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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SAFE SCHOOLS: A HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH

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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF SAFE SCHOOLS:
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A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
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ABSTRACT

Beginning in 1996, a rash of rampage school shootings occurred in the United States. “Rampage school shootings occur when students or former students attack their own school” (Langman, 2009, p. 2). Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the psychological and sociological aspects and to provide insight into the question of how and why something this horrific could occur in our American schools (Twenge & Campbell, 2009; Irvine, 2010; Langman, 2009, Newman, Fox, Harding, & Roth, 2004, Epstein, 2007, Levine, 2005; Hine, 1999). The voice conspicuously missing in these studies is the voice of the teachers (NESRI, Fall 2008). Yet teachers have been the victims in many cases as they faithfully fulfilled their job and protected the lives of their students.

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenology study is to ascertain the meaning teachers make of what constitutes a safe school according to the interpretivist point of view. The interpretive paradigm is viewed as the most suitable for this research because of its potential to generate new understandings of complex multidimensional human phenomena. The data from ten teacher interviews is presented according to Max van Manen’s (1990) four existential life-worlds: temporality (lived time), corporeality (lived body), relationality (lived other) and spatiality (lived space). Emerging threads of shame, vulnerability, isolation, empathy/relationship, hope/ involvement, and reintegration/forgiveness are examined through the etic theoretical and practical overlay of restorative practices.

CHAPTER ONE

Theoretical Perspective

Introduction

Upon hearing the first shot, or before, it is imperative for teachers to be able to react as trained professionals whose job it is to save all others. Beginning in 1996, a rash of rampage school shootings occurred in the United States. These violent eruptions, the most extreme cases of school violence, exemplify the problems that also lead to less sensational expressions of anger and intimidation that unfortunately occur daily in our schools, threatening even the most basic notion of a safe school (Brooks, 2006). Columbine, the deadliest massacre at an American high school, is also the most notorious. On April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School near Denver and Littleton, Colorado, two senior students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, killed twelve students and one teacher. Twenty-four other students were injured before the pair committed suicide. This event, along with the spree of other school shootings (see Appendix A), including one in 1999 close by at the Middle School in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma and another which just recently occurred in 2011 at Millard South High School in Omaha, Nebraska bring national attention to the need for crisis prevention and operational plans designed to restore order and normalcy after chaos by providing working models for preventing, managing, and recovering from episodes of school violence.

When new ideas for crisis management emerge, schools depend upon staff development to train teachers. However, the administration has few effective measurements to determine the proficiency of teachers to effectively implement this training (Duke, Dec 1992/Jan 1993). Educators who feel overwhelmed by current

demands on their time and attention may view this issue as just the latest fad in the pendulum swing all too familiar to education, or face personal obstacles that mitigate assimilation of a new idea (Palmer, 1998; Scherz, 2006). Such obstacles weaken the potential for success of the program, no matter how effective. Since program success is dependent upon teacher readiness for implementation, it is imperative that schools have knowledge of what might impede a faculty's willingness or ability to participate.

This study analyzes one component of the larger situation that is school violence. It investigates one of the essential agents of education, the teacher. No matter what programs or philosophies are mandated by the administration of the school, it is dependent upon the individual teacher in the classroom to set the tone, establish an environment conducive to learning, and lead the class to mastery, either by modeling, direct teaching, or by creating constructive learning opportunities. This is true for the intellectual field, as well as the social, emotional, and psychological aspects, as well. The study employs in-depth phenomenological interviews and multi-layered interpretation to answer the question: based on his/her lived experiences as a seasoned teacher what is his/her vision of a safe school? The study is limited in scope to teachers employed for a minimum of fifteen years in order to benefit from their experiences and to determine what impediments may exist after longevity in the field.

To put the role of teacher in proper perspective, I reflect and then address education utilizing a systems theory approach. Systems thinking is described by Senge (1990) as a "discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static snapshots"(p. 69). Because causality is circular rather than a straight line, changes in any part of the system

will affect the other parts and the system as a whole. Furthermore, a system is always in a state of flux and changes that occur today in one part of the system may not become obvious for months or even years (Sparks, Fall 1994). Senge (1990) encourages organizations to look for points of high leverage in the system; small changes introduced into one area can have a ripple effect elsewhere in the organization. Teachers' attitudes and behaviors are one of the points of high leverage.

In addressing school violence from a systems viewpoint, I first provide definitions and then explore the types and causes of violence. Next, the study explores current studies into pedagogical perspectives and what research is still required for proper analysis. Finally, the teacher's role is further investigated in the context of a whole-school implementation system. The most compelling program that works to prevent crisis and manage the aftermath of an event is restorative practices (Delisio, 2004; Kessler, 2000; Kohn, 1996; Kriete, 1999). This theory and practice provide a lens or etic theoretical overlay through which teacher interviews will be examined. This chapter contains a brief introduction to restorative practices and Chapter Two will provide a more comprehensive historical and theoretical view.

Background for the study

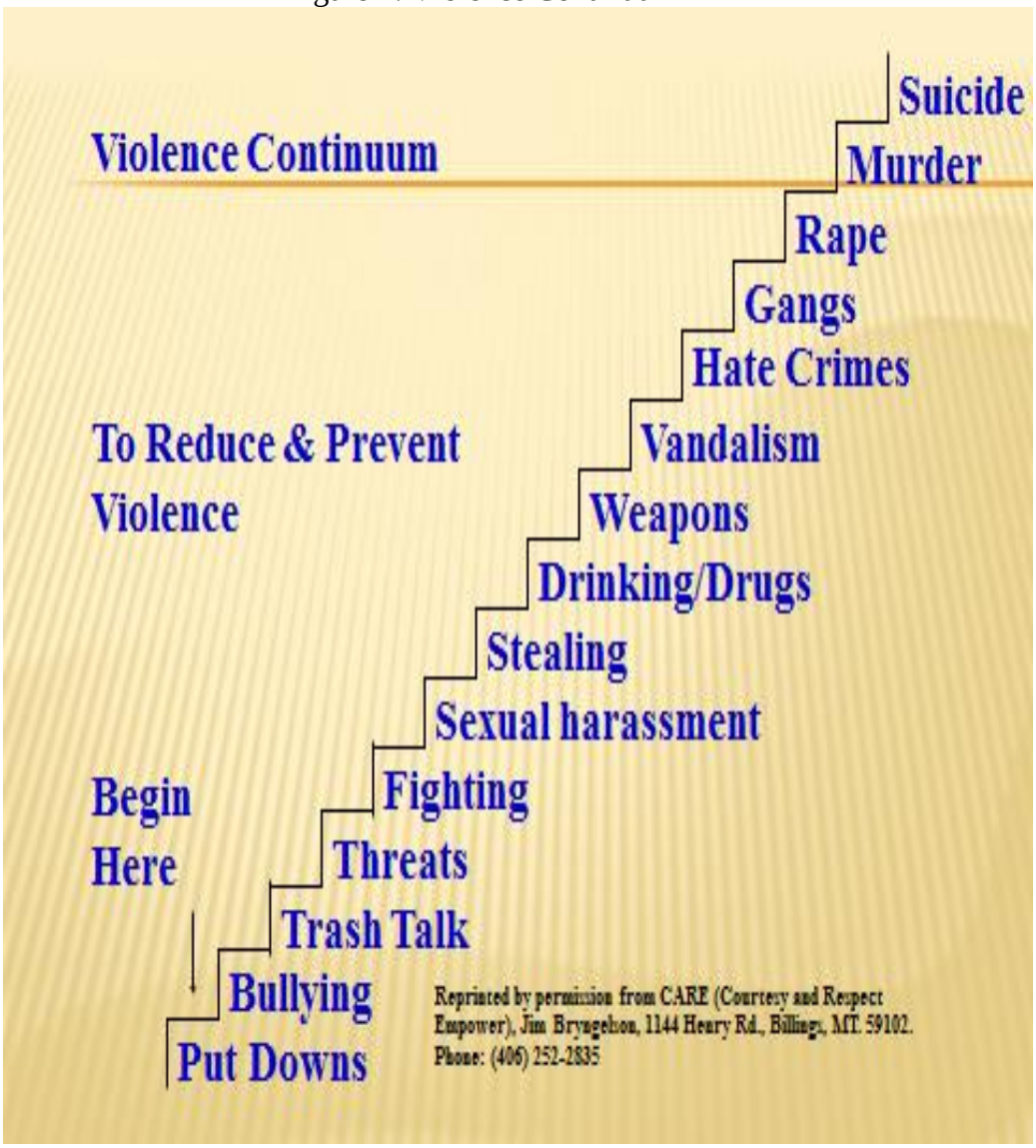
A survey of high school principals in 1949 is the first known study on student violence. It determined that no difficulty existed with violent behaviors in school. However, in 1956, the National Educational Association (NEA) asserted that violence was becoming more of a concern within the schools (Warner, Weist, & Krulak, 1999). Cultural, racial, and political issues in the 1960s and 1970s contributed to the growth of reported tumult, and in 1971, the House of Representatives held hearings and debated the

passage of the Safe School Act, but no action resulted (Scherz, 2006). There are several known examples of school shootings dating back as early as 1974, when 18 year old Anthony Barbaro entered his closed high school, set several fires, killed the custodian, and then shot at firefighters and passers-by, killing two more people and wounding nine (Newman, Fox, Harding, ~~&~~ & Roth, 2004). This shooting and other acts of violence spurred federal officials to initiate the "War on Drugs" in the 1980s to curtail school violence and to communicate to the public the serious retribution that could follow. Other government actions followed, but finally in 2001, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Community Act (SDFSC, Title IV, Part A), part of the "No Child Left Behind" legislation, tied funding to school laws, including a mandate that districts write safety plans and implement zero tolerance consequences for students in possession of weapons or drugs.

Recognizing that school violence may be defined in many different contexts, school consultant Jared Scherz (2006) offers the definition used by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention, and then broadens the focus, making the definition more appropriate to school settings. His definition of violence is "an overt or subtle act of aggression, physical harm, intimidation, or coercion resulting in emotional or physical suffering of another" (p. 9). The definition provided by the Center for the Prevention of School Violence (CPSV), a resource center and "think tank" on the issue, further attempts to capture the idea that rampage school shootings are only the final act of violence culminating from numerous other forms of victimization. Their definition of violence incorporates "any behavior that violates a school's educational mission or climate of respect or jeopardizes the intent of the school to be free of aggression against

persons or property, drugs, weapons, disruptions, and disorder" (News Brief, May 2002). The CPSV relies on Dr. Bryngelson's "violence continuum" (See Figure 1) and takes into account precursor behaviors that have been identified as escalating into increasingly violent behaviors.

Figure 1: Violence Continuum



www.esc1.net/12931095174216250/lib/12931095174216250/Date_Violence_PP_Laredo.ppt

Efforts which are directed at preventing violent rampages must focus upon a more comprehensive definition and understanding of what constitutes school violence.

Research abounds into the social and psychological causes of school-based attacks with the goal of helping communities across the United States formulate policies and strategies aimed at preventing this targeted mayhem (Twenge & Campbell, 2009; Irvine, 2010; Langman, 2009, Newman, Fox, Harding, & Roth, 2004, Epstein, 2007, Levine, 2005; Hine, 1999). Scherz (2006) states, "As with any social phenomenon, violence has been studied from several perspectives, yielding different paradigms" (p. 12). Many theoretical perspectives focus exclusively on the individual who perpetuates the aggression, considering the impact of social, familial, and cultural influences only as secondary determinants. Developmental theorists propose that traumatized babies may have a proclivity for perpetuating violence. Incomplete moral development is also believed to account for children who behave aggressively. Resiliency, or the internal capacity of an individual to tolerate duress, is another aspect of the phenomenon, suggesting feelings of helplessness may result from the inability to cope with one's catastrophic environment. Youth who continue to feel victimized or helpless, without any hope for the future, are likely to feel powerless. Another theory provided by some criminologists for the explosion of youth crime reflects a growing percentage of children at risk due to neglect or poverty. General dysfunction with the family system is another school of thought (Scherz, 2006). However, rampage school shootings are rare enough to conclude that any particular episode arises from multiple causes interacting with one another (Newman, Fox, Harding, & Roth, 2004).

European criminologist Manuel Eisner provides a historical perspective on violence. He states,

> We need a better understanding of the interaction between the evolutionary forces that shape the universal mechanisms associated with violence, and the ways in which social institutions, beliefs, and structures of daily life control or amplify the potential for violent action (Eisner, 2011).

The predominance of male homicide perpetrators (between 85 and 95 percent) is one of the striking commonalities across space and time that Eisner documented. Although his statistics are based upon research conducted in Europe, it is noteworthy that the statistics are also accurate for the sex ratio of rampage school shooters. Among their findings, the National Academy of Science (NAS) concluded that in the shootings taking place in the United States between 1996 – 2000, there were no cases in which girls had been implicated except in one near-miss when a possible female accomplice reported the plan to an adult (Newman et al, 2004).

A possible explanation for the preponderance of male school shooters is found in contemporary violence research. Relational aggression has received considerable attention since the late 1990's (Bjorkqvist & Niemela, 1992; Bjorkqvist, 1994; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Werner & Crick, 1999; Galen & Underwood, 1997; Paquette & Underwood, 1999; Owens et al., 2000; Bond & Carlin, 2001; Van der Wal et al., 2003; Gleason et al., 2004; Coyne et al, 2006). Other terms used interchangeably with relational aggression are indirect aggression, social aggression, and relational bullying. Recent research on this topic suggests that adolescent males tend to display more incidences of overt physical aggression while adolescent females display more incidences of indirect emotional aggression (Gomes, 2007).

Social aggression includes actions such as rumor spreading, reputation slandering, social isolation, or even facial expressions and body language, which are expressions of anger and contempt projected onto another individual. Indirect aggression could also include behaviors such as throwing, slamming, breaking, or stealing objects. The intended goal is to manipulate the victim's relationships in a negative way so as to cause emotional pain. Victims of relational aggression have been found to be more depressed, anxious, lonely, and to have a more negative self-esteem and fewer close relationships (Coyne, Archer, & Eslea, 2006). There are four criteria (Gomes, 2007) that must be present for relational aggression to occur:

- A relationship between individuals, either casual or close, must exist (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).
- The need for a sense of control must exist.
- The willingness to inflict pain on an individual is evident (Owens, Shute, & Slee, 2000).
- Desensitization is critical. In order for an individual to be able to inflict pain onto another person, they must be able to see that person as less than human.

Two forms of bias-motivated aggression too often overlooked or under reported yet having profound impact on the emotional well-being of students are sexual and racial harassment (Hill & Kearl, 2011; Russell, Clarke, & Laub, 2009; Office for Civil Rights, 2005). Discrimination based on a student's race, color, and national origin is prohibited in schools and colleges receiving federal funds under Title VI. Sexual harassment is defined as "unwanted sexual behavior that interferes with a student's right to receive an

equal education" and is considered as a form of sex discrimination under Title IX (Hill & Kearl, 2011, p. 6). The Office for Civil Rights states that sexual harassment can include:

> conduct such as touching of a sexual nature; making sexual comments, jokes, or gestures; writing graffiti or displaying or distributing sexually explicit drawings, pictures, or written materials; calling students sexually charged names; spreading sexual rumors; rating students on sexual activity or performance; or circulating, showing, or creating emails or Web sites of a sexual nature (p. 6).

Nearly half, forty-eight percent, of the 1,965 students in grades 7-12 surveyed experienced some form of sexual harassment in the 2010-2011 school year. Nearly one-third, 30 percent, was affected by Facebook or other electronic means. However, only nine percent of students reported the incident to a teacher, guidance counselor or other adult at school, although girls did report more often than boys (Hill & Kearl, 2011). Other studies, conducted by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in 1993 and again in 2001found that eight in ten students experience some form of sexual harassment during their school years (Harris, 2001).

Gender harassment, students are targeted for failing to follow norms that are typical for their gender, plays a significant role in sexual harassment in schools (Hill & Kearl, 2011). One study looked particularly at the effects of bias-motivated harassment based on racial identity and sexual orientation among students in California. Over one-third, thirty-eight percent, of participating students reported some form of bias-motivated harassment. Asian students recorded the highest level of racial harassment but the lowest percentage of discrimination based on sexual preference. The highest gender harassment among racial groups was reported by White students (Russell, Clarke, & Laub, 2009).

Scherz (2006) describes the type of violence we witness in rampage school shootings as systemic violence, or acts of aggression that take place within an institution and are typically promoted by factors experienced within. Although it must be noted that gang violence was not responsible for the devastation caused by the rampage shootings we have witnessed since the 1990s, it is an obvious contributor to school violence in general. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) defines gangs as organized groups often involved in drugs, weapons trafficking, and violence. Gangs at school can be disruptive to the school environment because their presence may incite fear among students and increase the overall level of school violence (Laub and Lauritsen, 1998).

Another form of social aggression that warrants its own discussion is cyber bullying. Because it can occur anytime and anywhere, it is often anonymous. Anonymity may amplify fear and negative effects on victims above that of more traditional bullying (Aoyama, Saxon, & Fearon, 2011). Among adolescents, whose identities are closely tied to peer relations and position in the pecking order, bullying and other forms of social exclusion are recipes for marginalization and isolation, which in turn breed extreme levels of desperation and frustration. Particularly in tightly knit rural and suburban communities, where ties are multiplex, anonymity scarce, and homogeneity the rule, those who are different are all the more easily pushed to the fringe (Newman, Fox, Harding, & & Roth, 2004). Ninety percent of the youth surveyed reported not informing adults about cyber bullying for fear of losing online privileges or restriction of their Internet use (Agatston, Kowalski, & Limber, 2007). Access to the Internet is simply too important to youth.

Increased technology provides opportunities and challenges for educators. The benefits include greater access to rich, multimedia content, the increasing use of online course taking to offer classes not otherwise available, the widespread availability of mobile computing devices that can access the Internet, the expanding role of social networking tools for learning and professional development, and the growing interest in the power of digital games for more personalized learning. At the same time, technology presents aspects, besides cyber bullying, that are detrimental to youth and therefore have a negative impact on schools.

Video games have been increasingly available to children and adolescents for more than thirty years, since they were first introduced in the 1970's. The games themselves have advanced from the slow-paced tennis-like game Pong to games of virtual reality, war and avatars. A new game, "School Shooter: North America Tour 2012" in which the player stalks and shoots fellow students and teachers is drawing criticism from educators. The controversy stems not only from the sensitivity to the games replication of school shootings, but also to the link between video games and violent behavior (Rhen, April 2011). Increased time spent playing video games has a two-fold negative impact on youth, school performance can suffer and children can become more aggressive (Bickford, October 2010).

News coverage that glamorizes victimization also has a negative effect in several ways. It exposes youth to more violence and adds to feelings of fear and depression, and it desensitizes people to death and killing as well as providing a public stage for potential killers, who want to be noticed and remembered. Scherz (2006) states,

> The spread of violence across the age spectrum and the severity of incidents we have witnessed throughout the country suggest that youth are learning to resolve conflicts by watching each other. The contagion of violence is a term that is sometimes referred to in the media as the Columbine Effect. For adolescents who are interested in attracting public awareness to their desperate plight, acts of violence have proven to be an effective tool (p. 8).

Thanks to 24-hour news stations, pagers, cellular telephone updates, text messaging and Amber Alerts, teenage murderers can count on their hour of fame as Americans hunger for unfiltered, real-time news coverage (Atkinson, Vaughn, & VanCamp, 2009). As American culture has grown more focused on self-admiration and more enamored with celebrity and fame, and now that mass killing in schools is seen as a direct avenue to fame and attention, the frequency of mass killings has increased.

The media's coverage following each of the major violent episodes places some of the blame on schools, suggesting teachers do a better job of assessing students' potential for violence. Recognizing student needs is most decidedly a teacher's responsibility and goal. However, so often teachers are the ones criticized for not recognizing and addressing the needs of their students, both academically and socially (Palmer, 1999). However, they often have little say in the overall goals and operation of their schools. Levine states,

> It also strikes me that the issue of violence in schools is really an issue of power, who has it and who doesn't. Sadly in today's context, neither the children not the adults working within the system tend to have a lot of power. Often, the creation of violence is an attempt to grab that missing power. (Levine, 2005)

The challenge of educational organizations is to create environments in which teachers and students are empowered to have a voice in leadership (Reeves, 2006).

The causes for student violence are numerous and complicated. Each theory holds some component of the complex equation, and the components vary due to the uniqueness of each child. It would be easy to become discouraged as a teacher and feel that the problems outside of school mitigate anything attempted in the classroom. However, educators, although respectful of the issues and problems facing students, need to be cognizant of the components that make up a healthy school which can reduce the potential for student aggression. The theory of organizational health of a school system can be viewed as the collective awareness of the factors that influence both internal and external environments, and use of that awareness for improvement in areas identified and agreed upon by the collective membership of the constituents within that system (Scherz, 2006). This holistic approach to school health and safety is supported by research which shows that positive environments and constructive interventions, with participation from all stakeholders, are the most effective means for preventing violence (Skiba, 2004).

Need for Study

Instead of focusing our attention solely on the perpetrator, Scherz (2006) has suggested that we address the social ecology of school systems. The term organizational health has been used for at least thirty years to describe the ability of an organization to function effectively, to cope adequately, to change appropriately, and to grow from within. In a whole school approach, instead of targeting the students as the sole cause of aggression or blaming the teachers, thinking is expanded to include the entire system and

each subsystem including parents, school boards, administrators, legislators, faculty, and the students, as well as the interrelatedness of each of these parts to form the whole.

As previously stated, a system is always in a state of flux with movement along various continua. At the end of each continuum is the polarity that defines it. Organizational health can be viewed as how cohesive the varying subsystems are along any particular spectrum. If subgroups move toward opposite extremes, power struggles develop and groups are viewed as adversaries. It is imperative to understand the polarities and where people currently exist on any continuum in order to effectively deal with school change. Utilizing teacher stories, this study helps to establish a safe school continuum useful in understanding the complex problem of campus safety.

As American schools become larger and increasingly bureaucratic, organizational theory becomes more applicable (Tyack, 1974). As early as 1977, a study by the New Jersey School Boards Association found that size was the most important predictor of violence in schools (Fishbaugh, M. S. et al, 2003). Teachers interviewed in New York for the project Teachers Talk agreed that

> in overcrowded schools with large class sizes and limited resources, teachers are not afforded the time and space to build the necessary relationships with students. Students themselves have a more difficult time managing multiple peer-to-peer relationships and tensions are more likely to develop (NESRI, Fall 2008).

Small schools within schools have been suggested as one solution to the problem of oversized facilities (Featherstone, 1987, cited in Fishbaugh, M. S. et al, 2003).

Scherz (2006) suggests that the success of an agency depends in large part upon the organization as a whole and each individual's willingness and ability to be self-aware

and then use that awareness for positive growth. This study provides teachers' an opportunity to reflect and gain self-awareness as they share their stories. I hope that in hearing these stories other teachers, professors, administrators and school reformers will add their personal story and pass on what makes education meaningful.

Perception plays a major role in the determination of whether or not organizational health is being achieved. Recognizing that teachers' perceptions are an integral part of the organizational health of education, a few studies have been conducted to ascertain educators' views on issues relating to school safety. I identify four core studies that have been conducted regarding teachers' perceptions. These studies include: The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher, Kris Bosworth's study of Arizona schools, a qualitative study conducted by Scherz, Murphy and Fanning, and Teachers Talk.

The MetLife Survey of the American Teacher began in 1984 as a simple but provocative idea: listen to teachers. After the release of the report "A Nation at Risk" in 1983, Americans were concerned about the quality of education and debating solutions. Though teachers were the focus of much attention and criticism, they were largely excluded as participants in the debate.

> Teachers are at the center of the educational experience. Despite enormous daily pressures, they are expected to transmit the accumulated knowledge of decades to children of differing backgrounds, abilities and needs – a tall order. If we as a nation truly want quality public education, we must pay more attention to the needs and concerns of teachers. They must be an integral part of any effort to attain a higher level of educational excellence (p. 3).

Beginning in 1990, a series of three surveys tracked the experience of new teachers from the time they finished college and accepted positions through the first and the second years of teaching. The portrait was one of declining optimism and enthusiasm for teaching. Prior to beginning to teach, eight-three percent agreed strongly that they "can make a difference in the lives of their students;" after the second year, only seventy-one percent agreed. At the outset, twenty-eight percent agreed that "many children come to school with so many problems that it's difficult for them to be good students," and after two years, fifty percent agreed (Markow & Cooper, 2008, p. 13).

The 2008 issue highlights the themes: education reform, teaching as a profession; students; leadership and professional relationships; parent and community relationships; and school conditions. Of special interest, forty percent of teachers report that they have so many non-educational responsibilities that they do not have time to develop positive relationships with students (p. 53). MetLife research shows student trust of teachers has improved in the past decade, although improvement is still essential. In the 2000 survey, thirty-nine percent of seventh through twelfth graders indicated that they trust their teachers only a little or not at all. In 2008 this has decreased to twenty-eight percent of secondary students (p. 85). Robert Henrikson, Chairman of the Board of MetLife, Inc. shares that the intent of the survey remains the same: to share the voices of teachers in order to help strengthen education for all children. Qualitative research, such as this study, will enable teachers to expand on these topics and probe deeper into their relevance concerning the safety of schools.

A qualitative study, designed to ascertain student and teacher perceptions of campus safety, was conducted in eleven Arizona schools in 2011. Instead of the expected

findings that schools in more affluent neighborhoods are safer or that the presence of gates and security guards make faculty feel less vulnerable, sixty percent of the students and teachers were more concerned with school climate, the ways students and teachers connected, how teachers interrelated, and what behaviors were reinforced throughout the school. Interestingly, perceptions of safety do not appear to be clearly correlated with the school's location, neighborhood factors, or level of academic achievement. "Well functioning schools may act to mitigate students' negative life environments (Bosworth, Ford, & Hernandez, April 28, 2011).

The significant finding in the Arizona report relates to a feeling of "safety". Measuring suspensions, police reports, or even discipline referrals provides inadequate data and ignores the complex realities of student and faculty experiences. The report states that "a more important measure of the relative safety of any school campus may be the perceptions of safety among students, faculty and staff" (Bosworth, Ford, & Hernandez, April 28, 2011). More research is recommended, specifically regarding the role of leadership in promoting perceptions of safety. Focus groups were utilized to garner perceptions in this study. Multi-layered interpretations and multiple interviews of individual educators will permit development of the topic of leadership in this study.

Recognizing that perceptions of the role of school culture in spreading violence influences prevention efforts. Scherz, Murphy and Fanning (2004) created a school violence inventory with fifteen internal factors, related to school culture, and fifteen external factors. Teachers and administrators were asked to rate each factor as to its low, medium, or high influence on student violence. The five most highly rated internal factors were morale of faculty, leadership of faculty, supervision of faculty, teamwork of

faculty, and school policies and procedures. External factors considered to exude the most influence were child abuse, familial influences, social isolation, poverty, and media. Semi-structured interviews formulated from these factors were conducted as a follow-up to the survey.

Scherz, Murphy and Fanning verify the need to know more about how educators' perceptions of school climate and culture influence prevention efforts. They quote Finley (2002) who states "The absence of studies to date that directly seek to understand how safety measures are perceived by teachers, how they affect teachers, and how a teacher, in turn, affects students, is a glaring omission" (n.p.). The authors note that school administration as a key determinant of campus culture was supported by the limited research available to them while completing their literature review. The importance of leadership in preventing school violence is a prompt provided participants in this study to augment current available data.

Teacher Talk is a report based primarily upon the findings of surveys and focus groups of New York City middle and high school teachers, conducted during the 2007-2008 school year by the National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI) and Teachers Unite. In answer to the question "What do you believe is the largest threat to safety in your school?" the most common response, roughly seventeen percent of teachers, was a lack of cohesive culture and positive relationships between staff and students. Moreover, they further state that even the other major threats to safety, including gangs, at sixteen percent, and fights and conflict among students, at fifteen percent, can only be addressed if a school has a positive and respectful culture. Eleven percent of the teachers cite a lack of leadership and support from the principals as the

largest threat. Research supports the importance teachers place on strong leadership. In a national survey, seventy-nine percent of new teachers chose supportive administrators over salary increases (Associates, 2007). Other findings from this report are as follows:

- Fourteen percent cite the lack of a clear system for discipline
- Seven percent state overcrowding and large class sizes threaten safety
- Almost forty-three percent of teachers say they have only some influence over discipline and safety, and
- Eighty-six percent think teachers should have a lot or the most influence over discipline

Recommendations from this study were distributed to the mayor and the Department of Education, calling for proactive and constructive approaches to discipline that create positive school cultures, teach behavioral skills and use conflict resolution and mediation, and use restorative practices. Sixty-six percent of those surveyed say that restorative practices are effective or very effective disciplinary methods, yet twenty percent of the teachers respond that they lacked sufficient knowledge about the philosophy.

Teachers also talk about the need for creativity and flexibility in staff development, creating programs where teachers can collaborate and give encouragement, constructive feedback and guided reflection to support them in the classroom. Further research could expand upon teachers' greatest needs, including staff training in restorative practices and the identification of hindrances they experienced when implementing the ideas presented.

Administrators define the ethos, or a set of values, that determines how the staff, teachers, and students treat each other. "Thinking systemically allows school leaders to

foster a climate for learning and safety. However, it is inside the classroom that students learn specific skills, knowledge, and dispositions" (Devine & Cohen, 2007. pg. 2). Teachers enter the profession because they want to make a difference. The pay is low for professionals. Most are not interested in promotion, and if they are, it is to make a larger difference and be able to affect more of the educational environment than they feel they can achieve in the classroom (Fullan, 1996). Recognizing the importance of teachers predicates the need to understand and address their social, learning, and safety related needs, a goal of this research.

Restorative practices are driven by an ethos that emphasizes trust, mutual respect and tolerance (Hopkins, 2004). In developing a whole school approach to restorative practices, it is paramount that everything that is done is informed by this ethos, these values and philosophy which give central importance to building, maintaining, and when necessary, repairing relationships and community. Change of this magnitude does not occur easily. Many factors influence how transformation is embraced and implemented. The notion that "change is a process, not an event" is recognized by researchers and practitioners (Zmuda, Kuklis, & Kline, 2004).

Educators offer a depth of knowledge and experience that is essential to comprehending how the social organization of schooling has contributed to student violence. The National Economic and Social Rights Initiative (NESRI, 2008) states,

> Political leaders, advocates, police, journalists, and pundits all have given voice to opinions about how you ensure safety and discipline in schools. It is far less common to hear the voices of ordinary teachers in this public debate,

although it is the teachers, along with their students, who have the most relevant experience with this question. (NESRI, p. 1)

This study will provide another venue from which politicians, researchers and administrators can hear the teachers' voice. Current studies emphasize the need for additional research (Scherz, 2006).i

Significance of the study

Rampage school shootings disturb peoples' confidence that schools are an insulated, safe place, where students love for learning is nurtured and skills to live successfully in a democratic society are taught. Responding to this and less sensational expressions of anger and intimidation that occur on a daily basis, schools increasingly adopt law enforcement rather than educational models for violence reduction. These measures include the use of metal detectors, increased police presence on campus, searches of lockers and students , student and staff I. D. cards, school uniforms, zero tolerance mandated sentencing, and adjudicating delinquent adolescents as if they were adults (Fishbaugh, M. S. et al, 2003). However, a national study comparing violent and safe schools demonstrates that safe schools are characterized by leadership that instilled in students a "sense of fairness, belonging and empowerment to effect change," not by retributive, or punitive, police tactics (Eliasm, Lanteri, Janet, & Walberg, 1999).

Recognizing the anger and alienation generated in schools as they are currently configured, Friedland (1999), a communications researcher, augmented by restorative justice and educational theorists suggested putting into place purposeful programs that make the culture of the school community friendlier, less threatening, and far more rewarding (Fishbaugh, M. S. et al, 2003; Atkinson, Vaughn, & VanCamp, 2009). Caring

relationships are central to creating a sense of community in a school (Byrk & Driscoll, 1988; Noddings, 1992). When students do not feel connected with school staff or feel that teachers truly care about them, then discussions, even about themes of respect and kindness, between the teacher and the student do not have the desired effect (Brooks, R., 2006).

The value system that provides for integrating individuals into a community: for healing, for forgiving and reconciling, for fostering responsibility, and for restoring individual dignity and peace is restorative practices. Significant evidence exists (Delisio, 2004; Kohn, 1996; Kriete, 1999; Lanteri & Patti, 1996) that restorative practices are effective in modeling, taking ownership and responsibility for one's own actions and education, and for establishing the kind of community necessary for the realization of the two primary goals of school discipline proposed in a publication prepared for the U. S. Department of Education Office of Educational Research (Gaustad, 1992). The first goal is to ensure the safety of staff and students. The second goal of school discipline is to create an environment conducive to learning.

In 1999, former teachers Ted and Susan Wachtel began teaching restorative practices to public schools through their "Safer Saner Schools" program, to address the crises they saw in education: increasing truancy and dropout rates, disciplinary problems, violence, and even mass murders. To quote from an Education World wire-side chat with Mr. Wachtel,

> We believe that the dramatic increase in negative behavior among young people is largely the result of the loss of connectedness and community in modern society. Schools themselves have become larger, more impersonal institutions

> where students and their families feel less connected to the teachers and school administrators. In an increasingly disconnected world, restorative practices build relationships and restore community. A positive school climate, in which young people feel connected, is the best environment for learning.

Restorative practices theory maintains that human beings are happier, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things WITH them, rather than TO them or FOR them (Wachtel T. &., 2008).

Restorative justice is a choice; it requires a conscientious decision on the behalf of the victim and the offender. It is not natural to admit our errors and risk losing face or diminishing our identity. It is self-protective to make excuses and defend ourselves. However, restorative justice begins with taking responsibility for one's actions and recognizing the harm our actions have caused. From the victim's perspective, it is much easier to want to get even, to cause the offender the fear, pain, and disequilibrium we are experiencing. It requires energy to attempt to be empathetic, to listen with your heart, and to work together to make things as right as possible for all concerned (Lanteri & Patti, 1996).

One of the effects of violence is the disequilibrium it brings into the lives of all involved. It does require great effort to work through the chaos to determine what will restore the proper situation. In their book, Sullivan and Tifft (2001) make this point by looking at the Tim Robbins movie, *Dead Man Walking*. Sister Helen Prejean, a Roman Catholic nun, meeting with the father of a murdered boy, addresses the father's comment that he doesn't know why he is meeting because he has a lot of hate, and he doesn't have

her faith. Sister Helen states, "It's not faith, I wish it were that easy. It's work. Maybe we could help each other out of the hate." It is easier for me to hate when I do not know someone. Restorative practices help both the victim, or victim's family, and the offender to recognize the other as a person with needs and hurts.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child recognizes that schools must teach students how to resolve conflict in a non-violent manner and promote supportive approaches to discipline that reinforce positive social interaction (NESRI, Fall 2008). Educators are always teaching lessons, whether in word or in action. Unfortunately, our dealings with students and with adult peers sometimes teach the wrong lesson. As educators we need to insure that we are making the correct statements and presenting a cohesive message so that students can learn. "Children can learn to derive meaning from a text, but more importantly, they can learn to derive meaning from their schooling, which helps them to direct their lives and make good choices" (Charney, 1991, p. 189). When teachers view confrontations in terms of right and wrong, winners and losers, we inadvertently escalate a situation and create unnecessary obstacles.

Many teachers have lost their optimism for themselves and naturally transfer pessimism and despair to their students. "Most people who become teachers initially have a vision of what they will add to the world through their teaching. This vision is often lost in the pressures, confusions, and constant demands that exist for every teacher in every type of school"(p. 185). Teachers own psychological wounds, either from childhood or as adults, affect how we deal with a crisis and how we react to students.

In classrooms daily, interpersonal conflict arises that presents an opportunity for problem solving and dialogue. Research, compiled and analyzed by the American

Psychological Association, shows that rather than deterring misbehavior, zero-tolerance suspensions and expulsions are linked to an increased likelihood of future behavioral problems, as well as detachment from school, academic difficulties and an increased likelihood of dropping out of school altogether (Skiba, R. et al., 2006). A study conducted with New York City educators showed that while teachers saw suspensions as potentially constructive in narrow and specific situations, broad use of these measures severly undermined their professional identities and discouraged them from turning discipliniary intervention into an opportunity for education (NESRI, Fall 2008).

Restorative practices acknowledge that relationships are central to building community and seek to strengthen relationships by encouraging a caring school climate. Because violence is an offense against people and relationships, the solution needs to involve all of those involved in the situation. By giving voice to the person harmed, as well as the one who caused the harm, personal growth and change is empowered. Restorative practice works to repair the harm caused by violence through careful listening, reflecting, shared problem solving, trust, and accountability structures that support commitments to work at relationships (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005). This study employs restorative practice as the etic (outside) theoretical and practical framework to view how teachers make sense of the lived experience of school and the meaning they make of what constitutes a safe school. Teachers' insights in turn aid in the interpretation of restorative practices in schools.

Procedures

The researcher initiates this study with a literature review to identify campus safety constructs in available literature. Spurred on by a rash of rampage school

shootings in the 1990s, extensive research has been conducted into the causes of such devastation and the role schools play in student violence. Since the voice missing in a great deal of these findings is that of teachers, I utilize in-depth interviews and layered interpretation to uncover teachers' perspective. "The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, not to test hypotheses, and not to evaluate as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience"(Seidman, 2006, p. 9). The qualitative methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology is best suited to my study.

While there is not a set of fixed procedures in conducting hermeneutic phenomenological research, Canadian phenomenologist, Max van Manen (1990) describes the interplay of six research activities:

(1) Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world;

(2) Investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;

(3) Reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon;

(4) Describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;

(5) Manipulating a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;

(6) Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole (pp. 30-31).

Upon completion of my prospectus hearing, I apply for and receive permission from the University of Oklahoma's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Names of seasoned teachers from five suburban school districts are requested from acquaintances with knowledge of each school. The researcher deliberately chose not to interview only teachers experiencing a shooting at school in order to ascertain the perspective of

seasoned teachers at large. Educators with varying age, race, sex, and teaching experiences from all grade levels is solicited. The process for anonymity is stressed during the first contact and is protected throughout the study with all names changed to a pseudonym and details regarding their place of employment deleted. Signed letters of consent are secured before beginning the interview process and participants are advised they can terminate their participation at any time, without fear of reprisal.

The semi-structured interviews are audiotaped to facilitate data analysis. In order to provide a context for each participant, one question encourages the teachers to reflect upon their life experiences that led them to pursue a career in education. Follow-up questions pursue memories regarding their best day and their worst day in their teaching career, their previous experience, if any, with student violence, their experiences and beliefs regarding prevention and intervention types of programs, and their view of the role of leadership in preventing school violence. A final question asked of all participants is what, if anything, they believe is needed to make your school safer.

The interviews are transcribed, participants verify the accuracy of their dialogs, and multi-layered interpretations are conducted. The data is then presented according to van Manen's (1990) four existential life-worlds: temporality (lived time), corporeality (lived body), relationality (lived other) and spatiality (lived space). Emerging theoretical threads of shame, vulnerability, isolation, empathy/relationship, hope/ involvement and reintegration/forgiveness are observed woven throughout the narratives. Each of these threads is examined through the lens of restorative practices and practical applications are suggested for the prevention and intervention of school violence.

Summary

Alienation, or a lack of connectedness to other students, teachers, and the school structure is a likely theory for violence, as recognized in research (Atkinson, Vaughn, & VanCamp, 2009; Scherz, 2006). The school killer, for example, is so desensitized and disconnected from others that he feels no one else's pain. Teachers sequestered in their classroom with little time for socialization also experience alienation (Bjork & Kowalski, 2005; Drago-Severson & Pinto, 2006; Howard, 2002, cited in Ford, 2009). Bosworth's (2011) study in Arizona concludes that overall school climate and interactions between students and staff members are more influential factors in determining whether students and teachers felt safe than academic achievement or geographic location and poverty level. Additionally, several researchers note a climate of mutual trust and respect among students and teachers is an important element in keeping schools safe (Gallagher & Sauer,1998; A Guide to Safe Schools, 1999; MacDonald, 1997; Wanat, 1996; Welsh, 2000 cited in Schulte, Shanahan, Anderson, & Sides, 2003).

So much of the school reform literature assumes that education is a mechanistic process that can be fixed by pulling separate parts out, tuning them up and moving on (Scherz, 2006). Education, since it is above all a human enterprise, is an organic process where all the elements must be considered. To make schools truly safe, we need to consider four overlapping levels of school life: the school as a whole, the curriculum, the classroom, and the individual. The failure of a whole-school culture leads to dichotomies of "us against them." Students against adults, teachers against teacher, or even teachers against administration are all unhealthy confrontations that can lead to a culture of violence (Scherz, 2006).

A growing body of research suggests that evidence-based social, emotional, ethical, and academic learning initiatives provide the optimal foundation for violence prevention efforts in K-12 schools (American Psychological Association, 2003; Catalano, Berglund, Ryan, Lonczak, & Hawkins, 2002; Zins et al., 2003, cited in Devine & Cohen, 2007). The most compelling program that works to prevent violence and deal with the aftermath is restorative practices (Delisio, 2004; Kessler, 2000; Kohn, 1996; Kriete, 1999). By bringing together all those affected by violence, including the one causing the harm, restorative practices works to reintegrate individuals into community for healing, for forgiving, for reconciling, for fostering responsibility, and for restoring individual dignity and peace.

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) compiled a report to stimulate researchers to place greater emphasis on how they conceptualized implementation of evidence-based programs. The report stated, "Without question, prevention practice will reach its full maturity only when known effective programs are implemented with integrity" (p. i). Studies are lacking into teachers' attitudes that best ensure the implementation of restorative practices. It is the goal of this study to add to this body of research through multi-layered interpretation of phenomenological interviews with seasoned suburban teachers to determine what hindrances prevent educators from successful implementation. My research question is: based on his/her lived experiences as a seasoned teacher, what is his/her vision of a safe school? Crimes such as rampage school shootings naturally leave the victims and the community feeling helpless and powerless. Affected parties are restored power and hope through discussions that lead to effective crisis management.

CHAPTER TWO

Restorative Practices

As Theoretical Framework for the Study of Safe Schools

Introduction

The 1990's saw a rash of violent school shootings as students lashed out at the establishment they felt was responsible for their pain (Newman, Fox, Harding, & & Roth, 2004; Langman, 2009; Brown, 2002). The theory and practice of restorative practices helps to prevent and alleviate the pain and alienation which are often present in today's school environment. In Chapter Two, this study provides the historical perspective of restorative justice and contrasts it with retributive justice. The theories of forgiveness, shame, and fair process, are examined, focusing on the role each plays in the restorative paradigm. Finally, the study examines the theories behind restorative practices' whole-school programs as well as other risk prevention plans aimed at teaching social emotional skills and mediation, with the hope of deterring aggression and victimization. The philosophy of restorative practices provides a range of opportunities for dialogue, negotiation, and problem solving that leads to a greater sense of community safety, conflict resolution, and healing for all involved (Umbreit, 2001). Restorative practices will provide a lens or etic theoretical overlay for this study of teachers' lived experience of safe schools.

Restorative Practices versus Retributive Justice

The restorative practices framework developed out of the restorative paradigm in the criminal justice system. Howard Zehr (1990), an early and leading proponent of restorative justice, states that following a direction set by ancient Roman law; retributive

justice is defined more by the process than by the outcome. In our society, for example, justice is defined as applying the law. Justice is portrayed as a blindfolded goddess holding a scale and the focus is on equity of process, not of circumstances. However, in contrast, the test of ancient Hebrew justice was not whether the correct rules were applied in the right way. Justice was the product of the outcomes, not the procedure of maintaining order. Justice was restoring shalom (Zehr, 1990, 2002).

Shalom is a comprehensive precept built on the assumption that all people are interconnected. Shalom means living in a state of "all-rightness" with each other, with the creator, and with the environment (Zehr, 2002). It is the ideal state in which humans were created to live. Other cultures also have similar fundamental concepts. Many African people, for example, use the word ubuntu. For the Navajos the word is hozho. Although there is not an exact interpretation into English, it depicts an ideal situation where everyone and everything relates to each other as they and it should. Hozho is the opposite of hoxho, or a state of conflict in which people are not in right relations with their surroundings or environment (Zion, 1998). In other words, crime creates an imbalance in harmony, it disrupts wholeness, and justice is the way of making the situation right again.

A restorative justice definition of crime, as well as the definition best fitting with that of indigenous people is a violation of people and relationships, a tear in the covering of shalom. Restorative justice seeks to solve problems and to find solutions, thus making things right between all those involved. Conversely, crime when viewed through the lens of retributive justice is a violation of the state, defined by law-breaking and guilt. Crime gives the offender unfair advantage over the victim and disrupts harmony. Retributive

justice advocates that the only way to even the score is to have the offender punished in the amount required to equalize the disruption (Zehr, 1990).

Needs Based

Discipline or punishment throughout the ages has been based on three philosophical platforms: deserts based, rights based, or needs based: deserts based is contribution-assessed hierarchical power. It is the traditional retributive justice, that of getting what you deserve. Rights based punishment is depicted in the concept of power that Foucault (1977) espoused as an ascribed hierarchical view. French historian, Michael Foucault, noted that modern prisons sought to reach the soul in the same manner in early forms of punishment which inflicted bodily pain. Foucault contended that methods vary, but intentions to control remained the same. Rules can be made and discipline administered from a position of power. Needs based recognizes the value of every life and seeks to insure that the system is not operating to deny any person the opportunity to exercise choice in meaningful ways to enrich life. When an offense occurs or a conflict arises one of the primary questions from a needs based philosophy is what can be done to make things right for all involved? "The restorative movement originally began as an effort to rethink the needs which crimes create, as well as the roles implicit in crimes" (Zehr, 2002).

Restorative justice is a way of reflecting on the world through a needs based lens, not a distorted conception of personal needs, but of the global needs of society. A needs based philosophy is concerned with all of the social-structural conditions that exist with a community; in its families, schools, places of work, and worship. These conditions are primary determinants of how successful people will be in resolving interpersonal

conflicts, healing harms, fostering the reintegration of people into their communities and preventing disintegration of people in the first place (Sullivan & Tifft, 2001). This process involves work and it involves being willing to accept responsibility for the role people play in continuing the system.

Restorative justice is concerned with the needs of victims, offenders and the community, or other stakeholders that are affected by the offense. Since retributive justice views crime as an offense against the state, victims and community needs are rarely considered. Zehr, (2002) identifies four types of victim's needs: information or answers to questions they have about what happened, truth-telling or an opportunity to tell their story, empowerment and restitution or vindication.

Offender accountability is another theory behind restorative justice. The retributive system is concerned with making sure offenders get the punishment they deserve, but little in the process encourages them to accept responsibility for their actions or to empathize with the victim. In fact, the strategies that offenders use to distance themselves from the people they hurt further alienate them from society. Restorative justice demands real accountability by urging offenders to confront their actions (Zehr, 2002). Another offender need satisfied through restorative justice involves encouragement to experience personal transformation by addressing the harms that contributed to their offending behavior, treatment for addictions or psychological problems, and enhancement of personal competencies. Reintegration into the community, possibly after a time of restraint, is a final offender need considered in restorative justice.

The community, including families and friends of the victim and the offender, have needs and a role to play arising from crime. In restorative justice, all stakeholders are brought together in dialogue that brings attention to their concerns and to their obligations to foster the conditions that promote healthy communities. Crime is a violation of people and interpersonal relationships. In restorative justice, the central obligation is to right the wrongs (Zehr, 2002).

Forgiveness

Psychologist Dr. Worthington (2003) states, "damage can be repaired in many ways, but complete healing and restoration can come only through forgiveness and reconciliation" (p. 13). Forgiveness requires both letting go and pulling toward. Forgiveness involves releasing the resentment, hatred, and bitterness of unforgiveness, and letting go of the desire to seek revenge against the perpetrator. However, forgiveness also means reaching out toward the offender to understand what was going on in his/her life and mind that led to the offense. In other words, forgiveness is built on empathy, but empathy is not enough.

Worthington (2003) emphasizes the importance of what he calls humility, the recognition that in wanting to seek revenge I demonstrate that I too am capable of harming others. That recognition brings awareness of a person's need for forgiveness and for the times they were forgiven. Awareness makes a person more willing to forgive the one who caused harm. Christians often reference how they have been forgiven by God. However, research demonstrates the same psychological impact occurs when victims recall other times they were forgiven by others (Worthington, 2003). "No matter what your religion, relationships are smoothed by apology and forgiveness. To apologize

is to discard your entitlement and move towards a true connection with someone else"(Twenge & Campbell, 2009, p. 241).

When we are wronged, it is natural to dehumanize the perpetrator and to believe we will feel better when they are made to pay. Frustration, helplessness, and anger are natural reactions to crime which cause us to reach out and attempt to take back control of some aspect of our life; often that involves blaming and punishing those responsible for our pain. Retributive justice fits more instinctively with our natural reactions (Johnstone, 2002). However, when capital punishment is administered, victims and their families recognize it does not always provide the closure they had hoped for. Berns (2009) found that:

> Some argue that killing the murderer will bring closure to the families of homicide victims. Others argue that only forgiveness will bring closure. And significantly, many families of murder victims argue that there is no such thing as closure and therefore disdain the word (p. 383).

Restorative practices helps victims achieve emotional repair through processes that bring empowerment through dialogue, reduce vengefulness, and increase empathy (Strang & Sherman, 2003). However, it is important to note that restorative practices provide a context in which forgiveness can occur, but the choice to forgive is left entirely to the participants (Zehr, 2002).

To better understand forgiveness, one needs to look at unforgiveness. Worthington (2003) defines unforgiveness as "delayed negative emotions, involving resentment, bitterness, hostility, hatred, residual anger and residual fear, which motivate people to reduce negative emotions" (p. 33). Rumination, repeatedly reflecting on what

has hurt us, changes fear and anger, and natural reactions to being harmed, into the delayed emotion of unforgiveness. Fear and anger are two of the six negative affects, or emotions, identified by Silvan S. Tomkins' (1962, 1963, 1991) writings about psychology of affect.

There are nine distinct affects (Figure 2) identified by Tomkins to explain the expression of emotion in all human beings. He defined most of the affects by pairs of words that represent their least and the most intense expression. Anger-rage, fear-terror, distress-anguish, disgust, dissmell (a word Tomkins coined to describe "turning up one's nose" at someone or something in a rejecting way), and shame-humiliation are the six negative emotions. Surprise-startle is the neutral affect, which functions like a reset button. The two positive affects are interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy (Wachtel T. , 2004).

Figure 2: The Nine Affects



(Wachtel T., 2004, p. 78)

Shame

The affect of shame is a "critical regulator of human social behavior" (Wachtel, T., 2004, p. 79). Tomkins (1987) defined shame as an interruption of the positive emotions. The reason a victim experiences shame after being violated is the offense interrupts the positive affects interest-excitement or enjoyment-joy (Nathanson, 1997). Shame has also been identified as a contributing cause to several of the rampage shootings of the 1990s (Langman, 2009; Newman, Fox, Harding, & & Roth, 2004). The shooters fragile male identities were increased by a sense of humiliation, even if it was more in their own minds than in reality. John Braithwaite (1989) argues that shame that stigmatizes pushes people toward crime. However, when reintegrative shame denounces the offense while not ostracizing the offender, it can provide an opportunity for the offender to again be restored to the community.

Nathanson's Compass of Shame (Figure 3) illustrates the various ways human beings react when they feel shame. The four poles of the compass of shame and behaviors associated with them are: (Wachtel T. , 2004, p. 80)

- *Withdrawal*—isolating oneself, running, and hiding
- *Attack self*—self-put-down, masochism
- *Avoidance*—denial, abusing drugs, distraction through thrill seeking
- *Attack others*—turning the tables, lashing out verbally or physically, blaming others

Figure 3: The Compass of Shame



(Wachtel T., 2004, p. 79)

We all react to shame in varying degrees as described by the Compass. However, violence is precipitated by the "attack other" response to shame (Nathanson, 1997). Restorative processes such as conferences and circles provide a safe environment for people to express and exchange intense emotion. Movement from negative affects through the neutral to positive affects is facilitated while people participate in the conferencing process (Wachtel T. , 2004).

Restorative Practice Processes

A brief description of how restorative justice has been reintroduced in the west includes several practices which are based on centuries of traditions and customs of indigenous people. Although the philosophy as a whole has its roots in ancient cultures, there are three primary examples of restorative practices that attempt to replicate the holistic response of 'aboriginal justice' (Johnstone, 2002). These practices are victim

offender dialogue, peacemaking or sentencing circles, and small group of family group conferencing.

Experiments with victim-offender mediation in Elmira, Ontario in 1974 are typically believed to be the one of the first examples of the renewed interest in 'aboriginal justice' (Zehr, 1990). Victim Offender Reconciliation Programs (VORP's) usually involve an encounter between the victim and the offender. The dialogue that takes place is facilitated by a trained mediator and time is previously spent with each participant to prepare them for the encounter.

Sentencing circles were first used in 1992 in the Yukon Territorial Court in Canada (Cayley, 1998, cited in Johnstone, 2002, p. 3). These circles, also called peacemaking circles like they were when originally used, involve bringing together the person who has caused the harm, the person who was harmed, and family members and supporters of both parties. A facilitator guides the conversation around the circle giving each member an opportunity to speak. Besides encouraging helpful dialogue, sentencing circles end with written agreements on how to make things right for all those involved. Family Group Conferencing was introduced by statute in New Zealand in 1989 to deal with youth care and protection issues as well as with juvenile justice issues (McElrea, 1994, cited in Johnstone, 2004, p. 4). The precedent for all three of these practices is listening with the heart and hearing each voice (Lanteri & Patti, 1996).

A restorative practices continuum (Figure 4) depicts the informal practices including affective statements that communicate people's feelings, as well as affective questions that cause people to reflect upon how their behavior affects others. Impromptu restorative conferences, groups and circles can be employed every day in the classroom,

often connected to the curriculum or a class discussion. Formal conferences require more preparation time in preparing all of the participants, but they are more structured and complete.

Figure 4: Restorative Practices Continuum



(Wachtel T. , 2004, p. 77)

The most critical function of restorative practices is restoring and building relationships. Tomkins (1962, 1963, 1991) asserts that human relationships are healthiest when there is free expression of emotion. Relational bonds are established through the emotional exchange of informal and formal restorative processes.

Fair Process

Fair process, or procedural justice, is a decision making approach that addresses our basic human need to be valued and respected. The central precept behind fair process is that individuals are most likely to trust and cooperate freely with systems, even if the outcome is not wholly in their favor, if they believe the process for arriving at those outcomes was fair. In the mid-seventies, two social scientists, John W. Thibaut and Laurens Walker combined their research on the psychology of justice with the study of processes to look at what makes people trust a legal system enough to follow the laws voluntarily. Their research established that people care as much about the fairness of the process as the outcome the process generates. Tom R. Tyler and E. Allan Lind conducted

further research demonstrating the power of fair process across social settings (Kim & Mauborgne, January 2003).

Successful change processes require fairness. "It is an axiom of organizational change that the larger the innovation, the greater the need for communication" (Evans, 1993). There are three key components to people's perception that sufficient dialogue existed for the process to be considered fair: engagement, explanation, and expectation clarity.

- Engagement means that everyone affected by a decision is given the chance to provide input and have an opportunity to discuss various possible courses of action.
- Explanation means that after a leader has made a decision, that decision and the process and reasoning behind the choice are made known to all stakeholders.
- Expectation clarity means that everyone involved understands the implications of that decision, the specific expectations and the consequences for failing to meet those expectations. (Kim & Mauborgne, January 2003, Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2009, p. 87).

In the spirit of fair process, teachers and nonprofessional staff should be included in the implementation process from the very beginning.

Restorative Practices in Schools

To familiarize myself with restorative practices I connect with the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP), an educational, non-profit organization started by Ted Wachtel in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 2000. Former teachers, Ted and Susan

Wachtel, began teaching restorative practices to public schools through their Safer Saner Schools program, to address the crises they saw in education, increasing truancy and dropout rates, disciplinary problems, violence, and even mass murders. Among the programs they offer today are Real Justice, Safer Saner Schools, Family Power and Good Company. Restorative practice provides a common language for the study of building social capital and achieving social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making (McCold & Wachtel, 2004).

The IIRP began their implementation process in Palisades High School in Pennsylvania. The principal, David Piperato, expressed that before the program was introduced, the level of caring and respect between teachers and students had declined. Restorative practices he said, "Created a more positive relationship between staff and students" (Wachtel T. &., 2008, p. 34). A culture of collaboration was also established among teachers and between administration and staff. Bob Costello, IIRP director of training, stated,

> The biggest step was when teachers recognized that they had to take care of themselves as a team before they could help the kids. They needed to respect their style differences, be honest, practice what they preached and work on their issues; do all the things they were asking the kids to do. (p. 38)

The implementation process stretched over a three year time frame.

After presenting the concept to the staff, administrators created three groups: believers, fence sitters, and critics. The first year the believers were trained and worked together as a support group. One teacher observed,

> That was phenomenal for us. Teachers used to complain to each other about kids and judge them. But the IIRP taught teachers how to discuss students' behavior, rather than their personalities, and brainstorm as a group how to handle it. (p. 40)

Students also responded and began reporting when they were feeling unsafe. "Kids felt safe reporting it because they believe it will be addressed"(p. 41). The second year the fence sitters witnessed enough success that they were ready to be trained. By the third year, the critics either retired or had their concerns addressed. My study seeks to understand through phenomenological interviews what hinders the fence sitters and critics from wanting to be involved in the beginning. The IIRP has identified some typical concerns and questions from staff:

- I don't have time for this.
- I am a teacher, not a counselor or social worker.
- Does this mean kids can just apologize and nothing else happens?
- What does this have to do with my subject area? (Costello, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 2009, p. 89).

Restorative classroom management is concerned more with communication that facilitates an optimal learning environment for students, rather than punishing students who misbehave. In order to improve the school sense of community and safety, teachers and students need to have a shared vision with structures for staff and students to communicate with one another. Teachers may contribute to student misbehavior through inappropriate responses, which may escalate low-level disruptions into major issues (Murphy, 1986). A lack of skill or sensitivity on the part of the teacher and a school

environment which is unreceptive will inhibit students' willingness to take the risk of making mistakes, which are essential for the development of skills and judgement which are are tranferrable to other situations (Metais & Jordan, 1997).

Alfie Kohn (1996) also addresses the need to work with students rather than to punish students. He emphasizes the need to ask students to think about what they are doing, as well as how, why, and with whom they are doing it (Brandt, 1995). Again, his questions are similar to restorative questioning which endeavors to achieve fair process through questions such as:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Restorative questioning is a foundational postulate of restorative practices, helping to establish a common language that students can come to expect in every aspect of their school.

Teaching and learning in schools have strong, social, emotional, and academic components (Zins, Weisberg, Wang & Walberg, 2004). The process of learning and teaching is fundamentally relational and good communication is requisite. Robert Marzano describes two spectrums seen in education:

High Dominance_____High Submission

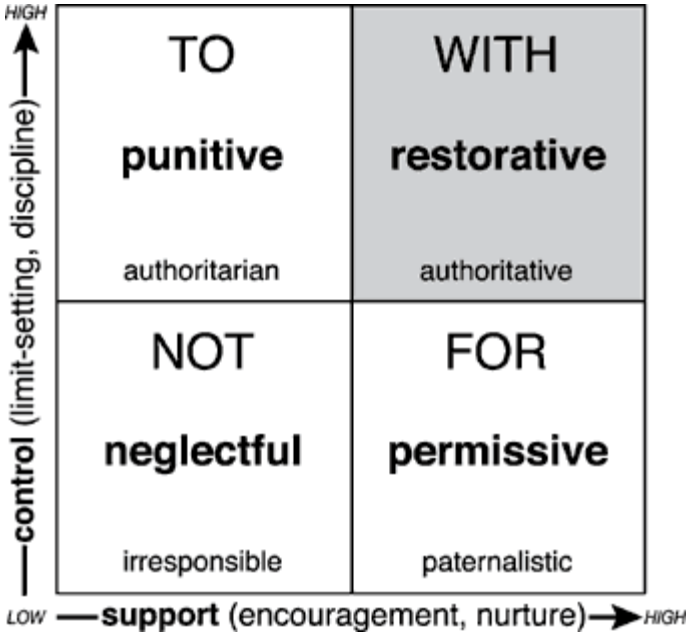
High Cooperation_____High Opposition

High dominance is characterized by clarity of purpose and strong guidance. Highly dominant teachers are clear about their purposes and provide strong academic and behavioral guidance. These are certainly positive characteristics, but high dominance is also characterized by lack of concern for the opinion or needs of students. The other end of this continuum is high submission, or lack of clarity of purpose or direction.

High cooperation is characterized by a concern for the needs and opinions of others and a desire to function as a member of the team. Against positive traits, high cooperation also involves an inability or lack of resolve to lead. The other end, high opposition, involves active antagonism towards others and a desire to thwart the goals and desires of others. Moderate, middle of the spectrum, dominance and moderate cooperation provide the optimal teacher and student relationship for learning (Marzano, 2003).

The social discipline window (Figure 5) in restorative practices is a framework similar to Marzano's. Four basic approaches to maintaining social norms and behavioral boundaries are formed by the continuums, control and support. These approaches are represented as different combinations of high or low control and high and low support. "The restorative domain combines both high control and high support and is characterized by doing things with people, rather than to them or for them" (Wachtel T. , 2004, p. 77).

Figure 5: Social Discipline Window



(Wachtel, T. , 2004, p. 76)

The domain of control, limit-setting and discipline, is seen as a continuum between low with lax involvement or disconnectedness and high with clear expectations and consistent reinforcement. It is important to note that high control is seen as optimum when it works in conjuncture with cooperative engagement. It is depicted as doing things with students, compared to the retributive form of regulation that uses punishment to do something to people.

The domain of support, attention to students' physical, social and emotional needs, is represented as a continuum between nonexistent or neglectful to responsive and attentive. High support and low control depicts doing things for people, not holding them accountable or allowing them to take responsibility. "The restorative approach of high support and high control confronts and disapproves of wrongdoing while affirming the intrinsic worth of the offender" (McCold & Wachtel, 2004, p. 70).

The International Institute of Restorative Practices is not the only organization beginning to implement restorative practices. Iowa Peace Institute and the Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies of Fresno Pacific University also are introducing restorative concepts and practices to prevent violence and respond to the harm if it does occur. In 1998, the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning (CFL) received a three-year, $300,000 state grant to implement and evaluate alternative approaches to expulsion. Implementing restorative practices and developing an evaluation plan to gauge the impact of the program on suspensions, expulsions, attendance, academics, and school climate was the job assigned to four school districts. One assistant director from St. Paul Minnesota states,

> Since PEASE adopted the restorative justice process, the staff has seen some amazing culture shaping at the school. The number of disciplinary interventions has dropped and students report feeling more connected to the community and to each other. (Chmelynski, 2005).

Six school districts in Wisconsin were asked to take part in a restorative justice experiment in 2002. The six districts agreed to collaborate, sharing information on the increased use of community service and reintegration of expelled students. One principal stated,

> If I had to give our approach a name it would be zero tolerance with compassion, common sense and service. Restorative justice works and we know it. We have a closer relationship with the police department, county departments, and parents. We have more places and ways of dealing with kids, and kids report an increased commitment to school and the community. (Chmelynski, 2005)

Restorative practices can be woven into current risk and crisis theory and school discipline plans without negating the need to temporarily remove students from classrooms. However, the goal of restoration is successful reintegration of the student when it is deemed appropriate.

School Programs by Other Names

In democratic schools, administrators, staff, teachers and students respect and value the opinions and needs of each person; individual goals are accomplished while pursuing the overall vision of the system. Almost a century ago, John Dewey (Dewey, 1938, 1997) articulated that only when individual citizens see themselves as part of the greater community are they likely to share cooperatively their various interests, abilities, and attainments for the good of society as a whole. Dewey continued that the more deeply they participate in society's ongoing dialogue among its many different members about beliefs, values, and actions, the more likely they are to experience a growing sense of community, and democracy itself grows. A democratic school empowers students and teachers to pursue their separate, reciprocal, and common goals.

The School Mediation Center in Boulder, Colorado has organized the elements of a whole school approach for conflict resolution that echoes the same underlying beliefs as Dewey held, students are resources in a democratic classroom. The complete list is available on their website and includes the following beliefs: conflict is normal, conflicts are driven by needs, modeling is key, learning takes time, diversity enriches conflicts and their resolutions, mastering our thoughts is a part of conflict resolution, integrating the curriculum improves learning, and effective change comes through whole school programs (CSMP, 2004).

Jeanne Gibbs (1995), the author of another human development process called Tribes, outlines a "democratic group process aimed at creating a positive environment that promotes human growth and learning" (p. 21). Gibbs (1998) philosophy is, "Rather than "fixing kids", transform the environment!" Activities with in Tribes provide explicit opportunities to practice skills such as personal and group goal setting, decision making, problem solving, and resolving conflict. Other goals within Tribes align closely with those in restorative practices. First is making students aware of how their behavior is perceived by and affects others, and learning to express their feelings about others' behavior in a nonaggressive way utilizing 'I' statements. Second is helping students develop empathy and negotiating skills to influence decisions and resolve conflict. The activities outlined in Tribes can be done with entire class, in small groups or in circles.

The value system that provides for fostering responsibility and for restoring individual dignity and peace is known by many names and includes numerous programs created to improve students' ethical, social and emotional learning. Elias et al. (1997) defined social and emotional learning (SEL) as

> the process of acquiring core competencies to recognize and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, appreciate the perspectives of others, establish and maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions and handle interpersonal situations constructively. (Durlak, Dymnicki A. B. & Taylor, Weissberg, & Schellinger, Jan/Feb 2011)

Three of the programs designed for elementary students include Responsive Classroom (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006), Peaceable Classrooms (Levin, 1994, 2003), and Teaching Concepts of Peace and Conflict (Kreidler, 1990). Activities in each of these programs are

designed around a pedagogy based on cooperative problem solving, conflict resolution, listening to other points of view, community building, decision making and critical thinking.

Helping children develop socio-emotional competencies in elementary school will decrease the alienation and disconnect students develop as they progress to middle school and high school (Blum & Libbey, 2004). However, it is imperative that these programs continue into high school. In its 2010 school climate research summary, the Center for Social and Emotional Education detailed how the systematic study of school climate has led to a growing body of research that attests to its importance in a variety of overlapping ways, including social, emotional, intellectual, and physical safety; positive youth development, mental health, and healthy relationships; higher graduation rates; school connectedness and engagement; academic achievement; social emotional and civic learning; teacher retention; and effective school reform (Cohen & Geier, January 2010). Discipline with Dignity (Curwin, Mendler, & Mendler, 2008), Discipline without Stress (Marshall, 2006), Steps to Respect (Cuevas, 2007) are just a few of the programs available.

Conclusions

The philosophy of restorative practices is not just another program that schools can implement to alleviate some of the alienation and disengagement prevalent in schools. It is a different viewpoint, a paradigm shift (Zehr, 1990). Educational institutions are instrumental in developing students' role identity as well as providing their first formalized contact with justice or injustice. Additionally, the "duty of care" of the school extends to all members of the community, not just to the misbehaving student

(Marshall, Shaw, & Freeman, 2002). The philosophy of restorative practices recognizes the school's dual responsibility of government and community as emphasized by Van Ness (1997): "In promoting justice, government is responsible for preserving a just order and the community for establishing peace" (pp. 8-9). In order to be truly restorative we must adjust the way we view community, the manner in which we percieve offenders, and our role in developing and maintaining relationships.

Alfie Kohn (1996) asks an important question, "So why do we do it? Why do we continue to rely on punishment if it makes things worse in the classroom?" (p. 30). Kohn proposes eight reasons:

- It is quick and easy
- It obviously works to get temporary compliance
- Most of us were raised and taught in environments that were to some degree, punitive, and we live what we know
- It makes us feel powerful
- It satisfies a desire for a primitive sort of justice, a belief that if you do something bad, something bad should happen to you
- We fear that if students are not punished they will think they "got away with it"
- We believe in a false dichotomy, an unnecessary either/or, that we can punish or we can do nothing

Changing to restorative practices means identifying and eradicating this dichotomy of punishment versus doing nothing. Schools and educational policy formulators also have to respect the relevance of the "soft skills," essential capacities that

extend beyond the academic core abilities. Growth processes such as brainstorming, communication, decision making, evaluative thinking and collaboration are among the "soft skills" vociferating for academic perfecting (Levine, 2005, p. 231). With that understanding, Zehr provides a restorative justice yardstick for organizations to measure their progress in becoming more restorative:

- Do victims experience justice?
- Do offenders experience justice?
- Is the victim-offender relationship addressed?
- Are community concerns being taken into account?
- Is the future being addressed? (Zehr, 1990, p. 230)

Programs, or explicit teaching of social skills, will not bring about the desired changes in student behavior if they conflict with the example set by the teacher. Therefore, teachers need to model appropriate, nonconfrontational behavior by demonstrating empathy and appropriate patterns of social interaction. This is foundational in Albert Bandura Social Learning Theory that proposed people learn new information and behaviors by observing others' actions (Cherry, 1977). No program or philosophy will change the behaviors and attitudes of students if they see a discepancy between what is being taught and the way administration interacts with teachers, teachers treat each other, or the way teachers care about students. Empathy has been described as the basis of moral development (Hoffman, 1990). In order to cultivate empathy and understanding in students, teachers must first experience empathy toward students (Peterson, 2001).

Effective leadership and planning are important to promote quality program implementation through ensuring adequate financial, personnel and administrative support as well as providing professional development and technical assistance (Devaney et al., 2006; Kam, Greenberg, & Walls, 2003, cited in Durlak, Dymnicki A. B. & Taylor, Weissberg, & Schellinger, Jan/Feb 2011). This study will help inform leadership's application of staff development by enabling them to make informed decisions based on teachers' attitudes and needs regarding a safe school. Restorative practice provides an alternate framework or lens for thinking about crime and justice. This theoretical framework will guide the analysis of teachers' perceptions of a safe school.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

Restoration and safe schools are concepts whose full meaning cannot be ascertained by their meaning in a dictionary; but they are instead human experiences and their meanings must be experienced as they are lived in everyday existence. As such they are suited to the human science methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology. Chapter Three provides the historical and philosophical implications of phenomenology as the theoretical framework for this study. Careful attention is given to the elements of ethics and trustworthiness necessary to add credence to this research. Finally, my own story is woven into this chapter in order to provide the appropriate research reflexivity (van Manen, 1990).

Merriam (1998) underscores the importance of understanding the philosophical foundations underlying a type of research before choosing a study design. She draws from the distinction Carr and Kemmis (1986) make among the three basic forms of educational research: positivist, interpretive, and critical. Her explanation of interpretive research most closely aligns with my view that "education is considered a process and school is a lived experience" (Merriam, 1998, p. 4). Critical theory takes more of the Marxist view of schooling as an instrument for maintaining and legitimating power and privilege by one group over another. However, although I recognize that the perception of power may arise during my study, my role as an interpretivist researcher is not to offer a global political argument regarding school violence, but to understand the way teachers

in a suburban setting understand the rules, vocabulary, conventions, and point of the social situation of schooling (Feinberg & Sottis, 2009).

Phenomenology as an accepted research method has been gaining in acceptance over the past forty years. Partially as a reflection of the era's general resistance to received authority and partly as a reaction to the dominance of experimental, quantitative and behaviorist research in education during the 1970's saw an increase in researchers' interest in qualitative methods (Seidman, 2006). Part of the paradigm shift from quantitative to qualitative research stemmed from a distinction between "human sciences" versus "natural science." A distinction often attributed to Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911). Dilthey (1976) believed that we can explain nature, but human life must be understood (van Manen, 1990). The human science methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology involves description, interpretation, and self-reflective or critical analysis that aim at explicating the meaning of human phenomena and at understanding the lived meanings.

Risk prevention teams are being implemented in schools across America, working to meet the demands of No Child Left Behind and the Safe School Act and to authentically shape a safe environment where learning can take place. However, the voice of teachers in this discussion is strikingly quiet ((Scherz, Murphy, & Fanning, 2004). This researcher is interested in how teachers make sense of the lived experience of school and the meaning they make of what constitutes a safe school. Therefore, this study is most conducive to the qualitative methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology.

The Question

Van Manen (1990) reiterates that determining a research method is secondary to developing a question and the way one understands the question. First, consideration is what depicts the epitome of an unsafe school; that leads this researcher to investigate the causes and societal influences behind rampage school shootings. Of the violent occurrences 1996 - 2000, sixty percent of the shootings occurred in rural communities and thirty-two percent in suburbs. Only two out of twenty-five, or eight percent, happened in urban areas (Newman, Fox, Harding, & & Roth, 2004). Since the researcher's teaching experience emanates from suburban schools, this study chooses to focus upon teachers working in suburban settings.

Research has been conducted demonstrating the effectiveness of the restorative practices philosophy in preventing crisis and dealing with the aftermath (Delisio, 2004; Kessler, 2000; Kohn, 1996; Kriete, 1999). Additionally, for the researcher, its theory and practice demonstrate the most respect and care of both victims and perpetrators and describe procedures that open dialogue and create community. It provides the etic (outside) lens through which interpretation of the teachers' lived experiences is possible.

I remember the feeling as a teacher of being asked to implement yet another new theory and decide to interview seasoned teachers that have weathered many such transitions and are aware of what is truly needed in schools today to more effectively manage the environment. All of these aspects are reflected in the question: based on his/her lived experiences as a seasoned teacher, what is his/her vision of a safe school?

Husserl's Phenomenology

Although often used interchangeably, there are marked differences from a historical and philosophical understanding between phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology. Susann Laverty (2003) reiterates that their

> distinction is important as it reflects the view that phenomenology and hermeneutic phenomenology, and our understandings of them, are not stationary, but rather dynamic and evolving, even today. (p. 3).

A brief description of each follows; however, throughout the remainder of this study, the terms are used interchangeably with the understanding that this research would best be labeled hermeneutic phenomenology as it deals with the interpretation of the lived experience.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is considered to be the father of phenomenology (Cohen, 1987; Koch, 1996; Polkinghorne, 1983; Scruton, 1995). Because his early work centered on mathematics, Husserl (1970) viewed phenomenology as equally objective and subjective, and finally had subjectivity dominate his pursuits (Cohen; Reeder, 1987; as mentioned in Laverty, 2003). His primary emphasis was the study of phenomena as they appeared through consciousness. Intentionality, the process where the mind is directed toward objects of study, was for Husserl the beginning of building one's knowledge of reality. "Valle et al. (1989) reported that Husserl viewed consciousness as a co-constituted dialogue between a person and the world"(Laverty, 2003, p. 5). Husserl's (1970) transcendental phenomenology involves a descriptive analysis of how people grasp the phenomena of their world. In studying these phenomena, the intent is to return

and re-examine people's taken for granted experiences and perhaps uncover new or forgotten meanings.

Husserl believed in a process of phenomenological reduction or bracketing to separate out researchers' particular beliefs or biases about a phenomenon in order to see it clearly. Osborne (1994) described bracketing as "identifying one's presuppositions about the nature of the phenomena and then attempting to set them aside to see the phenomena as it really is" (Laverty, 2003, p. 6). In order to accomplish this, Polkinghorne (1983) described a two-fold process. First, a method of free variation allows the researcher to identify the essential structures of the phenomena, which it needs to exist. Then, using intentional analysis, the researcher focuses on the concrete experience itself and describes how the experience is constructed (Laverty, 2003). Husserl sought to use careful description to see things *as they are*. This position reflects back to the positivistic view that reality is *out there* to be apprehended.

Heidegger's Hermeneutic Phenomenology

While Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) taught at Freiberg in Germany alongside Husserl, he became familiar with the process of phenomenological intentionality and reduction. However, when he later succeeded Husserl's chair, he dissociated himself from Husserl and his work (Laverty, 2003). Like Husserl, Heidegger (Heidegger, 1927, 1962) was concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived. However, Heidegger disagreed with Husserl in the way this exploration proceeds.

> While Husserl focused on understanding beings or phenomena, Heidegger focused on the existential concept *Dasein* that is translated as *the mode of being human* or *the situated meaning of a human in the world* (Laverty, 2003, p. 7).

Heidegger went as far as to claim that nothing can be encountered without reference to a person's background understanding, or historically.

> Meaning is found as we are constructed by the world while at the same time we are constructing this world from our own experiences (Laverty, 2003, p. 8).

For Heidegger (1927/1962), claiming to be human was to interpret and all description is already interpretation. Hermeneutic phenomenology, therefore, takes the methodology to a more interpretive level, rather than being purely descriptive. The goal is to create meaning and achieve a sense of understanding by focusing on details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991).

Gadamer's Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Hans-Georg Gadamer was influenced by the works of both Husserl and Heidegger while he was a student at Freiburg in Germany in the 1920s. Gadamer focused on extending Heidegger's work into practical applications (Polkinghorne, 1983).

> Gadamer viewed interpretation as a fusion of horizons, a dialectical interaction between the expectation of the interpreter and the meaning of the text (Laverty, 2003, p. 10).

A horizon is everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point, seeing beyond what is close at hand. New horizons and understanding are possible through questioning.

> Understanding is always more than merely re-creating someone else's meaning. Questioning opens up possibilities of meaning, and thus what is

meaningful passes onto one's own thinking on the subject (Gadamer, 1960/1998, p. 375).

Gadamer believed that a definitive interpretation is likely never possible because interpretation is an evolving process (Annells, 1996). Like Heidegger, Gadamer believed in the unquestionable presence of historicality of being that mandated some prejudice in all understanding, a position he felt played a positive role in the search for meaning. He viewed bracketing as impossible (Laverty, 2003).

Interpretivist Framework

Unlike the positivist framework that views reality as something *out there* to be apprehended, the interpretivist framework of inquiry supports the ontological perspective that realities are more or less informed, not more or less true. Multiple realities are constructed and can be altered by the knower. The interpretivist point of view sees the investigator and the investigated as interactively linked in the creations of findings, rather than the researcher attempting to assume a stance of disinterested scientist as in the positivist tradition (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The primary aim is understanding and the reconstruction of experience and knowledge which evolves into a process of interpretation and interaction between the investigator and research participants (Laverty, 2003).

British philosopher Peter Winch argues the case for the importance of interpretation by demonstrating how the particular *raw behavior* of raising a hand can carry very different meaning in different social situations. It can symbolize greeting a friend, asking for the teacher's recognition, or voting, depending on the context.

> The meaning is determined by the way the act is interpreted by the hand raiser and by members of his or her community (Feinberg & Soltis, 2009, p. 83).

Social behavior is role and rule behavior in a way that requires human agency, interpretation, understanding and monitoring. Social scientists "must be able to interpret the way those who are engaged in an action understand it before they can begin to explain it on other terms" (p. 84). Thus, before those involved in attempting to create school safety can begin the process of program implementation, they must have knowledge of the way teachers understand the phenomenon of a safe school. The interpretive paradigm was viewed as the most suitable for this research because of its potential to generate new understandings of complex multidimensional human phenomena, such as recognizing teachers' perspectives on school safety and their readiness to implement restorative practices in schools as a philosophy to help in the prevention of school violence.

Hermeneutic Circle

Quantitative research establishes variables by taking a phenomenon apart and examining component pieces. However, qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole (Merriam, 1998).

> The hermeneutic circle is a metaphor for understanding and interpretation, which is viewed as a movement between parts (data) and whole (evolving understanding of the phenomenon), each giving meaning to the other such that understanding is circular and iterative (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007).

One manner in which a hermeneutic circle can be engaged is the use of a reflective journal, moving back and forth between the parts and the whole of the text (Heidegger,

1927, 1962). A series of interviews, journal notes, audio-recordings and transcriptions provide text that is compared and analyzed.

The text is a creation by the researcher from data collected from the participants and from field notes. Two types of field notes are recorded during the research process in addition to the raw data from the interviews: the personal file, and analytical file. The personal file provides an account of the participants and their settings providing a context. The analytical file contains reflections and insights related to the research that influenced its direction (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Interpretation occurs as the researcher moves back and forth from the parts of the experience to the whole of the experience to increase the depth of engagement with and understanding of texts.

Hermeneutics involves reading and interpreting a complex human text. Teachers engage in hermeneutics when they attempt to understand and behave according to the rules and norms of their school (Feinberg & Soltis, 2009). The actions verbalized by the participants in this study reflect understanding of their role according to these rules and norms. My years as a teacher in suburban schools in the same geographical region as the participants facilitate my interpretation of their experiences. The hermeneutic circle refers to both the process I use to understand the text and to the process I use to choose between two or more competing interpretation of the same text. My understanding of a piece of the text is substantiated by referring to the framework of the whole text and I understand the whole text by exploring the meaning and structure of its various parts (Feinberg & Soltis, 2009). I reach the end of this spiraling through the hermeneutic circle when a place of sensible meaning, free of inner contradictions, for the moment, is achieved (Kvale, 1996).

Interviewing

In-depth interviewing, transcriptions, and field notes provide the data for this analysis of how teachers experience a safe school. Interviewing is a process through which people are provided an audience to listen to their stories. Storytelling is commonplace throughout history, since cavemen drew their first pictures on the walls of caves and thus preserved a piece of history for those who followed. Before written languages were developed and available to families, people passed down tradition and culture through storytelling. "At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals' stories because they are of worth" (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). The design of this study is emergent and flexible as opportunity is provided for each participant to develop their story and explore their own experiences.

Van Manen (1990) states that the interview serves two distinct purposes in hermeneutic phenomenology:

1. As a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that serves as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon
2. As a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with a participant about the meaning of an experience

In both uses of the conversational interview it is important to refer back to the guiding question to keep the discussion from wandering off purpose.

Sample Selection

In order to insure information-rich cases for in-depth study, the study's sample selection is nonrandom and purposeful (Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1998). Selecting

seasoned teachers, those having taught fifteen years or more, working in a suburban setting best fits the essential criteria determined in this study's problem statement and helps to narrow the field of potential participants. Teachers lived experiences of safe schools in rural or urban schools are topics for further research, however, my experience professionally and as a parent is in suburban schools.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) believe the most useful strategy for the naturalistic approach is maximum variation sampling. Therefore, in order to gain the broadest possible range of experiences, study participants are selected who represent diversity in age, gender, and race. Van Manen (1997) also emphasizes choosing participants who are willing to talk about their experience and who are diverse enough to enhance possibilities of rich and unique stories.

The sample consists of ten teachers (see Table 1) representing six schools in four suburban school districts. Seven of the teachers were Caucasian and three were Hispanic; eight teachers were female and two were male. Collectively they represent 250 years teaching experience. Two of the teachers have doctorates; four have masters and all have received numerous awards and National Board Certifications. Their classroom experience ranges from elementary to high school. I gain an impression of each participant through the initial handshake or hug that prefaces the interview. However, as the conversational relation develops I am able to transcend my previous corporeal impression of each teacher and view them in a larger existential sense as human beings in a communal search for a sense of purpose in life, meaningfulness (van Manen, 1990).

Table 1

Teacher Demographics

Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Male							X			X
Female	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Caucasian	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Hispanic							X	X	X	
Age	45-49	65-69	50-54	55-59	55-59	50-54	35-39	40-44	40-44	45-49
Years Taught	24	30	32	33	30	32	15	18	15	19
Level Taught	6th	4th	7th & 8th	5th	6th	7th	4th	3rd	4th 5th 6th	7th 8th HS

Lived space is the existential theme that refers us to the world or landscape in which human beings move and find themselves at home (van Manen, 1990). All of the teachers interviewed work in large suburban schools in districts with a history of passing bond issues enabling them to construct and maintain functional and comfortable buildings; teachers working in less satisfactory conditions might have a very different perspective. The participants all live and work in the Midwest Bible belt of the United States. Most have advanced teaching degrees and numerous awards. Each of these descriptors affects the teachers and plays a role in their lived experience of safe school. The selection of teachers' education and attainment level was not intentional; however, the researcher feels it added to the depth and richness of the data provided. Further studies could be conducted with teachers demonstrating greater diversity and from other geographical locations.

Ethical Conduct

Before this study commences, the researcher applies for and receives permission from the University of Oklahoma's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct interviews. Ethical considerations important to all social science research include the protection of subjects from harm, the right to privacy, obtaining informed consent, and the issue of deception (Merriam, 1998). The goals and research process are clearly articulated to the participants during the selection process and written consent is obtained. Participants are provided opportunity to validate transcriptions and analysis and final copies of all discoveries are made available.

It is imperative that this researcher consider any possible risks or sacrifices asked of the participants during the study, the product of which is the fulfillment of the requirements for the researcher's academic degree. Seidman (2006) emphasizes the moral issue involved in interviewing, that of possible exploitation of the participants. Interviewing has the potential of turning participants into subjects so that their words can be appropriated for the benefit of the researcher. It is important, therefore, that critical analysis occur, related to the benefits participants will receive from the experience.

It is with the belief that teachers value the opportunity to have a voice and want to feel empowered in their chosen profession that this study is conducted at this time. Rather than seeking names from school leadership, the study selects teachers referred from acquaintances as Lofland and Lofland (1984) recommend. They suggest researchers can gain access more successfully if they make use of contacts that can help remove barriers to entrance. However, the researcher purposefully avoids recommendations of participants from school administration to eliminate the possibility of coercion upon

those choosing to participate. Nor does this researcher want them to fear talking freely due to potential employment repercussions. However, the researcher also chooses against interviewing close friends, so that our relationship and knowledge of this study will not bias the data assembled. All names are changed to a pseudonym and details regarding the participants' place of employment are omitted.

The researcher-participant relationship overlaps both the collection of data and its analysis. Asking participants to reconstruct and give meaning to their lived experiences brings about new levels of self-awareness. However, embarrassment or frustration could develop as they reflect on their past as well as on their working environment. In restorative practices, importance is placed on doing things *with* people, not *to* or *for* them. This will provide the lens used to gauge all interactions. However, Patton (1990) and others recommend offering professional counseling referrals to appropriately manage problems or concerns that may manifest during an interview (Merriam, 1998).

Trustworthiness

Careful attention is given to this study's conceptualization, collection, and interpretation of data and presentation of findings in order to enhance the internal and external validity and the reliability of qualitative studies. Good qualitative research helps to understand a phenomena that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing (Eisner, 1991). Nevertheless, because phenomenology, by nature, is the researcher's interpretation of the participants' perception of his/her life-world, there have to be guidelines to determine the trustworthiness of the research. The question, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), is "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (p. 290).

In human science research, validity is more easily measured as credibility. The goal of credibility is conducting the inquiry in a manner to ensure the topic is accurately identified and described.

Reliability deals with whether the results could be duplicated if another study was conducted. Because the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in all forms of qualitative research, no two studies would ever end with identical themes or conclusions. However, the richness of the holistic description of the researcher and participants biases, the nuances of the subjects involved, their individual experiences, and the particularities of the settings does permit the reader to form evaluations of whether or not the researcher's conclusions were valid. This criterion is referred to as dependability in qualitative research by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

External validity, or transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations or how generalized the conclusions are. The researcher's role is to do a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research. It is up to the reader to determine if the results transfer successfully to a different context.

Insider Researcher

The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in all forms of qualitative research. As such, the researcher is responsive to the context of the study. Kvale's (1996) metaphor used to describe the qualitative researcher is as a traveler who:

> wanders through the landscape and enters into conversations with the people encountered. The insider is a traveler wandering into new, but at the same time,

> familiar territory, gathering stories to take back to the peoples of his or her own community. The stories are differentiated and unfolded through the traveler's interpretations and are validated through their impact upon the listeners (Roland, 2009).

Because this researcher, like the participants, is a teacher who has worked in a suburban school, I represent the emic (insider) view of the experience along with them. Being an insider provides me several advantages, including an equalized relationship between researcher and participants and expediency of access and rapport building (Chavez, 2008). My familiarity with education terminology is both an advantage and a disadvantage if this analysis is based on this researcher's pre-conceptions. Being cognizant of this, I attempt to maintain what van Manen (1997) referred to as hermeneutic alertness, which means the researcher steps back to reflect on the meanings of situations rather than accepting their pre-conceptions. I also seek participants' clarification and listen closely to be certain it is their story and meaning I am hearing and not my own.

Complications can develop if the insider status goes unchecked and complicates or overwhelms the researcher's role. Compromised professional ethics and/or research results; selective reporting; bias in selecting participants; and difficulty recognizing patterns due to familiarity with the community are other potential risks for the insider (Chavez, 2008). However, the researcher has never taught in a high school setting and has not felt the departmentalization of teaching only one subject to over one hundred and fifty students a day. Their perceptions of what a safe school means will bring a deeper layer of meaning to my previous experiences. Throughout the process, I attempt to step

back and view the data through the lens of restorative practices. This lens will provide the etic (outsider) perspective.

Researcher Reflexivity

Hermeneutic phenomenology research encourages a certain attentive awareness to the details and seemingly trivial dimensions of our everyday lives. Van Manen (1990) suggests that the phenomenologist needs to be reflectively aware of certain experiential meanings with the possibility that personal experiences could be collective experiences. However, this reflection is not introspective, but retrospective. A hermeneutic approach asks the researcher to engage in a process of self-reflection and to claim the ways in which their position or experience relates to the issue being researched. Laverty (2003) suggests that researchers keep a reflective journal to assist them in the process of reflection and interpretation. During my interviewing process, this researcher refers back to the journals kept before and during graduate classes as a basis to compare experiences and perspectives.

At the heart of every phenomenological research endeavor is a deep questioning of an experience. Without some sense of how the researcher experiences this phenomenon, I enter the research ungrounded. It is from personal reflection on the experience of teaching that I not only begin to explore a sense of meaning from the experience, but also begin to wonder what it is like for others. "Phenomenological research is a being-given-over to some quest, a true task, a deep questioning of something that restores an original sense of what it means to be a thinker, a researcher, a theorist" (van Manen, 1990, p. 31). Researcher reflexivity is an ongoing conversation about a phenomenon while simultaneously living in the moment, actively constructing

interpretations of the experience and questioning how those interpretations came about (Hertz, 1997).

My Story

I was introduced to restorative practices in graduate school and it immediately resonated with my own reflections regarding schooling. In 1999, America watched in horror as we realized how vulnerable our children could be at school, a place we previously considered safe. I completed my Master's degree in July of that year, three months after the Columbine shootings. Because I received my degree in curriculum with a reading specialty, I procured a job as a Title I reading and math specialist in a great suburban school, one with a reputation for high test scores, involved parents, and winning athletic teams. In my Title I position I worked with approximately fifty students who were not diagnosed with learning disabilities but for whatever reason were below average in reading or math, or both.

I loved working with the students, getting to know them personally and attempting to find a way to connect learning for them. Watching them become excited about their own growth was the reward that made me love coming to school each day. However, it was also an eye opening experience that dispelled the notion that all of the children in this suburban school lived idyllic lives. Many of the students faced challenges that could easily be overlooked if you merely did a surface glimpse of the school, yet these challenges were never far from the hearts and minds of the students and made learning take second place to their inherent need for food, shelter, safety and belonging.

Maybe it was because of the attention coming from the rash of recent school shootings or maybe it was because of similar struggles I faced in my own childhood, but either way, I was driven to help alleviate the needs in my students' educational lives as best I could. I realized that looking at my own school record one would not suspect the wounds I carried with me every day. I graduated valedictorian of my senior class of approximately 100 students, I was secretary of the senior class and I served on several academic and intramural teams. No one at my school or church suspected that I had been sexually and emotionally abused for many years by a stepfather. My own father died when I was seven years old. Although I have very few memories of him, I know that both my father and stepfather were alcoholics and my family lived with the usual shame, secrecy and abuse that are inherent with the disease.

I recognized at a young age that my own strength and self-esteem were gifts and a result of significant people in my life that balanced the abuse and gave me a sense of purpose and direction. It also made me acutely aware of other children that were similarly afflicted. I determined to help inspire confidence and a sense of hope in them as well. Somehow it increased my sensitivity to the times those wounds were occurring at school. My journal entries testify to the frustration I felt when I realized that the school system I was working in was not meeting the needs of students and I felt minuscule in my ability to make a difference.

When I learned that the school where I was employed was joining with a research university to offer a cohort doctoral program meeting weekends at our school administrative offices, I felt led to join. I had a vague internal drive that told me there was more to education than I was experiencing. I was frustrated by what I innately

sensed was missing in educational reform and the testing and mandates I was being asked to perform in the name of rigor and accountability.

In my graduate classes I loved discovering and reading ideas from Jane Adams (1994), Alfie Kohn (1996, 1999), Nel Noddings (1992, 1984), Jane Roland Martin (1992) and others because they articulate the *ethic of care* for children that I recognized as missing in many of my school experiences, both as a teacher and a parent. I realize children are innately aware of how they are measuring up in a given situation and they can naturally sense whether they are accepted and respected or not. Students can tell if they are cared for by a teacher's tone of voice or by looking in their eyes (Haney, Thomas, & Vaughn, 2010). However, somehow teachers mistakenly believe they are fooling them. I hear the way teachers discuss troubled students in the teachers' lounge, and shudder when at the age of ten some students are already assessed as losers that will probably end up in jail. Yet, I am conflicted because many of those teachers are also my friends and I know them otherwise to be thoughtful, caring people.

I know hermeneutic phenomenology research is an appropriate approach for me because it "edifies the personal insight (Rorty, 1979), contributing to one's thoughtfulness and one's ability to act toward others, children or adults, with tact or tactfulness" (van Manen, 1990, p. 7). In contemporary discussions about school reform there is a great deal of emphasis on rigor and accountability through testing. When test scores are being posted on the commons wall and compared with all the other teachers' scores, it is easy to resent the student who is monopolizing your time and distracting the other students. Yet I know these teachers also entered into the profession because they wanted to make a difference in a student's life. What happens that makes us forget that

the child who does not follow the rules or dress or act in an acceptable manner may be the student that needs us the most? I was confused and frustrated about what it would take to make schools realize that we could not afford to relegate students to the streets through suspensions and exclusion.

Gaining knowledge always involves a process of disequilibrium. As a teacher I explain it to my students this way: learning something new means going from comfortable to confused, sometimes frustrated, as you attempt to take in new information. You are in a state of disequilibrium. After you wrestle with the new idea and reflect on how it fits with what you already know, things become clearer again and you regain stability until the process begins again. My experience of wrestling with what it means to be a caring, safe school mirrors this pattern.

Researching restorative practices is a cathartic experience for me. Having personally gone through the process of exchanging letters from college with my abuser and learning to see him as a man who had himself been abused, I know how healing it can be. Because it was the 1960s and 70s, I did not publically acknowledge what was happening and my step-father remained in the family. Although I moved away, I had to find a way to come to terms with what occurred in my own way.

I know every student in school brings their own story and it is up to us as educators to provide a socially, emotionally, and physically safe environment where learning can take place for all. My story is ongoing and changing and will continue to write itself as I conduct my interviews and go through the interpretation. Phenomenological research often leads to a transformation of consciousness and a heightened perceptiveness for the researcher (van Manen, 1990).

Summary

Phenomenological research is the description of the experiential meanings we live as we live them" (van Manen, 1990, p. 11). Hermeneutic phenomenology research involves increasingly deeper and layered reflection through the use of rich descriptive language to gain a conscious understanding of a pre-reflective life experience (Van Manen, 1990). As such, this researcher determined that this was the best methodology for my study of teachers' perceptions of school safety, since it mirrored my growth process and enabled access to a phenomenon that is often subconscious. As a method, hermeneutic phenomenology maintained a harmony with the deep interest that made me an educator in the first place (van Manen, 1990).

CHAPTER FOUR

Phenomenological Narratives: Presentation of Findings

Introduction

Ten suburban teachers respond during interviews to prompts designed to illicit their lived experience of safe schools. The interviews are transcribed, verified by the participants, and then presented according to van Manen's (1990) four existential life-worlds: temporality (lived time), corporeality (lived body), relationality (lived other) and spatiality (lived space). After reviewing the participants' reflections, deciding upon a structure for the meaning of the text proves difficult. According to van Manen's (1990) thematic analysis, the meaning units or themes of the phenomenon must be identified as they are embedded in the text, "grasping and formulating a thematic understanding is not a rule-bound process but a free act of 'seeing' meaning" (p. 79). Ultimately, streams of connections threaded throughout the dialogue are determined. The theoretical threads of shame, vulnerability, isolation, empathy/relationship, hope/ involvement and reintegration/forgiveness are italicized as they occur in the transcriptions.

Phenomenological Narrative: The Uncovering of the Life-worlds

Participant One

Participant one is a Caucasian female in her late forties. Ann teaches sixth grade special education students in a suburban intermediate school. She has taught for twenty-four years, has a master's degree and has received several teaching awards. Since Ann is the sister of a close friend, she chose to come to my home where we sat comfortably in the living room during the interview. Our previous acquaintance and the homey

surroundings allow Ann to open up and become *vulnerable* by sharing her failures, fears, and day to day experiences.

Temporality (lived time)

Lived time is subjective time and reflects our temporal way of being in the world (van Manen, 1990). Ann talks about public education getting more difficult. It is probable past experiences she encountered have left their traces on how optimistic Ann is about her ability to make a difference.

> Public education is getting more difficult. I think there are just so many cases that it is difficult to stay on top of each situation. Instead of having two or three like we used to, now there are just so many.

Making a difference is very important to Ann and is reflected in her answer to the prompt: tell me about your worst day as a teacher. As Ann begins this story the tone of her voice increases and portrays her frustration at her perceived *failure.*

> The worst days are those days when you leave school and you just feel like a *failure.* About three weeks ago I had a really bad day in that one of my emotionally disturbed kids that we have worked so hard with this year and we felt like we had made great progress just started to crumble. He lost it over something really minor and unanticipated in the classroom. I didn't see it coming! I try to be proactive and interact with anything that you think is going to set them off and I didn't see it coming anywhere. And he let loose and he was attacking students verbally and physically he was yelling and screaming, we had to lock down the school and they called campus police and they had to come and haul him off. I tried all the tactics I had been trained with to de-escalate and nothing worked. It

was just so hard; when you have an eleven year old that has to be taken out in hand cuffs you think this is just not right.

Corporeality (lived body).

Our physical presence both reveals and conceals something about ourselves simultaneously (van Manen, 1990). Ann's emphasis on particular words and her rigid posture spoke to the *shame* accompanying her storytelling. What it does not reveal is how many times her thoughts have returned to this moment and questioned what she missed or what she could have done differently to prevent it.

> *I didn't* see it coming and *I tried* all the tactics I had been trained with to de-escalate and nothing worked. *I didn't see it* coming anywhere. It was just so hard; when you have an eleven year old that has to be taken out in hand cuffs you think *this is just not right.*

Relationality (lived other).

"Relationality is the lived relation we maintain with others in the interpersonal space that we share with them" (van Manen, 1990, p 104). Ann recounts a story of the *relationship* between one of her previous students and girls at her school. Embedded in the story is also the *relationship* Ann develops with her students and their families.

> I had a student in the elementary school for three years and again when I had transferred to the sixth grade. I have known the family since I had the girl in Kindergarten, I stay in touch with the family and I tutor the girl during the summer; she is raised by her grandparents. The girl was in eighth grade last year and the grandmother called me in May and was so upset because they had just figured out that the girl had been bullied all semester by a gang of about eight

girls. This little girl functions on the level of about a second grader, but she looks just like everybody else. She is very cute and they dress her just so cute. The grandparents had been missing money, but they played it down as forgetfulness at their age. They also noticed that the girl was losing her clothes. The girl got to where she was afraid to go to school or couldn't go because her stomach hurt. They also noticed that when she did go to school she came home with bruises on her knees and said she had fallen down the stairs. This happened about twenty times. Finally the grandparents had the teachers look more closely into the situation and they found out that this gang had been telling the girl to bring twenty bucks to school tomorrow or they would kill her or beat her up. The gang would also say they liked the outfit she was wearing; bring it to school tomorrow. The grandparents estimated that around $500 and two thirds of her wardrobe had been taken to these girls. The bruises on her knees were from the girls shoving her down the stairs. Her injuries were so bad that she ended up having to have knee surgery from a cracked kneecap.

Ann is a mother as well as a teacher. Her lived human relation with her students embodies some of the same *hopes* and *fears* embodied in the parental experience. This is evident in the extra time and attention she provides this young girl.

I was just furious and when she called me and told me all this we were literally on the last days of school. So I picked up the phone and called the special education coordinator and asked her if she knew about this story. She said yes she had been in on the investigation trying to figure out what was happening. That was when I found out that nothing had really happened to this gang of girls.

When I heard that nothing had been done, I called the 9th grade center principal and said we need to talk. I went with the grandparents to his office one afternoon and gave him the whole story and the names of the girls in this gang. They asked him to help come up with a plan where next year this girl could come to school and be safe and not come in contact with these girls. The principal was great. He took the girls' names and he made sure the next year the gang was broken up and more closely watched. This year the girl loves school and they are all so happy. They made her an aid in the office and she loves it. They assigned her to a great special education teacher that has really looked out for her and made sure she is safe. The 9th grade principal says they totally headed off any problem and they have not had any problem with this gang this year.

Spatiality (lived space).

Spatiality deals with how a space is felt as well as its physical dimensions (van Manen, 1990). Ann recognizes that school, with all of its limitations, holds more potential for the boy in her story because of people at school who can help him; he is *alone* a great deal at home. She suggests taking on the parental role of preparing him for the future and feels they are *failing* if they don't facilitate his dealing with the real world when he leaves their protective environment.

He got in-house suspension for three days. We kept him in-house so we could work with him. We try not to send them home if we can help it because often they are home *alone* and they play video games or watch television and it is not really a punishment. The kids had tiptoed around this boy all year and really so had the teachers to some degree. He's actually lived under this false

> expectation of protection. That is not real; it is not the real world. He is going to middle school and high school and we need to help him learn to deal with it while he is here and we have people to help him and we have people in place to help.

Ann also realizes that it is more difficult to *provide for students' needs* when schools become too big. Her discussion about mega sites portrays Bollnow's (1960) view about the possible differences between perceived size and actual size (van Manen, 1990). A mega site may be determined by sheer number of students; however, it can also be a teacher's perception.

> I think the larger the site, the more difficult it is to get a hold on something like bullying and keep control. That is why I think when we create these mega sites we are leaving ourselves open for a lot of problems and difficulties.

Participant Two

Participant two, Beth, a Caucasian in her late sixties, has taught for thirty years. She has a doctorate and has received numerous awards. Our interview takes place in her fourth grade classroom over spring break. She is at school to work in her classroom even though it is her time off. This speaks to her commitment to her work and her *love* for the students.

Temporality (lived time).

When I ask her to reflect upon the life experiences that led her to pursue a career in education, Beth travels back to her childhood influences. "The temporal dimensions of past, present, and future constitute the horizon of a person's temporal landscape" (van Manen, 1990, p. 104).

As a child I had younger brothers and sisters and my mom would just turn the party over to me and I was able to work with all the kids and keep them entertained so I knew I loved to work with kids. I had some especially good teachers; I had a 3rd grade teacher that was way ahead of her time because that would have been in the 1950's. She had a class that was really hands-on. We had a store and we would bring in containers form home and we were able to do math from the prices. At Valentines she created a Post Office and had mail slots for each of our valentines. We each took turns performing the jobs in the post office. It was a very hands-on class and that is how we learned the subjects. That year I decided I wanted to be a teacher just like her!

Lived time affects the way we view the past and in turn pilots our future. Beth also looks back when she ponders how much time teachers currently spend thinking about school safety.

I think it has become much more or we have much greater awareness probably even in the last five years. It has been growing over time; our district has plans and strategies. We had a meeting earlier in the year and our principal said she was on a Tulsa committee that tested an urban school randomly. They took them wherever the plan was in buses and they had all of the students put in a certain part of the gym with their class. The students had no supplies and the teacher did not even have her purse. They told them to think what it would be like whether it was from a dangerous criminal situation or it was from a fire or tornado. How would you prepare yourself? From that point on, whenever we have a drill I grab my coat and my purse with my phone and I am going to pack a bag

with some snacks like Pop Tarts, or crackers or something. My students started taking a book with them to fire drills so they will have something to do. No one else has done it, but that was something that really made an impression on me.

I have it in the back of my mind, but I don't think about it all of the time. I think it would take away from the fresh cutting edge or that free spirit that flows where you can just carry on with your day and not worry about if anyone is going to do anything to anybody. I think you'd know that, not always, but you can pick up on vibes and if you pick up something you become more alert with that type of student. That would be the thing that I'd hate if we ended up being in little boxes, where you had to have the doors locked all the time and we couldn't just be free to go outside for a little while and read books together or something.

Corporeality (lived body).

"When we meet another person in his or her landscape or world we meet that person first of all through his or her body" (van Manen, 1990, p. 103). Sitting rather stiffly in student chairs in Beth's classroom, I am relaxed by her soothing voice as she responds to the prompts without hesitation and shares her teacher stories. Meeting her again after many years, she makes me feel comfortable and I can tell she is comfortable with herself in this space. She speaks fluently with confidence about her lived experience. She is in her element as an educator and her mind was focused on what takes place here in her classroom and what her role is. She maintains great eye contact and even comments when she has to look away that she is remembering an experience and is picturing it in her mind. However, Beth's voice takes on urgency when she talks about what *scares* her.

Those bullies have their own issue that is the reason they bully. But the ones they bully are the ones doing the shooting. That is the part we have to figure out. We have to not let these people be *invisible.* That is why I try so hard, even with kids that don't speak English yet, that may be here up to six months in the silent period. I want them to know that *I see them and I know that they are there.* Also, I try to bring the other kids in on that, either through class discussions or by modeling it have other kids wanting to help other kids, help them feel important. For example, one year I had a boy who would become violent and I had to remove him from the class to protect the other students. I would tell the students, you know he has issues that we don't even know about, but we need to treat him with love because he needs to feel love just like the rest of us do. The counselors are pretty good with that and we do have all the Rainbow groups where kids can go if they need help. I just think that the biggest problem that is troubling to me are the children that are so quiet and keep it all inside and all of a sudden it comes out and hurts a lot of people. Those are the things you never can predict and those are that things that scare me.

Relationality (lived other).

"The teacher-child relation is experienced as a special lived relation to the other in the sense that this relation is highly personal and charged with interpersonal significance"(van Manen, 1990, p 106). The teacher-child relationship has the potential to be liberating or smothering, edifying or degrading, and fulfilling or frustrating for both the teacher and student. Beth mentions how she has lives both extremes and how she

consciously speaks positive so that every student in her class experiences at least one adult that *sees them as important and valued and loved.*

I always try to make sure that every kid in my class *knows they are important and they are of value*. In fact, my students wrote a book about me last year and had it published. One of the things they said is I've noticed that Mrs. B privately says a little kind word to every student sometime through the year. I want every child to feel *empowered* and know that they are valued. I always tell my class that I can see something that is good in every single student. I once had a child who got into trouble and she said to me "Well are you going to tell us what that is, every single one of us?" Of course I responded that yes I would!

Something we do at the end of every year is called Warm Fuzzies. It was from Chicken Soup for the Soul about an army boy that was killed and the list that was found in his wallet of nice things his classmates said about him one year in school. So for the last three weeks of school I have each student write down something nice about each student and then I compile each students list and type it up. It takes about four hours to type on top of report cards and everything, and the kids knew it and I add my own personal warm fuzzy. In that same book they wrote about me, one parent wrote in and told the story and said her son wanted her to go out and buy him a wallet so he could put his list in it. This is where it starts within the classroom with having every child feel he or she is *important* and they have *something to offer to the class*.

I feel there are people that sometimes make situations worse because they are belligerent toward the students and I think they think I am a softy. But I

believe it is more important for me to *love them* and I still discipline and I still raise my voice. Over the years people have said to me, I see you worked your magic on the kids again. But I think it is just *love* and it is helping to get to the root issue a child might have, rather than slapping them down. Not literally of course, but just putting them down all the time or saying just sit down and do your work . There are times that I am short and I don't take the time with a child. The bottom line is they know. I think a teacher can make a difference when a child just doesn't feel like he is all bad! There is *something good in everyone.*

I do remember in my first year of teaching, after Christmas in 1966, it would have been January. I taught in a school with students from affluent backgrounds, where I had some students that would say can I call my maid and have her bring my homework, to students from poverty or from another country. I had one student who was constantly drawing pictures of ways to kill people. Back then there wasn't much to be done about it. You could tell he came from a very different background. Then I had a student who was extremely behaviorally challenged where he needed to have some outside help and we didn't really have a system for that yet. He had to be actually taken down a few times, taken down and held down. He would just explode. So that year was pretty tough. I had another year where two really brilliant students who were sort of like the joker who could destroy the world with their brilliance and they basically destroyed that year. An example would be they put itching powder down the back of an autistic child and he came up and said my back itches and he was so precious. Then when they got in-house suspension, the rest of the class said it is no fun when they are

not here. So that was my very worst year ever. Then I had another year two or three years ago where a student was extremely emotionally disturbed and he would actually go into almost a fetal position. When he would look at me it would be with a glare, not of hatred because I knew he liked me and we *related*, but just this anger. His eyes were just black with anger. I believe over the year God helped me to help this little boy and to see that he was a *valuable person*. The next year his grandmother came and told me he was having a different year. Fortunately over the last couple of years he has come back and visited me and he has not had as many issues. There were a couple of times that I would physically have to remove all of the other students to keep them safe and just leave him here and call for help. I just knew internally there were other students in my class that needed me to help make it as smooth as I could. So I just got through the year. There is nothing else you can do, even though it is very unpleasant and you really don't want to go back. You do everything you can to make it good for the other kids.

We all inhabit different life-worlds at different times of the day, such as the lived world of work and the lived world of the home (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973). Life-worlds overlap and may conflict; nevertheless they cannot be completely separated (van Manen, 1990). Beth draws attention to her conflicting emotions experienced during safety drills. As a mother, however, Beth also wants her own children to have someone in their life that would be willing to die to protect them. Her emotions are not completely opposite, they overlap.

When I think of school safety I think of the shootings like we hear about in the news like the kid who pulled the fire alarm and then just started shooting from behind bushes at people as they came out of the school. Well I thought that could really happen at our school. You start thinking wow I would probably sacrifice my life for my students, but you also have your own children at home, so you are torn. Of course I would do everything I could; I would do my job and try to protect the students. But I would also think of my kids and try to protect myself.

Spatiality (lived space).

The classroom is the location of teachers and students shared lived space. Through this space experience of school, the student is offered an opportunity to question, to express curiosity and to develop as an individual (van Manen, 1990). However, the relationship is reciprocal as the teacher also learns, adapts and grows as a result of having been a mentor to each student. In response to my prompt of tell me about the worst day in your teaching career, Beth accepts some of the *blame* stating that bad days are often days that she is not as organized as she needs to move from one thing to another seamlessly. However, where students come from and the experiences they encounter before entering the classroom play a huge role.

A worst day partly could be my *fault* because I was not as organized as I need to be. I have to do a lot of planning. Sometimes the planning is just in my head, but from previous experience I need to know what I am going to do and be prepared to move from one thing to another sort of seamlessly, which doesn't always happen. That is why it is a good day when it does! I also think about the

people involved and if they are all going to be there or if some will be going to labs or other places, so that each level of students needs are met. I have leveled math, leveled reading, and leveled spelling, even though I don't necessarily meet with groups all the time or as often as I would even like. I know they have work on their level, or spelling words on their level. So that is one thing and the other is to always have it together to be ready to move on to the next thing before I finish the first thing and be thinking of what I need to do to make every second count. Another thing would be when the chemistry in the class is difficult. In fact it could be the worst year, not just the worst day. Of course you *think about where the students came from* and not just what is going on in the classroom but where the student came from that morning. If you know their background is rough, and then you realize that school may not even be on their list, it is more about survival. We are in a school setting where it used to be all upper level income down to average. Now the clientele has changed and so we have extremes from children in other countries that have been refuges and they washed their clothes in the river and don't have drinking water at home to students whose parents are not just separated but are in a very angry separation or divorce, students whose parents or parent are away at war. All of these things affect the peace of the classroom. You have to constantly be thinking about those needs too and try to be aware of them and cater to that need of a hug or a smile or something that is different from what they had that morning.

Participant Three

Participant three is a Caucasian female in her early fifties with thirty-two years of teaching experience. She has a doctorate in education and has received numerous awards. I met Carol in a booth at Camille's restaurant during spring break. The casual atmosphere contributed to the ease of conversation.

Temporality (lived time).

Carol looks to the past in comparing her own perspective of school safety. Her present viewpoint is based not only on publicized shootings at other schools, but on an act of violence that took place in her own district.

> Used to, you would think what is going to happen in a tornado; that would be school safety and those were the kind of drills we had when we were growing up. You would never have thought of some kid bringing a gun to school and unfortunately that is the first thing you think of now.
>
> You know we did have that one at the high school back about four years ago when the boy had the gun on the roof. I was just glad that was not my musical that was going on, it was during the high school musical. The principal had to keep everyone in the building. They couldn't let them out until everything was diffused.
>
> Things are changing so rapidly, I think we can always benefit from more training. Like we said before, our biggest *worries* used to be from fire or tornado. Now we have to insure that a child isn't bringing a gun to school. We had a student who brought a garrote to school. I didn't know what it was, it looked like a wire or guitar string, but it is a wire that is used to choke somebody.

The amount of time we feel we have is another way of experiencing lived time. Carol recognizes the benefits of more safety training, however, that realization conflicts with her sense of not having enough time already to do what is required in her job. When asked what would be your first question or concerns regarding a new safety intervention and prevention program being implemented, she answers:

> What is going to be added to our workload? That would be my first question. Are we going to have to sit down and write a bunch of stuff that I already know, kind of like when you have to write explicit lesson plans or write out your goals for the year? That might benefit new or inexperienced teachers, but at this point I know my goals… I don't have time for another once a week meeting or a bunch of busy work.

Lived time is also reflected in our memories of the past. Carol has two memories that demonstrate the *shame* that can be experienced by students and teachers as a result of making themselves *vulnerable* in the process of learning.

> I remember when we had a different assistant principal. We had a student who had a legal name and a name he wanted to go by. I primarily knew him with the last name that he went by. I was taking attendance one day and apparently wrote down that name. Later, in front of a bunch of seniors, this principal called me over and asked who this student is and said I didn't have any one in my class with that name. That was in my second year of teaching and I still remember it well thirty years later. I lost a little respect for that man that day. I taught his son and his grandchildren and he was a totally different person. I never brought it up, but it had *affected me* and I remembered it.

In fourth grade I had a teacher, I still remember her name, we did some new math thing and I just didn't get it. I am sure I was driving the woman crazy asking her if I was doing it right. She looked at me and said smart people don't have to ask questions. That is the only time my mother went up to the school and took my side. My mother always backed the teacher, but not that time. Again, I remember that from fourth grade. I even remember what I was wearing that day. That just made such an *impression on my brain*.

Corporeality (lived body).

Knowing your body, your instincts and your inner voices is a part of corporeality (van Manen, 1990). Carol references how important it is for teachers to *listen* to those voices and *observe* carefully what is happening around them to help prevent school violence.

I think you just really have to watch. I have had to do this on occasion and it is usually when there is a weather change. I can usually just feel something in the air and say to myself this doesn't feel like a good day. Later when I talk to the assistant principal I will ask did you have a bunch of fights today and they will say yes, how did you know? You just have to be really *aware* when kids are coming in and really listen.

I have one child who is now on a shortened day, but I could always tell when he came in. I had him 6th hour of the day and you could tell when he was just about to explode. He was a small child and I think had what they call the small man syndrome. A couple of days I could see he was not having a good day and I would say hey, let's go over here. Could you help me out by doing this or if

I could see that he was really close to the breaking point and he might hurt someone in the room I would just call down to the office and say could 'Mike' come sit with you. I have a hundred kids in that room I can't baby that one child. When you have a choir it is really different. The office is really good about helping us out with stuff like that because they know there are days. In a smaller classroom you maybe could handle it and have the student cool down by coming and sitting by you. Sometimes I can do that, but some days I can just tell.

A principal's *presence* and acting on instinct is also an important role of the administration in preventing violence.

I think a lot of it is being aware. It happens even more in the spring. Administrators need to be seen, walking down the halls because you hear things. Then it is important to *act* on things that might happen. I have seen times that things are getting ready to blow up and they will do a lot of calming the school down. We have a pretty safe school. When you have 1500 kids and all those hormones fights are going to happen, but it isn't like we have the fight of the day club. There are some days you can just feel it.

I think a lot of it is the head principal. He has a military *presence* and the kids respond to that. It is just the air that he has. He doesn't do it in a mean way, he just lets trouble makers know it just isn't going to happen. He does it in a little bit of an intimidating way, but at that age that is okay. They need to know they are not quite as invincible as they think they are.

Relationality (lived other).

Teacher-student *relationships* have an enormous impact on children as evidenced by the life directing influence Carol's eighth grade teacher had on her life.

> Well I really hit it off with my eighth grade music teacher and ever since then I knew I wanted to be a music teacher. Her son and I were the same age and I would go over to their house and there was just this *connection.* I loved what she did and knew that was what I wanted to do when I grew up.

Nevertheless, lived human relations can sometimes be evidenced by the lack of connectedness we feel due to emotional or physical *isolation.* Carol refers briefly to this isolation when she mentions the music teachers "are sort of in our own little world in the music area." However, possible *emotional isolation* can be experienced by victims of verbal abuse or bullying.

> I have never witnessed teacher to teacher bullying just because we are sort of *in our own little world* in the music area. I have witnessed teacher to student and it happens a lot in athletics. I guess I have seen other teachers cross what, I feel, is the line. You can have a certain tone when you reprimand, but it can't turn into *abuse*.
>
> I would want to make the kids feel safe. We do surveys and sometimes the kids will say that they don't feel safe. If I question them more the answers I get suggest they are more *afraid* of bullies. From the students I talk to, I don't think they are *afraid* of someone bringing a gun to school and starting shooting. They are *afraid* of the bully that is going to beat them up at the bus stop.

Spatiality (lived space).

Our *presence*, or the way we occupy a space, affects how we and others experience lived space. Carol refers to teachers' presence again in response to the prompt "what have you seen that you feel is the most successful in creating a safe school culture?"

> I think, especially at the beginning and end of the year when all the teachers are out in the hallway, just *presence*. The teachers are everywhere; the kids don't have a chance to get into trouble. At the beginning of the year, for four weeks or so every teacher talks about bullying. I talked to my home base and asked them how they thought the discussions were helping and the students said they thought it made it worse. I asked how it made it worse and they said the videos showed ways to bully that they had never thought of. So the hard core bullies learned new tricks.

Although teacher presence helps create a sense of *connectedness,* Carol also admits that bullying is a big problem because it often is not seen or detected.

> I think bullying is a big problem because it is so secretive. *I would never hear* this one boy say anything, but the students would tell me he just said this to me. I had him on the front row and watched him, but as soon as I did something else, he would say something.

For Carol, however, lived space is also very much about the actual building and its security.

> The one thing that has always *bothered me* about that school and I have voiced it, they just don't know what to do, is anybody can walk into that building,

or all the buildings in the district. You are supposed to stop at the office and they check everyone out, but if the office is distracted anyone could walk right on by.

Participant Four

Participant four, Debra, is a Caucasian female in her late fifties. She has known from high school that she wanted to be a teacher and has been teaching for thirty-three years, currently in the fifth grade. Her daughter now is a teacher as well. She has a master's degree and has been recognized with numerous awards. Because Debra lives in close proximity, the interview takes place in my home over spring break. Debra has already had a busy day and arrives a little later than originally scheduled. She does not expound extensively on each prompt and I feel the interview reflects her physical tiredness. However, I greatly appreciate her willingness to participate and to share her voice.

Temporality (lived time).

Teachers work with students about seven hours a day, but what happens outside of school in the remaining time greatly affects the students' learning experience. Debra's voice reflects the frustration she feels both for the students and for the expectations this adds to her job.

> When they come in and they have had problems at home, learning is the last thing on their mind, they come in with already having had a horrible morning and you can read it all over them and learning is the last thing they want and they act out because they are so frustrated with situations carried over from home.
>
> Right now, I am starting to see a lot of students who don't want to learn because the parents don't support the school, the parents are so *involved* in their

own lives that school is not a priority and that is instilled in the kids. We are supposed to handle everything at school, make everything right, give good grades, and take care of all of their problems and emotional needs.

Corporeality (lived body).

Physical size or appearance alters how people are perceived or treated. Debra tells a story regarding the effect it had on one of her students.

> We have a lot of ESL students now and we are hearing stories from them. I have one little boy and he told of getting on a boat to come over here. He is a small child because growing up he only ate rice, he is lucky to be alive. He has been so bullied this year by all the kids. He shared with us his history a little bit and it came out of a math story problem of a student who couldn't go to school so he went to the library and decided to educate himself. This little one started sharing his life history and it totally turned the class around. I told the kids look at that. He is lucky to be alive, he is lucky to even be here. Could you even imagine, he lived in a bamboo hut with no electricity, no bathrooms, nothing. That is how he grew up his first five years. I asked, do you not admire and *respect* him now? And their whole attitude changed that moment. It was amazing that he shared the detail that he shared.

The students in Debra's class were able to *empathize* with their classmate when they heard his story. However, *empathy* most often has to be modeled or taught.

> Bullying is getting worse because there are always those boys who think they are macho because they are on the football team and they are the ones who instigate the bullying because they are pushed so hard by their parents to be the

best and told they are the best that if they see something less than them they bully them.

Relationality (lived other).

Debra recognizes that teachers can not accomplish all that children need to learn alone. She stresses the need for teachers to *partner* with the counselor and with parents in working against bullying.

> The counselor is real good about dealing with bullying issues, if she is told about them and if we are made aware. She immediately addresses it and she will send kids home because of it and she contacts parents so they have that type of support. However, by the time it gets to her it has escalated to a point that it has already damaged the child.
>
> The counselor does lessons on bullying but I think if there was a way to make parents more aware of it and make parents more *involved* because a large majority of the kids that commit suicide do it because they were bullied. The parents say, oh I knew they were having problems, I knew this was happening and yet they don't step in and do anything because they are not educated enough about what can happen. The problem is the parents that need to come are the ones that won't show.
>
> I would just love to see bullying addressed more in the schools. I think it should be required curriculum. It could be integrated into a science unit or social studies unit. Our counselor is very well versed on it, but there isn't enough of her to go around and teach it in every class and do what needs to be done.

Debra also brings attention to the conflict between confidentiality and a teacher's need to know.

> Frequently if the counselor is called by a parent or even if a student comes in and tells about a bullying situation, we as *teachers are not even told about it*, we are not aware of it. So many home situations where the child has been removed or this is happening or that is happening but we are never told.

Spatiality (lived space).

Maslow (2002) hierarchy of needs recognizes physiological safety as a basic need. If a child does not feel safe, he or she is not in a position to concentrate on the academic requirements in the classroom. Debra recognizes the importance of children having a place in life where they can relax and experience a sense of safety and acceptance.

> The big thing that I think of right now is for kids to be safe and feel that they are safe not having to be at school *worrying* that a parent that has been abusive might come to school and pick them up. I had this situation where a little girl this year told me if her dad showed up not to let her go to the office to go with him because his name was on the list and it was not a good situation. The teacher's role is protecting the kids and making sure they feel safe there, they know school is a learning place and a caring place.

She explains the process the office administers follow to insure the students' and staffs' safety from outsiders.

> They have the machine that scans your driver's license and everyone has to provide their license or they are not allowed back. Even if parents are coming

for a conference or something like that, if they can't show the office staff their license they won't let them back. They have to meet behind the principal's office in that conference area. If they do not go through that machine or if they do not pass on the screening, they are not allowed back to the teacher's room or to the Special Ed office or anywhere. If there is ever an issue when they know of a parent or someone coming up to school they will call campus police and they will have the police sitting in that area ready if there is a problem.

Debra's lived experience of spatiality also includes how to handle students who do become violent.

> Our special education teacher is trained and if she can't handle it we have a padded room where they can *put the child* so he/she can't hurt themselves or others. Then immediately campus police is called and if it is bad enough campus police will escort them out.
>
> They built the room last year for one little boy in particular that would get really violent. They converted a storage room and they went in and padded it and added the window so someone could watch and make sure he was okay. The office would announce IOC (Intruder on Campus) and we would just shut our door so the kids didn't even know anything was going on. They would shut the hallway doors because he would be kicking and screaming all the way down the hall. The hallway he was on had been talked to and were aware of it.

Participant Five

Participant five, Elaine, is a female Caucasian between fifty-five and sixty. She has taught thirty years, currently in sixth grade, and has a daughter who attended her

school. I interview Elaine at a friend's recommendation. We meet at Panera Bread after school on a Friday. Although Elaine is tired from a long week, the interview lasted almost two hours. Conversation flows freely from my initial prompting of her perspective on school safety. At one point in the conversation, Elaine expresses being reticent about meeting with me because she is nervous about how helpful she will be. Her hesitation is indicative of someone who is not accustomed to sharing their voice or having their opinion valued. She later reiterates her reticence to speak up, "I do have to say though and I think it is because our building is so big, but I don't feel the *respect* for the older teachers that I think was there when I was a younger teacher. I try to keep a low profile on that. I try to do my own thing and not attempt to lead the team meetings or draw attention to myself." Realizing that Elaine and I have mutual friends, attended the same college, and share many educational philosophies enables us to develop camaraderie unusual for a first meeting. Because of this trust, Elaine is willing to open up and share personal information that does not come up in any other interview.

Temporality (lived time)

Elaine reflects on how the changing times have required her to make adjustments in her teaching over the years.

> The dynamic of the students is a lot different than when I first started and that has made a difference in discipline and made a difference in just how things are handled. We also have a very culturally diverse student body. In the course of my day I have a good group of Hispanic students, African-American students and I see kids from India. There seem to be lots of different cultures I get to talk to. We do have an ELL (English language learners) program and that has been

wonderful for those kids. Those teachers I know work hard to help those students get ready for the classroom.

The kids themselves have changed a great deal in the thirty years I have been teaching. Of course cellphones were not around and the media was not as much of an influence as it is now. Now I have smart boards in the classroom and I try to use the television. In a forty-seven minute period I try to break my class into three different parts to keep it up and moving and clicking. We also have late start Friday and that is something we use for department meetings.

The law has just passed that schools will now be graded and that is a new wait and see what happens. We are checking the state website on a daily basis to see where that is going. I also *realize* that our students are dealing with a great deal of baggage. They can't even concentrate on what we are learning in the classroom because of the things they are dealing with in life. That has made me change my style of teaching. I try not to make them have a homework assignment every single day because I know I need to make it nonthreatening and let them just sit there and absorb what we are studying. That is what I have tried to do the last couple of years, I don't know if I have always been successful.

Making creative and diverse lesson plans takes time. Work load is one of the concerns expressed regarding implementation of a possible new violence prevention and intervention program.

Sometimes a teacher would say will it be a lot more work? Sometimes they are looking at could the counselors take over that. The counselors are over worked as well, but I would love to see that be a priority for the counselor so

when our students say this or that is happening we could give it to the counselor and they could hold some sessions and spearhead finding out about what is going on. I am not saying we could not be a part of the program and have something to fill out, but I see that as the role of the counselor.

Corporeality (lived body).

Elaine spoke of the efforts she and her colleagues go to *involving* parents in their child's schooling and helping to ease any discomfort they have in the educational environment.

Getting parents *involved* is one of our objectives. I am on a fantastic team and I could be the mom to three out of the other four teachers, but they are go getters and they are really good and we try as hard as we can to get the parents in to Parent Teacher Night. The principal let us try a new idea and we had a carnival setting. We had punch and cookies and we had games that focused on ideas that would be on the state testing, like we had a little math game going. We had students working out in the hallway and we had things for the parents to fill out. We had more parents show up for that than we ever would have for teacher conferences. I was able to talk to several parents one on one while I served my world-famous punch. Not all of the parents came and some of the ones we really wanted to come didn't, but we did get to visit with several of the parents. My team tries to do a lot of extra things to get parents *in the door*. That is one of the schools philosophies, to get as many parents *in the door* so they are not intimidated, they are not *afraid*. We wanted to get away from that formal setting where five teachers are sitting around a table with one parent and they may feel a

little outnumbered or intimidated. We do have to do that sometimes when it is a more traditional meeting and we need to visit with the parents about something, but this way we were seen in a little different light. It went so well other teams have tried it too. We are trying to be creative and our principal encourages us to think outside the box. We send out parent surveys every year as well as student surveys. We try to get feedback from as many as we can. We encourage parents to email us with questions and to stay in touch as much as they can.

Relationality (lived other).

Elaine talks extensively about how she relates to her students and the relaxed atmosphere she attempts to create in her classroom.

At the very beginning of the year I introduce myself in my regular tone and I don't come across too strict. I tell them I don't like to have to set up really strict rules, but these are the things they can look at and use. I tell them that I can be stricter but that is a choice the class makes by how they behave. My latest comment is I tell the students when kids have not done well behavior wise they have to go to in-house detention or ISD and I have to provide work they can do independently like reading and answering questions. I tell them they are going to have to get used to several teachers and different class settings and they don't need to complain, they just need to roll with them. I also tell them if I have to get onto them, I go home and my stomach hurts because that is just not who I am. I also try not to talk at them too much. But I do try to just play with them a little bit and stay *approachable*. I don't always catch every upset kid, but I try to just keep talking to them and help them so they can talk to me if they want to.

Last week I went to see one student in ISD (in-house detention) and I *bragged* on him and told him I thought he was going to be great on the wrestling team. Previously I had allowed him to bring his wrestling trophies into class and talked to him about it. In ISD I told him maybe he would like to write down some of his feelings and the next day we found that he had written each of his teachers a note. I don't have too much trouble with him so he didn't apologize to me, but he did apologize to the teacher he had the problem with. He complimented the other teachers. So he is back in class and we are just trying to wait and see. I told the principal, I knew some things were confidential, but I would like to *know more about him* and what we can do and how we can get mom up there.

I guess I just try to *be as real* with the students as I can and tell them we have to get work done today. I also like to do projects with them. There are so many ADD kids; I have tried to make my lessons short and to the point. We do take a section of time to learn how to read non-fiction text and answer questions and how to learn vocabulary. Every day is not the same, but they do have certain expectations of things we are going to do in a week. I try to make it short manageable things and try not to stress them out or overwhelm them. Some days it wears me out, but some days I get recharged by it. I love being a classroom teacher and I love thinking of new ways I can present the material that will make it interesting and exciting to the students

I borrowed another saying from someone and that is I try to teach all the kids like I would like my daughter to be taught. The other idea I've heard is if we knew all of the problems that every child had, we would have so much *empathy*

that we would make all the accommodations that we could. That is why I try to find a happy medium and not stress them out too much, but let them get some work done.

My father was an alcoholic and he *embarrassed* me at school events and I didn't like to bring friends home. I sometimes do share that one on one with students. I did go ahead and tell it to the boy I mentioned in in-house. I tell them yes I did get some counseling when I was older to work some things out, I made it just fine. I know whatever you are going through you are going to make it. I think I had some background that helps me to *empathize* with students.

The kids *don't want to tell anyone* about it and they want to seem really cool. That was one of my goals growing up. I wanted to be very successful and so I was *involved* in all these things like student counsel, cheerleading, athletics. *I wanted to be this achieving person. I wanted to become separated from the alcoholism.*

Spatiality (lived space).

Students may live in a world of violence, abuse, or neglect but school can be a haven where they feel safe and *connected*.

There is one other thing. Our school does do after school programs. They do have a small number of students that are actually in before and after care, somewhat like they have at the elementary level. But we also offer after school activities that are called Out of School Programs that are paid for by a grant. You can sign up for two or three days a week for like gaming class or I held a yarn class and now I am doing a plastic canvas class. You set the limit for the number

of students you can take. We are trying to keep the students that really need it in school for an extra hour. Our sixth graders can ride the seventh grade bus home and sometimes the seventh grade students can come an hour early so if the parents need to drop them off an hour early they can do that. I am pleased with that. I am also pleased that the school will also let Kids for Christ or other Christian groups meet. I am thankful that there hasn't been any opposition to that. Our school does a great job of communicating all over the district what is going on.

Going back to these after school programs, they help to keep the students safe and provide a bus ride home. They are at least are trying to keep the kids *engaged* and keep them from going home to an empty house or keep them from feeling alone or left out. I had one boy in my class that is called the Nifty Knitters. I found out later there was some problem at home with a gun or something, but in my class he was the sweetest boy. I have two boys in my class now that really seem to like doing crafty things. Sometimes it is best not to know the whole history or you would be *scared* to death.

As she talks, Elaine reflects on how *isolation* in her classroom and lack of information sharing with counselors and administrators limits her awareness of possible dangers or difficult situations.

I hope I am not naïve because I don't hear things that make me feel unsafe. I don't know if I stay enough *out of the main stream* of kids that I don't hear a lot of things. I think kids say a lot to each other on buses, I think there are threats and things at bus stops. I like the way our school says if you say or do something at a bus stop that still counts as school property. At least we are trying

to hold down the fort and get students to school and home safely. I think kids kind of start hanging out with the kids they are most like. And it is kind of sad because some kids get totally *ignored* and there is some bullying in that shuffling of kids. I have students tell me so and so was saying this. I don't think we treat it as lightly as we did in the past because we do have them write it down and turn it in. We tell students you can't say this, this is harassment. I think we do this to both boys and girls. We had one boy that was larger in size but acted a little less maturely and he was kind of picked on. We had the parent come in and we talked together on things he might do, but also ways we could help so he didn't retaliate or the situation escalate. I can't say I truly know how serious bullying is or how much the office has to deal with bullying. The office tries to keep it out of my room.

It's funny though, I guess I just kind of rolled this off but I just happened to think. I do have a sixth grader that has to check in with a police officer every morning before he comes to class. I am not *afraid* and I don't even think about it all the time. I don't know what the priors are or anything about it. He will do things outside of my classroom and I will occasionally get an email that says he is suspended to home for one day or five days. He is in in-house suspension right now. Most of the time I do not even know what the altercation was; I can ask directly and I could find out. Every day I will try to make eye contact with him and he will give me a nod or he will get there early enough to give me his pass. I trust him and we haven't had a problem, but obviously there are some anger issues or things he is working with. When we first heard about it, there was a little

panic among the teachers, but then the worry is less than what really happens and it hasn't been a problem.

Elaine also recognizes the importance of school size in knowing and meeting the needs of each student.

> I like it that each wing has its own principal. We are learning how to be a small school within a bigger school and that way you can get to know your principal closer. Counselors are the same. I tell my parents that is one advantage of having your student on a team. There are about 140-150 students on each team. That way we can keep up with the kids. We have what is called Child Study Meeting and we get a print out each week on who is on the D&F list and we can talk about those students and look at what we need to do or if we want to call the parents. Our students have the benefit of band, orchestra, and keyboarding and drama electives that a big school can have, but still benefit from the smaller team. There are around 1000 in 6th grade. We also have the benefit of information online. Parents can get online and check grades and homework.
>
> It was something I loved as a parent. Having a daughter go through the same school system has helped me all around because it provided me with the parents' perspective as well as the teacher.

Participant Six

Participant six is a Caucasian female in her early fifties. Francis has a background as a learning disability specialist and has taught for thirty-two years, primarily as a seventh grade science teacher in a suburban school. I have not previously been introduced to Francis, but a mutual acquaintance prepares the groundwork for our

meeting. We meet at Panera Bread one afternoon following school. Sitting in a booth, isolated from other customers, we develop an immediate rapport. Our similar age and stature, coupled with our love of teaching, provides common ground and facilitates our discussion.

Temporality (lived time).

Francis laughs as she describes the circuitous path that led her to the classroom. However, in response to the prompt, what drew you to the teaching profession, she narrows in on why she stays in education although she could retire.

> The kids, yes working with the students, I loved *working with students*. I had done a lot of other jobs working through college from food service to secretarial. You name it, I had done it all. I just realized I liked working with students and after thirty-two years I still love it!

Her love for children further shines when Francis reflects on her best and worst days as a teacher.

> There are so many stories; good days are just when you connect with the kids. I don't think there is only one day, I have lots of them. When I had to turn a father in for burning his child and he came to school with a gun. That stands out as a bad day. A little kindergarten boy came to school with cigarette burns all up and down his arm. We turned the dad into DHS. Then the dad came back the next day with a gun.

Francis' discussion of lived time advances to the present in response to the prompt, if your principal announced the school was implementing a new safety program what would be your first questions or concerns.

Everyone would probably think it was a good idea, but their first question would probably be how much class time is it going to take? We have so many things pulling at us from so many directions at this point in time with all these new guidelines and such. You have so much just pulling you away from the academic teaching that you need to teach.

How much time would be needed for training would be another question? It would kind of depend on how much time it needed, if you could take a staff development day for it that would work out wonderfully. So many teachers have so many things going on after school or they don't want to leave school to go to training. Most teachers, it has been my experience, don't want to leave our classroom.

Corporeality (lived body).

Being-there is a term that denotes a physical as well as an emotional and intellectual *presence*. Francis mentioned the importance of both teachers and administrator's presence is students' lives as important factors in preventing school violence.

Teachers, I mean you are right there all the time. You've got to kind of keep everything under control as much as you can.

Our principal and vice-principal are wonderful. They are very hands-on with the kids. Kids that are high risk for behavior problems, the principal really likes to work with them one on one. He gets *involved.* Every year he picks out two or three high risk kids that he works with. Sometimes it is a success and sometimes it is not, but he tries to keep the kids in school and help them deal with

their anger management. We are very fortunate with that. I am very fortunate at the school I am at, very fortunate.

Francis also offers a physiological reasoning for the bullying prevalent among the seventh grade students.

> We have several programs, counselors run two or three programs a year on bullying. Unfortunately, with seventh graders it just doesn't work. I hate to say that because we don't allow bullying but it still happens. It happens in the hallway when you can't get to them, it happens at lunchtime when they are eating, it happens after school, now it is happening on the computers and on the phones; all those things. Seventh graders walk out of those programs and they are still doing the same things they were when they walked in, so it doesn't matter. They can get called to the office; someone has turned them in for bullying. It just doesn't make a whole lot of difference. They are just so egocentric. I remember back to seventh grade. It is just a tough time. Seventh graders can just be cruel. It is just a lot of hormones ranging and stuff like that.

Relationality (lived other).

Francis offers to give me a tour of her school and I accept, sensing her pride and her desire to share the space with me. My tour reveals how the physical building contributes to the *relationships* Francis touts repeatedly in describing what makes her school special. The hallways are clean, newly painted and decorated with framed artwork. Four classroom doors open to a pod allowing teachers to meet in the hall between classes for collaboration as well as providing more eyes and ears on the students. My attention is immediately drawn to the life-size skeleton and other manipulatives in

Francis' classroom, attesting to her spoken desire to have a hands-on classroom to facilitate students' learning and encourage a sense of *ownership* in their education.

> The school I am at is the most amazing school. There is none of the teacher to teacher bullying that I had at the school I came from before. Our school seriously is like a *family*. I have never been in an environment like it. It comes from our principal and vice-principal, they have been there forever and they hire people that they know are going to get along and fit in that environment. Everyone works together. We coordinate cross-curriculum together voluntarily, like I have this idea, you want to use it. I have to say again that I am very, very blessed. I could have retired a couple of years ago and that is one of the reasons I haven't. It is just amazing.
>
> Our principal trusts us to do our job, and the vice-principal does too. They don't try to micromanage us. It's like you are a professional and as long as you are doing your job and doing it well that is fine. They are not going to come in and tell you that you have to do such and such. He wants us to do the very best job we can. Now if you are having problems or he sees problems, he'll come in and let you know. Most of the other schools in the district are not like that. He is very unusual. People would love to get into our school.

The schools commitment to work with students is also evident in Francis' thoughts regarding the process of reintegration for students who have been suspended.

> I have two boys coming back after being out for forty-five days. They will be coming back next week. Pretty much they just come back in to class. I *work with them* while they are out. Both parents chose to do book time with

teachers so they students will come in after school and get help when they need it. We are still in touch with them and they are still in touch with us so that kind of helps. The hardest part for them is *facing everyon*e and getting started again. The counselor will talk to them, but you know the kids all know what happened. It doesn't matter what you said to the kids to prepare them, there are still going to be words said, there is still going to be talking, you can't stop that. The counselor will help get the kids through that, but that is about all we have. The two that were out just thought it would be funny to bring something from home, and with the no tolerance, you are out for forty-five days; that is a quarter. We send a packet of all the work we did that week and then they can come in and ask us any questions they have. I have two others that are out on long term suspensions; again, nice kids, stupid decisions; nothing malicious about it.

Spatiality (lived space).

The campus currently houses 755 seventh grade students and about sixty staff members. There are two buildings on the premises, one is a two story building and the other is a one story. The main office, as well as Francis' classroom, is housed in the newer one story. Francis stresses that all of the doors are locked during the day except for the front door through which we gain entrance with her pass key. It is after hours and no one is still at work. During the day staff wear identification badges and visitors are required to sign in at the office. "Stranger danger," or an intruder getting past the office, presents the primary *concern* of Francis in her otherwise favorable description of her working environment.

> Probably, the only thing I would worry about is someone getting in the building. Sometimes parents walk in during class changes and they walk past the office check-in. That is my biggest concern. In our building, everyone is funneled through the office and they are supposed to get a badge, but it gets so busy. We have 755 kids at last count and one office. Sometimes someone will slip through, but it hasn't been a problem. You can even notice it and say hey will you go back and check in. It doesn't happen very often, but I would say that is my biggest concern.

Lived space can be difficult to put into words since the experience is largely pre-verbal, we do not ordinarily reflect on it (van Manen, 1990). However, the feeling of a space helps to define our reaction and interaction while in it. Francis speaks numerous times about how fortunate she is to work at this school and what makes her school different from many others she has seen or heard about.

> We have been very fortunate and not had too much real violence. I mean we have kids that act out and do stupid things. Like I said showing out or what I call acting out. We have never really had any reason to *fear* for our safety. We do the lock down drills and all that, but we have not had to use it. I am afraid the kids don't even take it real seriously. I mean they know what we are doing, but nobody gets upset and it is like whatever. I think everyone feels pretty secure. We have had a few times that we have gone into lockdown, but it wasn't from something happening at our school. Like the convenience store across the street was broken into and we locked down just in case they ran towards the school.

> Again, it is the atmosphere, sticking to no bullying and having the programs to make students aware. I really think that helps calm everything else down. I know it doesn't solve all the problems, by any means. We still have lots of kids that have lots of problems. We have kids that you can look at and say that one may be one that we hear about someday. You know, you can't solve every problem. But, I really think it starts with the teachers and the counselors *working with the students*. You cannot necessarily control the outside influences such as parents or anything else, but you can *control* what is going on in school and that is what you have to *control*! You have to be able to set the atmosphere, set the tone for what is expected and then take it from there.

One final way Francis describes her lived space involves the disadvantages of mega campuses that house only one grade level.

> I wish we had two middle schools where you had multiple grades together. I don't like this idea of each grade *separated.* This may sound strange, but you need the older students to show the younger sometimes how to act. The younger kids need the role models. We did have a middle school until about ten years ago and so I have seen it both ways. When they are all *isolated* by themselves they don't mature as much. They need a little exposure to other ages. I think the mingling of the age groups is such an important social factor and we are getting away from that with all these campuses of just one age group. Then you hit our high school and they are thrown in with other age groups and they don't know how to act. They haven't been around them up until now.

Participant Seven

Participant seven is a Hispanic male in his late thirties who has taught for fifteen years. George is referred to me by another participant in this study. I contact him by email and meet him and his wife Gloria, participant eight, in his fourth grade classroom after school. The date he requested for the interview, he is called upon by the principal to translate for a bus issue. Gloria explains why George is late and he is very apologetic when he returns. The interruption speaks to the flexibility required in the teaching profession and demonstrates how life-worlds overlap. Although now teaching in a suburban school, George and Gloria both taught in an urban school in another state. Much of their reflection is upon the change they experienced there as a new principal implemented numerous changes to improve the school.

Temporality (lived time).

Change requires time and consistency. George emphasizes this point when he talks about the principal responsible for the transformation at his former school. The *relationship* forged through this endeavor is evident in the respect both George and Gloria both express.

> The principal came down from upper echelons to that school to change it. She stayed there until she retired and even then she stayed on as a consultant. She is still there as a consultant because we still talk. We highly *respect* her.

Corporeality (lived body).

George speaks of the physical and mental investments required of teachers by their new principal.

It was very hard because the whole culture had to change, the whole mind-set. There had to be a paradigm shift from what was there before. People had grown accustomed to what was there before, their roles and their day to day routine. She had to change things. You had to become *invested*, you had to really become a functioning member of the school in several aspects; you had to be part of committees, you had to put in a lot of effort, but it was all for the good of the children and the school.

One of the things she implemented was a high level of expectation. She had a high level of expectation for herself so she expected a high level of performance from everyone else. People who she felt were not willing to give what they had to for the sake of the children, she did not want at school. She had a high expectation and I think that is very important because then that permeates the climate and the mind-set and the atmosphere of the school. If leadership has a high expectation of themselves, staff, teachers and children than it affects everybody else. Unfortunately, it also works the other way around.

Relationality (lived other).

George's life story attests to the influence other people have in our lives. His motivation now is to positively influence other children by helping them experience success, maybe for the first time.

Well I didn't want to be a teacher at first. I wanted to be a police officer or fire fighter. My mom actually wanted me to continue school and I was working at an elementary school to pay my way through college. I started really liking to *work with kids* and my principal at the time had a teacher leave a class

that was really tough. She asked if I would take the class over. That is how I got started and I've been doing it ever since. I just really did enjoy working with kids and just the satisfaction, because I grew up also struggling in school and when I started understanding and just being successful in school there was a real personal joy in that. I think that is my motivation, to *work with kids* and help them experience that success.

Our principal carried her attitude about assuming *responsibility* for your actions over to adults too. I had experiences when I was working there with other administrators that would talk down to you and treat you as though you were not a co-educator. I told her that once, I said I appreciate that how even though you are principal, you are still teacher at heart. She would tell you when you messed up and she would be on to you, but then she will have lunch with you and give you St. Patrick Day surprises and be very nice. So I think that was what I *respected* so much about her.

Spatiality (lived space).

The bigger lived space of the *community* is integral in overall school safety. It is not always a correct assumption that dangerous communities will have violent schools; George explains what he believes to be important about community and about how the staff responds to both parents and children within that community.

A lot of school safety has to do with the *community*, I think. Obviously you can have very good schools in a tough community if the parents are really united and they are really there for the kids. Community outreach to the parents and the community is really, really important. If the kids come to school feeling

defensive all the time, like they have to look over their shoulder all the time that begins to permeate their mind-set. Little problems that they could have let go become really big and they blow up. Safe school does have to come from the top, not just the principal, but I would say from the superintendent on down. The community of course having *buy-in* and a *say* in the school helps; but also teachers having a solid management program where students know what is expected of them and what the consequences are if they do not live up to those expectations.

If students are walking around not knowing what is going to happen or what the rules are, chances are they are going to break rules and then they are going to have to suffer the consequences. Then they are mad because they didn't know what the rules were. That is why I think teachers should post the rules and they have procedures for everything. If kids don't know what is expected of them then they revert to something are familiar with and that may not be what the teacher wants. Then they end up getting into a whole lot of trouble. That is what we see here with a lot of our ESL students. They bring some of the behaviors from home with them to school. That may fit the expectations at home, but it doesn't work with what is expected at school. You have to make it very clear, procedure, procedure, procedure.

So I think it is the home, the principals and the teachers all having a solid, consistent set of expectations and guidelines and rules and make sure it is communicated to the kids. I think all that plays a part; I don't think it is just one component. I think it all affects the school's safety.

Participant Eight

Participant eight is a Hispanic female in her early forties. Gloria is the wife of participant seven and is also referred to me by another participant in this study. She has taught in both urban and suburban elementary schools for eighteen years. Although this is our first meeting, we quickly realize we live in the same area and have mutually close friends. Gloria is outgoing and friendly, sharing her voice openly. However, their children are expected home soon from school and it was evident when the joy of sharing her voice is overshadowed by her parental expectations. I know it is time to end the interview.

Temporality (lived time).

Gloria's road to teaching is also not straight and easy. Her story demonstrates how life happens and decisions are made based on their appropriateness at the time.

> To begin with I was not an education major; I was a criminal justice major. That was the field I loved. I wanted to be a police officer at one point and at another point I got a job with the Pasadena Superior Court as a witness coordinator and I loved the whole court process. Then I decided I wanted to be a lawyer. Unfortunately during that time my father passed away and I had little sisters and I thought well I could graduate in a year, and right now I am working three jobs and going to school. If I stay here and get one job it will be easier. I worked as a teacher assistant and the principal wanted me to stay on be a teacher. I kept telling them no, I am going to go into another field. I finally decided I would go ahead and be a teacher and maybe pursue law later. After a while I decided that I really loved teaching.

Gloria reminisces how time makes changes, in our lives and in the corporate places we share, such as our schools.

> That is one of the reasons I stayed in education. Working in the projects in another state is very different from working where we are at right now. I saw a tremendous change in that school through the years we were working there. The leadership was fantastic, we had a new principal that came in and turned that school around. Reading levels went up, and before that principal that campus had two security guards because there was so much crime in that area.

Corporeality (lived body).

Children are a part of us; in our *parental* role we dream of the best for our children and protect them from places and things we feel may harm them. Gloria's previous principal calls for that same attitude to be expressed by teachers for all children.

> One thing she did and I noticed it when we came here, she would stop you in your tracks if you said those children or these children, she would say they are your children, they are our children. What you want for your own children you want for these children because they are your children. So it is different because it stopped anyone from saying oh these children will never learn. It was that buy-in that made you feel like you were *invested* in what happened.

Relationality (lived other).

Gloria mentions several examples of adults *working with children* to foster their ability to solve problems and make healthy choices. She recognizes the *shame* attached to feeling like you are inherently bad, rather than seeing our actions as opportunities to learn and to positively resolve our difficulties.

Our previous principal strongly believes in letting the child assume *responsibility* for his/her actions. She also stressed never call a child a bad child, he did a bad thing. Let him realize what he did but *know he is not a bad child*. We can correct a bad behavior. It is different than saying the child is terrible. No, you didn't do the correct thing, you made a bad decision but you can make a better one next time.

One of the things they did in our previous school to reduce any conflicts the students were having in school instead of suspending all the time, we had a teacher that had a room called the resolution room. He would help the kids *participate* in conferences. It wasn't just go sit in the corner until you cool down, he helped the students talk it out and come to some resolution. They also had all kinds of books that helped address issues.

Our current school is going to implement a program on bullying, called Bully Free. The people that came to talk to us explained that it would help us discern between conflict and bullying. Bullying is like the buzzword and everyone uses that word when it may really only be a conflict between the students. We need to be careful that we are not *telling a child he or she is being a bully* when there is merely a conflict that we can help them work out. It looks really good because we want to be able to identify when bullying is happening. It encourages the students to speak up because often adults only see or hear 10% of the bullying that occurs. If children *keep it inside* through elementary school they go to intermediate school relieved that this is a new place and they will be okay.

Then when it starts up again on the first day of school the student may feel helpless and retaliate by bringing a gun to school or something.

She gave us a scenario of a young boy who that happened to, he was just fed up with everything, and brought a bat to school and wacked the boy in that head that had been bullying him for two years. He went to court and he was acquitted because they had documented all the things this boy had done to him. The boy that had been the bully did not die, but he had a long road of rehabilitation. When you hear the story, how even after hitting the bully in the head and knocking him to the ground the other boy hit him more, you would think he would go to jail, but because of everything that the bully had done to him he was acquitted. We need to deal with it sooner and not let it get to that point.

Spatiality (lived space).

Gloria realizes that home conditions often influence how well children stay on task. Responding to the prompt of "describe what makes a good day for you as a teacher," Gloria flashes back to her practice of going to the students' homes to meet their families and experience their natural environments.

I also think a great day is when you do not have to redirect constantly, more focus from the children. There is a lot that goes into why they may not be focused. They may not have had a good night's sleep, may not have had a good breakfast, whatever may be going on, but that goes with the territory because you can't know what is behind their actions all the time. One thing that I have always loved to do, I made it a yearly practice in our other school to visit every student's home. I have not done it as much here yet. But, it makes a *connection* with the

parent and even though you may think, “oh I am interfering with them; that is their space,” there was such gratitude from them for you visiting them. Not visiting them to tell them their child has been horrible, but just touching base with them.

The administrators here have stressed that we make that positive contact with the families before you have to call with the negative. That does help to have your parents as a partner. A good day for me would be having the students listen, do their assignments and get the results without having the constant struggle of trying to get their attention. I also don’t want to do all the talking; I want them to do most of the talking.

Participant Nine

Participant nine is a Hispanic female in her early forties. She has taught for fifteen years and is currently working on her master’s degree. I met with Ilene in a booth at Camille’s restaurant after school. Ilene, a former colleague, teaches Spanish to fourth, fifth and sixth grade students on three campuses. Teaching over 180 students a day provides Ilene with a different perspective than a self-contained classroom teacher.
Temporality (lived time)

Ilene talks about wasted educational time dealing with disruptive students and the commotion they create school wide or in a classroom.

I am on the SERT (School Emergency Response Team) team and Friday we were activated to address an issue on another campus in the district. There had been some threats made on the Internet the night before, but nothing really happened to follow through with the violence.

The SERT team was activated the night before and we had a strong presence that was able to shut things down before anything occurred. The same day while I was at the freshman academy they had incidences with drugs and other things that I don't usually encounter with the younger students.

I think frequent incidences would be very hard on teacher morale. My job for the day was just to stand in the hallway when students transitioned. We were looking for particular students, but basically I could just stand there and listen to all the students. You could hear the buzz about what they thought was going to happen. We had not said anything, but they all already knew. I thought that would be so hard to take those kids and bring them back to what they needed to do in their classroom. I know if we have a disruptive student in the 6th grade or something, it really is hard to calm the kids back down. It sometimes is a wasted day of class.

A worse day would probably be a day I have a lot of issues with behavior. I end up spending a lot of time on those behaviors and I'm not able to spend time on the lesson. I can tell the next time that group comes back to see me that the class didn't get what I had wanted to teach the last time and I understand why.

Corporeality (lived body).

Shame goes to a teacher's feeling of worth. Ilene verbalizes the personalization teachers experience regarding students' learning.

I think a best day is when I teach something and all my kids get it. My frustrating days are when no one gets it and *I think what is wrong with me?*

Feeling good about yourself and being *affirmed* for what you are doing also affects your sense of worth. For Ilene, affirmation plays a role in how she becomes a teacher.

> I didn't get into teaching until later because when I first got out of high school I worked in the business field. I worked in a bank for several years. I had my associate's degree in business, but I was not sure I wanted to pursue that. I had always thought I wanted to be a teacher, but never really could nail down what I wanted to teach. Then I was asked to go on a mission's trip as a translator and then I realized I wanted to teach Spanish. After that I went back and completed my bachelors in education. That is how I became a teacher.

Relationality (lived other).

Ilene talks about the role of *relationship* when describing the teacher's role in preventing violence.

> I think *knowing your students is important*. I have a little different outlook on that than most classroom teachers of this age group because I see at least 180 students a day and some of those are only once a week. It is a lot harder for me to get to know every child than someone that has the same students every day. But if I see something abnormal or out of the ordinary I always talk to the classroom teacher and ask them to follow up on it. It is very seldom that I would notice something the classroom teacher has not seen because they come into my class for forty minutes and then they are gone.
>
> I will say when we have an individual student that we knew might be disruptive or there may be a safety issue involved, when that student comes into my room that is the first thing on my mind, especially at the first of the year. I

know I have to seat them in a particular place, I know I have to make certain my other students are safe if that student has an issue or a blow-up.

For me teaching 180 different students every day is frustrating partially because I want to know every child's name and because I teach Spanish I also give them a Spanish name so that is another added thing for me to learn. But I think if I can let the students know when they first come in that they are in a safe environment and that they can *trust* me and they can talk to me if they need to, I think it will be okay. I think they can get that in the forty minutes they meet with me.

How well the teachers know each other is also important. At my main campus I feel very comfortable saying where do I need to be, what do I need to know, what do I need to do. But if I didn't know those teachers around me very well in an emergency I would probably go ahead and do what I think is right and that might not be the safest thing to do.

Spatiality (lived space).

Knowing how to keep students safe in the confines of the school building or grounds is imperative to Ilene.

I think the principal needs to be the guide for all of their teachers. They need to let us know what we need to do. They also need to let us know as teachers that we are in a safe environment. I think that they are the leader and they need to let us know all their expectations or what they want from us. We have good principals at every campus and I think they are really aware of what

goes on at the other schools so they know what could happen at their own school. They are all a part of the SERT team.

I think teachers are looking for some exact directions and instructions on what to do if a situation arises. I don't mean type something up on every situation. When an emergency comes up I don't want to go grab my book and look it up, I need some training and to know exactly what is expected of me. What do I do first, second and third? I kind of know that from the SERT team, but I *don't think every teacher does*. I know that first is life safety, I need to make certain that all of my students are safe. Then what is next? I think every teacher needs to know that. Our emergency procedure guides need to list some specific actions to take in each emergency and teachers need to become familiar with those before the situation comes up. They need to be easy to read and give specific directions. I think that is really important for the principal to do, to provide clear instructions on what is expected and provide enough opportunities to make sure every teacher is familiar with them. Practice is also important. I know I feel more safe being on the safety team because I know something is being done. I think if I were not on there, I would not feel as comfortable. Before I was on the team I was not aware of what was being addressed behind the scenes.

Ilene also mentions a role technology can play in an emergency.

I know that day when the SERT team was activated technology played a big role. I think by lunchtime everyone must have texted everybody they knew and after lunch there was a big exodus as students were getting picked up. That presents a huge safety issue! The rumors that can spread or the chaos it creates

can be a real problem. Seeing what I did in that situation *frightens* me even more for a riot or something else to break out as kids chose sides. Even kids that usually didn't have anything to do with the issue were siding up. I think cell phones are a major safety issue.

Participant Ten

Participant ten is a Caucasian male in his late forties. John has been teaching and coaching middle school and high school for nineteen years. We choose to connect at Panera Bread close to where John lives and works to accommodate his busy schedule. He has a tennis lesson to give right after our interview. John and I have not previously met and his willingness to participate speaks volumes about his desire to have a voice. John also had a daughter who attended his school so he addresses his lived experience of safe school from the perspective of a parent and a teacher. At the conclusion of the interview John reiterates the hope that his voice was important, "I hope it helps! I hope I was able to give you something you need."

Temporality (lived time).

The past morphs under the pressures and influences of the present. "As I make something of myself I may reinterpret who I once was or who I now am" (van Manen, 1990, p 104). John explains how life redirected him in the profession.

> Well originally I approached it more from an athletic or coaching perspective. Coaching was what I really wanted to do and obviously you also have to be a teacher to be a coach. When I first started in the history classroom at a private school I realized that I loved teaching and *working with the students* in that platform. I surprised even myself at how much I loved it.

> My first job was at a private school. I went to a Christian college on a football scholarship and I completed the course requirement for a degree in history, but I did not do my student teaching. I went to work in a retail industry for a couple of years and decided that was not what I wanted to do so I went back to school and attained a degree in physical education and this time I did the student teaching. I was at the private school for about seven years. I taught history and coached tennis and football. After that I came to this district and I mainly coach tennis.

John also addresses time management and the emphasis on testing as obstacles teachers face in the classroom.

> Probably time is the biggest hindrance to teachers implementing more intervention programs into their classroom? More time that it might take for the training and then integrating it into the daily schedule. Then the paperwork is another big thing. I don't have as much, but what I hear the paperwork is incredible. We have been going through testing this week and there is so much emphasis on test scores.

Corporeality (lived body).

A student's *self-esteem* and confidence is inevitably connected to his or her physical or bodily presence and can be affected by others. "For example, under the critical gaze the body may turn awkward, the motions appear clumsy, while under the admiring gaze the body surpasses its usual grace and its normal abilities" (van Manen, 1990, p. 104). John's confidence and expectations for his students enable them to discover strengths and abilities that encourage them to achieve in other areas.

There is no standardized testing in PE, but we do take an end of the year test. From the coaching or physical education side of it, you have a wide mixture of ability levels just like you do in the classroom. With PE I have athletes, I have students who don't even want to be there, I have kids that are overweight and kids who appear to have no ability at all. It is great seeing those kids be able to do something they didn't think they could do such as teaching them a tennis skill where going into it they were negative and the failure they have had in other physical areas carried over. Then seeing that little light come on and they find they may actually be good at the skill and they like it. Those are the fun moments! I work with mentally handicapped students in class and it is fun to see them succeed whereas they have struggled in other areas in life.

Relationality (lived other).

Relationality is the lived relation we share with those we come in contact with daily (van Manen, 1990). John explains the efforts he and colleagues exert to curtail bullying.

I know the staff and faculty really try. It probably needs to be more *unified* and *work together* more, like the staff workers from the cafeteria and bus drivers working with the faculty. Lots of times that is where the trouble starts, not in the classroom but at lunch or on the bus or in the halls. We do to try to make it safe, we cover morning and afternoon duties, and we try to have someone in every part of the school inside and out. Passing in the hallways too, teachers are encouraged to be out in the hallway outside their room. Also instead of having a five minute passing period, we went to four minutes so students spend less time

talking and visiting in the hall. They did find statistically that having less lag time helped. That is one thing at least administration has tried to curtail bullying.

Bullying is a big problem, it's a big problem! Our district has introduced Rachel's Challenge where acts of kindness are recognized. We have been doing that this whole school year so hopefully that has cut down on the number of bullying incidents. It still happens particularly with the 8th graders bullying the 7th graders. They are in my class together and I have had some issues with one particular class where the 8th graders have used intimidation, verbal bullying and even physical bullying. If the seventh grader tries to stand up for himself it even makes it worse, they feel like this is their turf. It usually takes some kind of intervention like anger management classes or something. I can see where something like that might help, just trying to sort through some things. Kids bully for all sorts of reasons, there may be abuse at home, and older brothers might bully the younger ones, all kinds of reasons.

I sometimes think that there are not severe enough *consequences* when someone bullies or gets in a fight. I also don't think we always do enough to find out what is behind that behavior. We had a student last year who just continued to pick fights throughout the school year. They would suspend him for three to five days and then he would be back and then the next week he is back in suspension for a little bit longer. I don't know if our hands are tied of if we can do more. How many students is that one boy affecting negatively? How much learning is being lost? Suspending them for three days just gives him a chance to stay home and play video games.

The only thing that we have new this year that I think could be helpful is DHS working with us. You can refer students and there are students that go out of my classroom and I know that is where they are going. Lots of times you find that it is the same kids that have basically checked out of school that are getting into the fights, for whatever reason they are low academic and getting into fights and bullying becomes their way of being recognized or dealing with life.

Preventing bullying starts with supervision; the teacher needs to take *immediate actions* whether that means talking to the student or students about what did you see or not see. You have to stop trouble before it gets worse or it can snowball. In PE you play games and kids have to stand in line and it seems like something small can start a conflict. You also have to watch to make sure some bully isn't cutting in line and not letting the others have a turn. It is important to talk to both people involved because the gym is so loud even though I am right there I might have missed something that instigated the whole thing. Sometimes I might miss the whole thing and no one will come tell me about it so it is important to talk to the kids and make sure those kids being bullied feel comfortable coming and telling me about it so we can get involved and help. Boys are not as willing to talk because they don't want to be snitches, even though they could be getting beat up bad. They think it could be worse if they tell and the bully finds out.

I hear the term school culture thrown out, like let's improve the school culture. That is what Rachel's' Challenge is supposed to help with by focusing more on the positive and encouraging more kindness. I think that is how some of

the teachers and the administration are looking at this challenge as a culture change, as a way of helping the culture be more positive which could potentially reduce our safety issues like fighting. Of course when you hear about school shootings other places they are usually the result of some kids getting bullied all through their school years. That is the purpose of Rachel's challenge. Rachel was one of the girls killed in Columbine.

Spatiality (lived space).

Spatial *isolation* influences teachers' ability to gauge overall school culture and to appropriately interact to make improvements.

I am in my little cave down there in the gym I don't get out and see much. I am down in that little area most of the day. We have a 6th grade wing and a 7th grade wing and an 8th grade wing and everyone tends to stay in that one area.

John suggests how spatiality assumes a role in determining how school is experienced by teachers and students. Positively, "the school is experienced as a special place where the child knows the atmosphere and quality of the classroom, the special desk, the hallway with its locker-spaces where the child meets friends and so on" (van Manen, 1990, p. 106). The reverse can also prove true. John's voice portrays the frustration and resentment he feels when forced to give up his space for the week of testing.

The school atmosphere during testing is tense, it is tense! It didn't used to be that way but there is something about all of kids testing in the same environment so now they take the whole entire gym for an entire week and they put all these desks in rows. All of the kids test in that one location. We didn't have a place to go; we couldn't even go in our locker room because it made too

much noise for the students testing. We couldn't even dress out so we just had to go outside. Then it rained so they had to find a contingency plan so they put us up in the science lab and we just had to watch movies.

Aggregate Analysis of the Existential Life-worlds

The meaning of lived experiences such as a safe school is usually veiled or hidden (van Manen, 1990). Hermeneutic phenomenology is a "research methodology aimed at producing rich textual descriptions of the experiencing of selected phenomena in the life-world of individuals that are able to connect with the experience of all us collectively" (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007, p. 616). In this concluding section, van Manen's four existential life-worlds are summarized as a collective body of experiences that "resonates with our sense of lived life" (van Manen, 1990, p. 27). My years of teaching in suburban schools facilitate my ability to recognize the experiences described by the participants as those I have had or could have had. My own story then is interwoven in the words directly spoken by the participants and in my interpretation of those words.

Temporality (lived time)

Two streams of thought run parallel through the participant's description of time. The first perception is that education in schools is changing and getting more difficult as more demands are placed on teachers' time. Students are coming to class with more emotional, psychological and academic needs and with greater cultural diversity requiring more creativity and organization to maximize each learning potential (Cosmos, 2012). Working with students, making connections, creating meaningful and relevant learning opportunities and fostering a sense of accomplishment are all important ideals to

the teachers interviewed. However, encumbered with these ideals is a *vulnerability* to not be successful with every student all of the time.

The second stream participants verbalize reflects on the *shame,* the feeling that 'I am bad', experienced from a perceived sense of failure to make a positive difference in the life of a student either academically, socially or emotionally. Subsequent disruptive behavior signifies wasted time from teaching and lost growth for the offender as well as the class as a whole. However, the participants describe a willingness to embrace the *vulnerability* and recognize it does not signify weakness, to show themselves to be real and in so doing enable students to develop a sense of trust and willingness to take more personal risks (Brown, 2010).

Corporeality (lived body)

Shame, the fear of disconnection, (Brown, 2004) developing from a feeling of *being invisible or of not mattering*, being *unworthy* or *unimportant* is a thread woven among many of the participants' dialogue. It is an emotion available to both teacher and student and it demonstrates itself in both physical countenance and in school participation. Physical size, appearance, self-image and confidence in our abilities play a role in how others treat us and in how we react to daily situations. Beth makes me feel comfortable in her classroom as I sense her own level of confidence in who she is and what she does in this space. Making her students know they are important and have value is paramount to her as a mentor.

Francis describes the egocentric nature developmentally intrinsic to children. Being able to affirm another person's perspective, to *empathize,* needs to be modeled and explicitly taught. Projecting high expectations and a belief in an individual's ability to

achieve those lofty goals should begin with administration and weave itself among the staff and student body. Sometimes this requires a paradigm shift, as students are viewed not as test scores or trouble makers but as children with worth and potential, while staff is visibly respected and invested in school procedures.

Physical and emotional presence, being aware and responding appropriately to student needs and to the school climate in general is identified as an important factor in promoting school safety. Again, participants stress the urgency of strong and consistent leadership. Administration and staff need to be visible, to listen and to interact fairly. Fear develops from a perceived lack of control (Lucado, 2009). Participants recognized their own need to feel in control as well as the benefit of *involving* students and parents and promoting a sense of ownership.

Relationality (lived others)

Relationship is what keeps the participants teaching despite the problems. Beth and George address the subject directly, but it is an attitude all of the interviews express.

> The year that was the worst I didn't get answers from anyone. I went all the way to the top and no one knew what to do. It was just one of those things that I kept thinking I just have to get through this year. It was interesting because the following year I received an award from my school district. I was one of only ten teachers to receive this award which included a $1000.00 stipend. That wasn't what kept me going of course, but I just knew internally there were other students in my class that needed me to help make it as smooth as I could. So I just got through the year. There is nothing else you can do, even though it is very

unpleasant and you really don't want to go back. You do everything you can to *make it good for the other kids* (Beth).

I just really did enjoy working with kids and just the satisfaction, because I grew up also struggling in school and when I started understanding and just being successful in school there was a real personal joy in that. I think that is my motivation, to *work with kids* and help them experience that success (George).

The participants' dialogue and demeanor suggest their confidence in their teaching abilities and in who they are. Though they face challenges, generally they do not view them as power struggles and demand to be respected (Holt, 1982). This could be due to their age, educational attainment, and life experience; it could also be a manifestation of my selection process. A conversation between Elaine and I relates to knowing oneself and utilizing that knowledge to make you a better teacher.

Elaine: My father was an alcoholic and he embarrassed me at school events and I didn't like to bring friends home. I sometimes do share that one on one with students. I tell them yes I did get some counseling when I was older to work some things out, I made it just fine. I know whatever you are going through you are going to make it. I think I had some background that helps me to empathize with students.

Me: I so agree with you, I know my background totally makes me who I am as a teacher. Like you said; sometimes no one knows what a student is going through. I am a child advocate for that reason. I know what kids could be secretly going through.

Elaine: That is just it. The kids don't want to tell anyone about it and they want to seem really cool. That was one of my goals growing up. I wanted to be very successful and so I was involved in all these things like student counsel, cheerleading, athletics. *I wanted to be this achieving person. I wanted to become separated from the alcoholism.*

Conversely, Beth speaks honestly about colleagues who sometimes escalate a situation through their own insecurity.

I feel there are people that sometimes make it worse because they are belligerent toward the students and I think they think I am a softy. But I believe it is more important for me to love them and I still discipline and I still raise my voice.

John and George present the importance of a unified and cohesive staff, insuring that every adult in the building recognizes their worth and assumes their responsibility. Establishing and recognizing high expectations from staff and students emanates from the top.

I know the staff and faculty really try. It probably needs to be more *unified* and *work together* more, like the staff workers from the cafeteria and bus drivers working with the faculty. Lots of times that is where the trouble starts, not in the classroom but at lunch or on the bus or in the halls (John).

I had experiences when I was working there with other administrators that would talk down to you and treat you as though you were not a co-educator (George).

Spatiality (lived space)

The size and physical lay-out of the school building as well as its location within the community are all key concerns of the participants. Several mention the difficulty of making connections and developing relationships when they have overcrowded rooms, too many students or too large a school complex. Smaller schools with-in schools divided by grade level or teams offer the subject diversity large schools can sustain, but also allow for more personal dynamics. Locked doors and security check-ins procure a level of safety. Participants describe having to implement lock-down procedures due to dangers in the community, such as an armed robbery. However, George and Gloria, having previously taught in an urban environment, stress the potential for creating a place of safety and belonging even in areas with high incidents of crime. Partnering with the parents and the community, establishing and communicating solid and consistent expectations from staff and students, and emphasizing procedures to maintain safety in emergencies are imperative regardless of the size or location of the school.

Teachers face *isolation* in the larger school building, but in their classroom they have a comfort level with their space and their kids. Participants joyfully acknowledge when their administrator trusts them to do their job and does not micromanage. They revel when given the autonomy to be creative and make connections with the curriculum and with the students. John's frustration with having his gym taken over for testing demonstrates the link between a teacher and his or her classroom, that week he was *invisible,* he was not important enough to warrant space.

How do students feel when banned from the classroom? Several teachers mention the benefit of at least maintaining connection to the school with in-house suspension

rooms instead of expulsion. One even described a padded room where out-of-control students can be taken to regain composure. When asked about how disciplined students are made to *feel safe again in the classroom* or how other students react to their coming back, participants praise counselors for their efforts. However, teachers also say often the student just *comes back into the room*. The following chapter analyzes the theoretical threads of shame, vulnerability, isolation, empathy/relationship, hope/ involvement, and reintegration/forgiveness through the etic theoretical and practical overlay of restorative practices.

CHAPTER

FIVE

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

This study does not approach the topic of safe school as a problem to be solved, but as a question of meaning to be inquired into. "Phenomenology does not offer us the possibility of effective theory with which we can now explain and/or control the world, but rather it offers us the possibility of plausible insights that bring us in more direct contact with the world" (van Manen, 1997, p. 9). Six plausible insights emerge through analysis of the teachers' interviews. In this chapter, theoretical threads of shame, vulnerability, isolation, empathy/relationship, hope/ involvement, and reintegration/forgiveness are reviewed through the etic theoretical and practical lens of restorative practices. The chapter concludes with researcher reflections on personal growth acquired during the study.

Participants in this study describe the harsh realities experienced by many of their students. Although buildings are usually newer and academic opportunities more abundant, suburban children face prejudice, marginalization, gang violence, broken homes, disconnection from family, and loss of hope for the future similar to their urban counterparts (Gruwell, 2007; Greene & Forster, 2004). As previously stated, among adolescents whose identities are closely tied to peer relations and position in the pecking order, bullying and other forms of social exclusion are recipes for marginalization and isolation, which in turn breed extreme levels of desperation and frustration (Newman, Fox, Harding, & & Roth, 2004).

The obstacles faced by students become a challenge to teachers as well (Olson, 2009; Gruwell, 2007). Feelings of failure, minimization and disappointment are realized by teachers who love teaching and teach with the heart (Palmer, 1998). Gruwell (2007) helps her students give voice to their experiences through journal writing and through biographies like Anne Franks who face atrocities with courage. Although young, inexperienced, and uncertain, Gruwell strives to discover ways to help her students develop empathy and experience hope through recognition of their own ability to make a difference. Her success with her students, however, is not without personal cost. Other teachers openly display their resentment of the attention Gruwell receives and the time and money spent on the students put strains on her marriage, eventually ending in divorce. Despite her success, Gruwell identifies feelings of failure and shame, seeing herself as a bad teacher and bad wife (Gruwell, 2007).

Gruwell is not alone. Kirsten Olsen (2009) set out to "discover people and places where love and learning were joined" (p. xi). Instead she records stories of students and teachers wounded and wearied by educational bureaucracy. Fortunately, the voice is also heard from educators who recognize their role of transforming lives and creating meaning and connection in ways that few professions offer. Participants in this research echo this love of teaching and compelling drive to make a positive difference in their students.

Shame

In Chapter Two, while addressing the historical and theoretical perspective of restorative practices, the researcher identifies shame as an interruption of positive emotions. It is paired with humiliation in Tomkins (1987) discussion of the nine affects. Braithwaite (1989) argues that shame that stigmatizes pushes people toward crime, but

reintegrative shame that denounces the offense while not ostracizing the offender can help restore community through dialogue in restorative circles. Shame and guilt are emergent concepts and their exact meanings are often debated. However, one perspective of shame becomes evident in the participants' stories, an intense personal shame for not measuring up to the standards teachers hold for themselves.

> The worst days are those days when you leave school and you just feel like a failure (Ann).
>
> My frustrating days are when no one gets it and I think what is wrong with me (Ilene)?

Brene Brown (2007) recognizes shame, although universal and equally dangerous as violence, as a silent epidemic people have been socialized not to discuss. Its danger lies in the power it exerts over our lives; power manifested in mental and public health issues including depression, anxiety disorders, addiction, eating disorders, bullying, suicide, sexual assault and all types of violence, including family violence and school shootings. On an individual level, Brown talks about the difference between shame, I *am* bad and guilt, I *did* something bad. She offers common language as a working definition, "shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing we are flawed and therefore unworthy of acceptance and belonging" (p. 5). Brown's definition provides the insight for this portion of the research.

Social-community expectations teach us about shame by dictating what is acceptable and what is not. As human beings we are wired for connection, to feel accepted and to believe we belong and are valued for who we are (Risk, 2003). Shame is the fear of disconnection. It is more permanent than embarrassment which is fleeting and

often eventually funny. Shame speaks to who we are, not to what we do, and often leads to self-fulfilling bad behavior or paralysis. Guilt on the other hand can be a positive motivator of change when we recognize our behavior does not reflect who we want to be (Brown, 2007).

Most schools, whether intentional or not, are shame based, contributing to the anger and violence witnessed daily on some level. Teachers experiencing shame filter episodes in the class through feelings of inadequacy, I am a bad teacher, and subsequently lash out with anger and blame wounding others. Students who are humiliated or made to feel stupid or bad repeatedly begin to believe it and even accept that they deserve it, thus developing shame. Standardized test scores are publicly reported even when classes are not equally represented by ability levels. Students' names are written on the board declaring their behavior level as well as completion of work and ability grouping. Labels are given for racial identity and sexual preference, as well as gifted and talented, slow learner, LD, ADHD, at-risk, or trouble maker; stereotypes that reduce people and lead us from connection and compassion to blaming. Even teachers' efforts to be understanding and empathetic can denote stereotyping. Being known as a victim of trauma sends a message of imperfection, the stigma of being damaged or permanently wounded, and blame, or somehow being responsible for your trauma (Brown, 2007). Elaine wanted to be known for more than her alcoholic father.

> My father was an alcoholic and he embarrassed me at school events and I didn't like to bring friends home. That was one of my goals growing up. I wanted to be very successful and so I was involved in all these things like student

counsel, cheerleading, athletics. I wanted to be this achieving person. I wanted to become separated from the alcoholism.

Nel Noddings expresses "the aim of education is to reveal an attainable image of self that is lovelier than that manifested in his or her present acts" (Noddings, 1984, p. 193). In order to attain a lovelier image of self a child has to be able to separate her actions from her belief about her worth. Restorative practices helps accomplish this goal by moving beyond viewing discipline as punishment or even problem solving, to a more holistic perspective that sees all aspects of behavior as related (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005). Restorative questions allow an offender to take responsibility for her actions, explain what she was feeling at the time and since, and work with the victim and others to make things right, thus redeeming her self-worth.

In her interview Beth emphasizes the importance of recognizing the good qualities in every child.

> I want every child to feel empowered and know that they are valued. I always tell my class that I can see something that is good in every single student. This is where it starts within the classroom with having every child feeling he or she is important and they have something to offer to the class.

We must embrace our own story, shame and all, before we can make the connections so vital to learning (Brown, 2007). Beth has obviously done that. It takes courage to listen to others' stories and respond with compassion by accepting the struggles that make us human.

Four elements of shame-resistance assist us in moving through the by-products of shame, fear, blame and disconnecting and moving toward courage, compassion and

connection. “We can develop the resilience we need to recognize shame, move through it constructively, and grow from our experiences” (Brown, 2007, p. xiv). The four elements of shame-resistance are recognizing shame and understanding its triggers; practicing critical awareness; reaching out; and speaking shame. Going through the shame-resistance steps requires quiet personal time to recognize the trigger and acknowledge and filter out the messages and expectations that precipitate this trigger. Time is also needed to develop connections with people we trust enough to reach out and talk about our feelings and our needs and interests. Restorative practice recognizes the value of these efforts and helps to build a culture that prioritizes such actions.

Vulnerability

Vulnerable means able to be wounded or physically injured; open to criticism or attack; easily hurt; or affected by a specified influence or temptation (Guralnik, 1970). When talking about school safety, our most obvious vulnerability is to physical injury. Participants in this research discuss the safety procedure plans that are in place in their schools, along with the drills conducted to familiarize students and staff of how to respond in an emergency. Both are integral components of school safety. However, in making real connections with others we also make ourselves emotionally and psychologically vulnerable; we allow ourselves to be seen, exposing our imperfections as well as our strengths (Brown, 2010).

Participants embrace their vulnerability when they have the courage to tell their story and allow what they think and feel to be included in this research. Almost all of them state they do not know what they will add to the topic revealing their vulnerability

to feeling insignificant. Teachers' vulnerability to being judged is again evident in Beth and John's responses describing their best teaching days.

> A best day for me would be when I am connecting with the students and I can go home and say today I taught (Beth).

> I love being able to teach history in such a way that it comes alive for the students. A great day is when you are in that zone and you are able to get into what you are trying to teach, when you can tell by the looks on the student's face that they are getting it (John).

Elaine's, Gloria's and Debra's reflections also demonstrate their awareness of students' vulnerability to teachers as well as other students.

> Every day is not the same, but they do have certain expectations of things we are going to do in a week. I try to make short and manageable things and try not to stress them out or overwhelm them (Elaine).

> Never call a child a bad child, he did a bad thing. We can correct a bad behavior. It is different than saying the child is terrible. No, you didn't do the correct thing, you made a bad decision but you can make a better one next time (Gloria).

> Watching that students aren't bullied and picking up on that and doing what you can to protect them because if they are bullied in school, they are bullied in the community, it doesn't stop there (Debra).

Recognizing how our actions affect other people making them vulnerable, making things right to both prevent the action from occurring again and to ease the suffering for those

affected, and working with offenders to make better choices are ideas central to restorative practice.

Isolation

Students' feelings of marginalization as a result of social exclusion, teachers sequestered in their rooms, and suburban schools sprawling size adding to the sense of being invisible are all forms of isolation previously discussed. One solution Elaine mentions is small schools with-in schools.

> I like it that each wing has its own principal. We are learning to be a small school within a bigger school and that way you can get to know your principal closer. Counselors are the same. There are about one hundred forty to one hundred fifty students on each team. That way we can keep up with the kids.

Additionally, Beth verbalizes a personal isolation, a sense of aloneness in her work and in what she is doing to make connections.

> I feel there are people that sometimes make it worse because they are belligerent toward the students and I think they think I am a softy.

John also expresses the desire to know someone else he could work with.

> It probably needs to be more unified and work together more, like the staff workers from the cafeteria and bus drivers working with the faculty. Lots of times that is where the trouble starts, not here in the classroom but at lunch or on the bus or in the halls.

Quoting a teacher working to heal students' wounds Olsen, 2009, states, "I don't know if I really have colleagues who believe the same things I do. I feel I am alone a lot in the classroom, doing what I think the right thing is. I can feel the isolation"(p. 179).

Isolation can also take the form of feeling disconnected from ourselves. Pressures and time constraints, feeling torn between family and job responsibilities, or personal problems can drain teachers and leave no time or energy for reflection. Educational critics, however, have a tendency to reduce problems teachers face to a matter of technique or curriculum reform, anything but the basic questions of the teacher's inner life and the lack of community teachers have to help sustain them in difficult times (Van Gelder, Winter 1998/1999). Disempowered teachers lack the confidence and motivation for self-reflection and growth. Nevertheless, it is precisely that reflection that allows teachers to connect with their students and to identify ways to make learning relevant and meaningful in their classrooms.

Students and teachers both can be so influenced by what other people think and so overwhelmed with trying to be who other people need them to be, that they actually lose touch with their own sense of self (Brown, 2007). Joining together with others that share a common interest, forming connection networks, helps both students and teachers identify and articulate issues that are personally relevant. When Jane Addams and other women were being isolated from the male dominated study of sociology in the early nineteen hundreds, they formed networks that achieved numerous policy innovations (Adams, 1994). Similarly, the conscious-raising groups described by Olson (2009) bring students together around questions similar to those in restorative conferences, such as "how does school make you feel about learning" (p. 190). After meeting several times for dialog and analysis, students often feel the need to begin an action project. Restorative practices is about addressing the social injustices foundational to many of the "crimes"

we see today; classroom meetings and informal restorative circles provide training and experience for students to collectively take ownership of issues regarding their education.

Empathy/Relationship

Literature about school violence suggests that most of the reasons for the conflicts in school have not really changed over the years, what has changed is the manner in which students solve their problems (Lebrun, 2009). "This speaks to the fact that youths are not being given good problem-solving strategies, are not taught how to communicate effectively, and are unable to deal with interpersonal issues with any level of success" (p. 55). Working through shame-resistance from disconnection to connection is a normal part of developing and growing relationships. However, psychological isolation occurs when a person feels locked out of possible human connection and of being powerless to change the situation (Brown, 2007). Several rampage school shooters express this helpless feeling (Langman, 2009; Chalmers, 2009; Newman, Fox, Harding, & & Roth, 2004). However, studies suggest that a meaningful relationship with even one teacher can help decrease a student's perception of himself as extremely marginal in the social worlds that matter to him (Brooks, 2006; Devine & Cohen, 2007).

Brown (2007) emphasizes that empathy is essential for building meaningful, trusting relationships and is the strongest antidote for shame. She defines empathy as "the skill or ability to tap into our own experiences in order to connect with an experience someone is relating to us" (p. 33). An activity Gruwell (2007) calls Line Game helps students identify previous experiences and emotions and realize their commonality with others in the class. She lines students up on both walls and creates a center line from brightly colored tape. She asks them a set of questions ranging from general to specific,

which extend from pop culture to family to personal beliefs and experiences. If students can answer "yes" to any question they must step to the line. Without having to say a word students find common ground over diversity.

Empathy is developed when we are asked to find it within ourselves, to put ourselves in another's shoes (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005). Debra helps her students develop empathy in her story about a new boy in class.

> I have one little boy and he told of getting on a boat to come over here. He is a small child because growing up he only ate rice, he is lucky to be alive. He has been so bullied this year by all the kids. He shared with us his history a little bit and it came out of a math story problem of a student who couldn't go to school so he went to the library and decided to educate himself. This little one started sharing his life history and it totally turned the class around. I told the kids look at that. He is lucky to be alive, he is lucky to even be here. Could you even imagine, he lived in a bamboo hut with no electricity, no bathrooms, nothing. That is how he grew up his first five years. I asked, do you not admire and *respect* him now? And their whole attitude changed that moment.

Since emotions are rarely put into words, they are usually expressed through nonverbal channels. Developing empathetic accuracy depends upon an ability to read nonverbal cues: tone of voice, gesture, facial expressions, and body language (Goleman, 1995). Part of being an empathetic listener is recognizing the courage required to open ourselves up and tell our story and rewarding it by listening with the heart.

In an increasingly disconnected world, restorative practices build relationships and restore community by promoting the skills Lebrun (2009) emphasized are missing in

the lives of youth, good problem-solving strategies, effective communication, and resolution for interpersonal issues (Sullivan, 2001). A century ago, John Dewey (1997) articulated that only when individual citizens see themselves as part of the greater community are they likely to share cooperatively their various interests, abilities, and attainments for the good of society as a whole. A recent study by the American Psychological Association offers promise that students who feel connected to their peers and teachers and overall have a sense of pride in their school and concern for others are much more inclined to alert a teacher or principal if they hear of a potential threat of violence (Syvertsen, Flanagan, & Stout, 2009).

Hope/Involvement

Research has uncovered factors including depression, narcissism, our current perspective of adolescence, and a lack of student preparedness for life as contributors to school violence (Twenge & Campbell, 2009; Irvine, 2010; Langman, 2009, Newman, Fox, Harding, & Roth, 2004, Epstein, 2007, Levine, 2005; Hine, 1999). Phillips (2001) also describes witnessing a growing sense of pessimistic fatalism and helplessness, a sense that what young people say, think, and do no longer matter much, and that they had little if any control over the circumstances that befall them. Increased awareness of what makes adolescents vulnerable and the factors that protect adolescents from self-destructive behaviors stimulated an interest in identifying protective factors that diminish the chances of negative outcomes for at-risk students. Connectedness to school, a supportive school environment, participation in after school activities, and effective involvement in the school were noted as protective factors (Rink & Tricker, 2003). More specifically specific actions by adults were noted to foster resiliency in children.

Restorative practices encourage resiliency building activities including teaching problem solving strategies, modeling empathy and tolerance, promoting strong adult-child relationships characterized by positive communication, teaching relationship building skills, initiating conversations about emotions, modeling effective communication, promoting sharing of responsibility, and service to others.

Questioning and wondering are strategies young children express naturally. Sadly, they are not always nurtured in classrooms where subject matter needs to be covered timely and efficiently. Elaine emphasized the multiple resources available to teachers today to rekindle this childlike sense of wonder.

> Now I have smart boards in the classroom and I try to use the television. In a forty seven minute period I try to break my class into three different parts to keep it up and moving and clicking.

In an interactive blogging site on edutopia.org teachers discuss the power of technology in breaking down barriers to learning (Young, 2012). Bloggers celebrate student voice through the use of cites such as kidblog.org/home.php and comments4kidsblogspot.com. Discussion forums bring out depth of thinking not verbalized in class and provide shy or less popular students an opportunity to demonstrate their expertise. Bringing in experts and joining with partner classes through Skype and Twitter were also cited as powerful learning tools.

Hope can develop from a spark of recognition that we are good at something and it can be used to make connections and be a part of something bigger than ourselves. For one boy in in-house suspension that spark is wrestling.

> Last week I went to see one student in ISD and I bragged on him and told him I thought he was going to be great on the wrestling team. Previously I had allowed him to bring his wrestling trophies into class and talked to him about it. In ISD I told him maybe he would like to write down some of his feelings and the next day we found that he had written each of his teachers a note (Elaine).

Physically accomplishing a skill previously causing embarrassment and ridicule encourages a student to attempt new endeavors. John shares his enthusiasm at watching this take place in his class.

> Then seeing that little light come on and they find they may actually be good at the skill and they like it.

"Young people cannot develop a sense of their own value unless they have opportunities to be of value to others" (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990). Jane Addams (1994) realized the importance of mutuality, the awareness of the necessity of defining one's personal interests with reference to collective, social interests. "It led her to hope that formal education could be organized so as to contribute to the individual's capacity to engage with others in community affairs, thereby identifying and advancing the common interests that would foster gradual yet continuous social reform" (p. 5).

Service to others is an important method through which young people can experience being a part of something bigger than themselves and helps to alleviate the hopeless feeling of not being able to do anything about their problems. Many community service projects require time and allocations outside of those provided by school. However, websites like www.myhero.com provides news stories and inspiration about ways children are finding to make a positive impact on their world. Bulletin boards can

be used to display these stories as well as newspaper or magazine articles. International Education and Resource Network, known as iEARN and available at www.iearn.org, is a non-profit organization made up of over 30,000 schools and youth organizations in more than one hundred and thirty countries. iEARN empowers teachers and young people worldwide to work together in service-learning projects online using the Internet and other new communications technologies to improve the quality of life on earth. Teachers are able to connect with other educators who share their care and concern and students are instilled with the restorative practices values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches that validate the experiences of everyone within the community, particularly those who are marginalized or oppressed.

Reintegration/Forgiveness

Chapter Two defines crime from a restorative perspective as a violation of people and relationships, creating a need to solve the problems and find solutions to make things right between all those involved. Worthington (2003) suggests that truly repairing the damage and providing restoration can only come through forgiveness and reconciliation. Conversely, the retributive perspective advocates evening the score by punishing the offender in the amount required to equalize the disruption (Zehr, 1990). Currently in schools, each offense has a designated punishment, generally some form of suspension or expulsion from school for a designated time. But what happens when the student returns? Beth, Ann, and Francis expressed concern about this process with their students.

> I would like to know that those students could be retrained and we wouldn't just make them the bad guys. I would want them to have counseling and to be taught strategies (Beth).

> After that little boy exploded I walked into the classroom and this student asked me if I had heard what happened and he said it was great, we are so glad he is gone. The boy that fought back is our hero! He just did what we all wanted to do! The counselor did come down and she visited with the kids and she pulled kids out as well, especially the one that he attacked. But the resentment they feel towards this guy is not just from this incident, but it is from all year and from years before because they have had to live with him. It is layers and layers of either I am afraid of you or I don't like you because of the way you make me feel or that you get away with things and nobody else does (Ann).
>
> We don't have a process for reintegration. I don't know I have two coming back after being out for forty-five days. They will be coming back next week. Pretty much they just come back in to the class. The hardest part for them is facing everyone and getting started again. The counselor will talk to them, but you know the kids all know what happened. It doesn't matter what you said to the kids to prepare them, there are still going to be words said, there is still going to be talking, you can't stop that. The counselor will help get the boys through, but that is all we have (Francis).

Charney (1991) stresses the goal when children break rules is never to make them feel 'bad' or defeated, although they may in fact feel bad. Our goal is first to help them recover self-control and self-respect. The descriptions given by the participants do not describe situations that would help a child recover self-control or self-respect.

Forgiveness and reintegration can be viewed from the perspective of power and fear. When a person transgresses against a victim, the transgressor essentially sets

himself up as superior to the victim and takes away his sense of power or control (Worthington, 2003). If the transgressor apologizes, he lowers himself again. Personal power is then returned to the victim with the choice to forgive or not. Palmer (1998) reiterates that fear is everywhere, in our culture, in our schools, in our students, and in our teachers. He suggests that the way to not let fear cripple our connections and limit our learning is to not *be* our fears. That means drawing on other things deep within us besides the fear. He says, "I can teach from curiosity or hope or empathy or honesty, places that are as real within me as are my fears" (p. 57).

Community then at its best is a collection of individuals capable of identifying their fear, shame, and self-worth and projecting the tolerance that comes from recognizing we are human on to all other members of the community. Palmer (1998) describes it as: "Community is an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, the flowing of personal identity and integrity into the world of relationships" (p. 90). That is what we are aiming for in our classrooms. The philosophy of restorative practices is not a quick fix, or an easy answer to school violence. We cannot correct all of the social injustices that create the anger, alienation and disconnection that is evident in our schools today. However, we can begin to show personal identity and integrity as individuals working on self-reflection; able to recognize our fears and yet able to not *be* our fears. We can speak and act from a place of honesty about being fearful rather than speak from the fear itself; and we can listen from the heart with ears of tolerance recognizing our own shame and our own strengths.

In a reintegrating circle, instead of saying, "I am afraid of you and I don't want you in my class or near me" the wounded child might be able to say, "I am afraid of you

because you hurt me and you have hurt other people before. I don't want to be hurt again. But I hear that you are also afraid of not having any friends, of not belonging anywhere and I am willing to try again". Restorative reintegration does not end with the circle. Actions need to be taken to correct the issues relating to the aggressor's anger, as well as counseling provided in better anger management skills. However the whole class will grow in a restorative culture where students and teacher have the freedom to speak and freedom to pass and reflect, and where listening is a gift offered from a heart ready to truly hear.

Reflective Awareness

The researcher participating in phenomenological projects and their methods often experiences transformative effects. "Phenomenological research is often itself a form of deep learning, leading to a transformation of consciousness, heightened perceptiveness, increased thoughtfulness and tact" (van Manen, 1997, p. 163). In this type of research, findings emerge from the interactions between the researcher and the participants as the research progresses (Creswell, 1998). As suggested by Laverty (2003), I refer back to journals written during graduate classes to compare experiences and perspectives and to assist in the process of interpretation. I recognize my explanation to my students about learning as a process of disequilibrium had come from reading Dewey (1997). A journal entry in 2003 read,

> Dewey says that learning takes place during problems, when you are in a state of disequilibrium. I feel I am facing that disequilibrium now. I really don't know why I pursued a doctorate degree or what I will do with it. However, I also recognize that in my cohort I have formed bonds with a group of people that may

> be instrumental in making changes in education. That thought is inspiring and frightening. Do we really have any thoughts or answers that will improve the educational opportunities for my grandchildren? Everything has been tried before, it seems, and yet we ended up where we are today.

Why educational reform continues to reinforce ideas of segregated subjects with mastery demonstrated in memorization of remote facts is a topic too large to address in this study, although it does have an impact on school safety. However, another answer is found in the realization that as teachers we are still doing everything too much by ourselves. Besides making us lonely, we do not connect with others who can duplicate our efforts and pass on what we have learned (Olson, 2009).

Pushing to complete this research I experience strong emotions that I really do not know how to deal with, fear of inadequacy and failure as deadlines approach and ongoing feelings of confusion about achieving my goal but not yet realizing how I will use it. My feelings of failure compound due to the time I am taking away from my family in order to write. I feel like a bad wife, mother and grandmother, roles I spent my life developing and using as a measure of my worth. Writing and rewriting, going deeper and deeper into the meaning of the teachers' voices led me to research the issue of shame. I was drawn back to authors, Parker Palmer and Brene Brown. Reading through their books is a life changing moment for me, a moment I am ready to receive because of the reflection I am going through analyzing the teachers' stories. They bring together fragments of what I have been developing in my thinking. Shame tells us that our imperfections make us inadequate and our vulnerabilities display our weakness. Brown helps me recognize that is far from the truth.

In my role as a teacher I do not experience difficulty seeing from a student's point of view; believing that children are to be protected and nurtured. During this study I realize my own shame and anger at not receiving that protection and nurture from adults in my life. Accordingly, I realize I have less empathy for other teachers and administrators when I feel they are treating students unjustly. Children of alcoholics exhibit one or more of five roles: the hero, the placater, the rebel or scapegoat, the clown or mascot, or the loner or adjusting child. I realize the child acting as hero and placater best define my actions. Heroes are responsible children who try to ensure that the family looks normal to the rest of the world. They also project a personal image of achievement, competence, and responsibility although such success is often denial of their own feelings and a belief that they are imposters. Placaters are also known as people pleasers who learn early to smooth over potentially upsetting situations in the family. "They seem to have an uncanny ability to sense what others are feeling, at the expense of their own feelings (Ahund, 2012, p. 2).

Self-examination reveals I continue to assume these roles as an educator. As a Title I teacher, students come to me from other classes and bring with them stories of frustration and failure. Another journal entry in 2003 describes my observation while working with these students in their classroom. A girl leaves the room upset after a misunderstanding with her teacher.

> I couldn't help but recognize that a great deal of the learning period was gone and little learning took place. It made me think about Dewey's (1997) comment regarding not all experience is conducive to growth. How many children are embarrassed and actually kept from the learning experience we wish

to encourage because we misinterpret their actions, comments, or frustration? Again I am reminded that even though we say we are accepting of diversity, it is very difficult to know and understand the cultures the students experience outside of school and to adjust to those differences in our classroom.

I realize that I unknowingly inflict shame on other teachers through blaming and reducing when attempting to dialogue with them concerning their students' perceptions of unfair treatment or dislike. My attempt to smooth things over between the teacher and pupil is not successful because it is an example of doing things TO people rather than WITH people. Restorative practice holds that human beings are happier, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things WITH them, rather than TO them or FOR them (Wachtel, 2008). A restorative dialog would be helpful enabling the student and teacher to gain understanding and empathy and to form a connection. The concluding agreement would be one that works for that student with that teacher, my opinion or my way of doing things is not the only or best way. Although this is not a practice common in my school I know change comes with those courageous enough to try not those waiting to perfect their knowledge.

Holt (1982), recalling his own journey into teaching at the age of thirty, recommends teachers "get to know and like yourselves a little better" before entering the classroom. He explains, "I had not lost all of my distrust in myself or fear of the world, but I had lost enough so I could see the trials and failures of the classroom not as threats to my authority or sense of personal worth but only as interesting problems to think about and try to solve" (p. 282).

I recognize what an enormous impact this could have on lives if teachers were taught in undergraduate classes the importance of spending time in self-reflection to know what triggers their reactions and their feelings of self-worth. I also appreciate even more how effective restorative practices could be allowing young children to develop in classrooms where they actively participated in informal circles sharing their thoughts and feelings in a nonjudgmental atmosphere. When this dialog continues through middle school and high school students could connect with teachers and administrators and staff as people interested in helping them discover their interests and enjoy a full life.

Socratic questioning is a type of inquiry or examination that reveals people to themselves; I similarly envision restorative practices. In his discussion about Socratic questioning Phillips (2001) states, to Socrates, a person should only consider whether in doing anything, he is doing right or wrong, acting the part of a good man or bad. An excellent human being is one who strives to acquire certain virtues, such as temperance, courage, and wisdom because the acquisition of such virtues creates a different kind of wealth, a wealth of empathy, of imaginative vision, of self-discovery. Brown (2007) mentions her goal in writing her book is to "give voice to the voiceless and give ears to the earless; to share the complex and important stories women have to tell in a way that allows people to hear them (p.42). I share her goal with the hope that in hearing teachers, professors, administrators and school reformers will add their personal story and pass on what makes education meaningful.

Conclusions

Restorative practices are about restoring a right standing, about putting relationships back together. It seems natural that restorative practices in schools would be

about restoring a feeling of safety, one of the basic of all needs. However, in reflecting upon my own journey as a teacher and a parent I realize that we need a better understanding of what a safe school essentially is before we can begin the process of restoration (Haney, Thomas, & Vaughn, 2010). I chose to begin this understanding with the voice of teachers.

Incivility in schools often runs in a cycle. Often a chain of complex interactions among home, school, and peers shapes students' moral qualities and behavior. Caring teachers are effective at identifying and turning around downward spirals by communicating high moral expectations and providing empathetic listening and opportunities for accomplishment that reduce student's shame and distrust (Weissbourd, 2003). Brown (2010) draws on stories she has amassed during her research of shame and vulnerability to learn from men and women who are living inspiring lives. She summarizes her findings with this: "How much we know and understand ourselves is critically important, but there is something that is even more essential to living a wholehearted life; loving ourselves"(p. xi). It takes courage to believe what makes us vulnerable also makes us valuable. When we are truly settled on that knowledge, we can extend it to other staff and students. The root word of courage comes from the Latin word *cor,* meaning heart. The original definition of courage is to tell the story of who you are with your whole heart (Brown, 2007).

Debra and Beth identify the need for more time and attention to be given to social and emotional education and quality collaboration.

> The biggest detriment for the staff is that we have so many other requirements and so many new techniques that they want us to implement that a

> lot of important things such as bullying kind of get put by the wayside. I would just love to see it addressed more in the schools. I think it should be required curriculum. It could be integrated in to science unit or social studies unit. Our counselor is very well versed on it, but there isn't enough of her to go around and teach it in every class and do what needs to be done (Debra).
>
> I think we would love being given more life strategies because there are times that I don't feel like I know how to handle it and I turn it over to the counselor. But I think we could all use more strategies because when things happen we don't have any time to think about it, we just have to react (Beth).

Teacher education reformers, however, leave little curricula room in their demands for rigor for collaboration and searching foundational inquiry among teacher educators and their students (Adams, 1994: Laird, 1988, 1998). In restorative practices, all stakeholders are brought together in dialog that brings attention to their concerns and to their obligations to foster the conditions that promote healthy communities. Staff development designed on restorative principals empowers teachers and staff to reflect, share stories, and authentically discuss issues relevant to their work with children. We are meaning making creatures; we tell our stories as a way to recreate our sense of meaning and identity. Restorative practices allow all those involved in schooling to share their stories and to build connection, empowerment, security, and trust before and after a traumatic event or violent incident.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Time Line of U. S. School Shootings

Feb. 2, 1996 Moses Lake, Wash.	Two students and one teacher killed, one other wounded when 14-year-old Barry Loukaitis opened fire on his algebra class.
Feb. 19, 1997 Bethel, Alaska	Principal and one student killed, two others wounded by Evan Ramsey, 16.
Oct. 1, 1997 Pearl, Miss.	Two students killed and seven wounded by Luke Woodham, 16, who was also accused of killing his mother. He and his friends were said to be outcasts who worshiped Satan.
Dec. 1, 1997 West Paducah, Ky.	Three students killed, five wounded by Michael Carneal, 14, as they participated in a prayer circle at Heath High School.
Dec. 15, 1997 Stamps, Ark.	Two students wounded. Colt Todd, 14, was hiding in the woods when he shot the students as they stood in the parking lot.
March 24, 1998 Jonesboro, Ark.	Four students and one teacher killed, ten others wounded outside as Westside Middle School emptied during a false fire alarm. Mitchell Johnson, 13, and Andrew Golden, 11, shot at their classmates and teachers from the woods.
April 24, 1998 Edinboro, Pa.	One teacher, John Gillette, killed, two students wounded at a dance at James W. Parker Middle School. Andrew Wurst, 14, was charged.
May 19, 1998 Fayetteville, Tenn.	One student killed in the parking lot at Lincoln County High School three days before he was to graduate. The victim was dating the ex-girlfriend of his killer, 18-year-old honor student Jacob Davis.
May 21, 1998 Springfield, Ore.	Two students killed, 22 others wounded in the cafeteria at Thurston High School by 15-year-old Kip Kinkel. Kinkel had been arrested and released a day earlier for bringing a gun to school. His parents were later found dead at home.
June 15, 1998 Richmond, Va.	One teacher and one guidance counselor wounded by a 14-year-old boy in the school hallway.

April 20, 1999 Littleton, Colo.	14 students (including killers) and one teacher killed, 23 others wounded at Columbine High School in the nation's deadliest school shooting. Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, had plotted for a year to kill at least 500 and blow up their school. At the end of their hour-long rampage, they turned their guns on themselves.
May 20, 1999 Conyers, Ga.	Six students injured at Heritage High School by Thomas Solomon, 15, who was reportedly depressed after breaking up with his girlfriend.
Nov. 19, 1999 Deming, N.M.	Victor Cordova Jr., 12, shot and killed Araceli Tena, 13, in the lobby of Deming Middle School.
Dec. 6, 1999 Fort Gibson, Okla.	Four students wounded as Seth Trickey, 13, opened fire with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun at Fort Gibson Middle School.
Feb. 29, 2000 Mount Morris Township, Mich.	Six-year-old Kayla Rolland shot dead at Buell Elementary School near Flint, Mich. The assailant was identified as a six-year-old boy with a .32-caliber handgun.
March 10, 2000 Savannah, Ga.	Two students killed by Darrell Ingram, 19, while leaving a dance sponsored by Beach High School.
May 26, 2000 Lake Worth, Fla.	One teacher, Barry Grunow, was shot and killed at Lake Worth Middle School by Nate Brazill, 13, with .25-caliber semiautomatic pistol on the last day of classes.
Jan. 17, 2001 Baltimore, Md.	One student shot and killed in front of Lake Clifton Eastern High School.
March 5, 2001 Santee, Calif.	Two killed and 13 wounded by Charles Andrew Williams, 15, firing from a bathroom at Santana High School.
March 7, 2001 Williamsport, Pa.	Elizabeth Catherine Bush, 14, wounded student Kimberly Marchese in the cafeteria of Bishop Neumann High School; she was depressed and frequently teased.
March 22, 2001 Granite Hills, Calif.	One teacher and three students wounded by Jason Hoffman, 18, at Granite Hills High School. A policeman shot and wounded Hoffman.

March 30, 2001 Gary, Ind.	One student killed by Donald R. Burt, Jr., a 17-year-old student who had been expelled from Lew Wallace High School.
Nov. 12, 2001 Caro, Mich.	Chris Buschbacher, 17, took two hostages at the Caro Learning Center before killing himself.
Jan. 15, 2002 New York, N.Y.	A teenager wounded two students at Martin Luther King Jr. High School.
October 28, 2002 Tucson, Ariz.	Robert S. Flores Jr., 41, a student at the nursing school at the University of Arizona, shot and killed three female professors and then himself.
Jan. 17, 2001 Baltimore, Md.	One student shot and killed in front of Lake Clifton Eastern High School.
April 24, 2003 Red Lion, Pa.	James Sheets, 14, killed principal Eugene Segro of Red Lion Area Junior High School before killing himself.
Sept. 24, 2003 Cold Spring, Minn.	Two students are killed at Rocori High School by John Jason McLaughlin, 15.
March 21, 2005 Red Lake, Minn.	Jeff Weise, 16, killed grandfather and companion, then arrived at school where he killed a teacher, a security guard, 5 students, and finally himself, leaving a total of 10 dead.
Nov. 8, 2005 Jacksboro, Tenn.	One 15-year-old shot and killed an assistant principal at Campbell County High School and seriously wounded two other administrators.
Aug. 24, 2006 Essex, Vt.	Christopher Williams, 27, looking for his ex-girlfriend at Essex Elementary School, shot two teachers, killing one and wounding another. Before going to the school, he had killed the ex-girlfriend's mother.
Sept. 27, 2006 Bailey, Colo.	Adult male held six students hostage at Platte Canyon High School and then shot and killed Emily Keyes, 16, and himself.
Sept. 29, 2006 Cazenovia, Wis.	A 15-year-old student shot and killed Weston School principal John Klang.
Oct. 3, 2006 Nickel Mines, Pa.	32-year-old Carl Charles Roberts IV entered the one-room West Nickel Mines Amish School and shot 10 schoolgirls, ranging in age

	from 6 to 13 years old, and then himself. Five of the girls and Roberts died.
Jan. 3, 2007 Tacoma, Wash.	Douglas Chanthabouly, 18, shot fellow student Samnang Kok, 17, in the hallway of Henry Foss High School.
April 16, 2007 Blacksburg, Va.	A 23-year-old Virginia Tech student, Cho Seung-Hui, killed two in a dorm, then killed 30 more 2 hours later in a classroom building. His suicide brought the death toll to 33, making the shooting rampage the most deadly in U.S. history. Fifteen others were wounded.
Sept. 21, 2007 Dover, Del.	A Delaware State University Freshman, Loyer D. Brandon, shot and wounded two other Freshman students on the University campus. Brandon is being charged with attempted murder, assault, reckless engagement, as well as a gun charge.
Oct. 10, 2007 Cleveland, Ohio	A 14-year-old student at a Cleveland high school, Asa H. Coon, shot and injured two students and two teachers before he shot and killed himself. The victims' injuries were not life-threatening.
Feb. 8, 2008 Baton Rouge, Louisiana	A nursing student shot and killed two women and then herself in a classroom at Louisiana Technical College in Baton Rouge.
Feb. 11, 2008 Memphis, Tennessee	A 17-year-old student at Mitchell High School shot and wounded a classmate in gym class.
Feb. 12, 2008 Oxnard, California	A 14-year-old boy shot a student at E.O. Green Junior High School causing the 15-year-old victim to be brain dead.
Feb. 14, 2008 DeKalb, Illinois	Gunman killed five students and then himself, and wounded 17 more when he opened fire on a classroom at Northern Illinois University. The gunman, Stephen P. Kazmierczak, was identified as a former graduate student at the university in 2007.
Nov. 12, 2008 Fort Lauderdale, Florida	A 15-year-old female student was shot and killed by a classmate at Dillard High School in Fort Lauderdale.
Feb. 5, 2010	At Discovery Middle School, a ninth-grader was shot by another

Madison, Alabama	student during a class change. The boy, whose name was not released, pulled out a gun and shot Todd Brown in the head while walking the hallway. Brown later died at Huntsville Hospital.
Jan.5, 2011 Omaha, Nebraska	Robert Butler, Jr, age 17 shot and killed an assistant principal and wounded the principal at Millard south High School

Sources: Newspaper reports.
http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0777958.html#ixzz1a1neLHlw