Loma County Youth Shelter site or at the regular public school site. Shelter education lacks the material, equipment and space that students need to learn. Shelter students are educated by the shelter instructor for three hours a day only. Shelter education was found to be significantly different from other forms of public education. The youth appeared to have many concerns that affected their educational experiences and were not responding to educational interventions. Placement issues such as frequent moves to new foster homes, a lack of educational advocacy, and mental health concerns were main factors in disrupted educational experiences. Shelter instructors also appeared frustrated by the differences in educational services between youth taught at the Shelter and those who were not.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: A. Kenneth Stern
