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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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NARRATIVE VOICES IN THE PRESERVICE CERTIFICATION YEAR: INQUIRY IN TEACHER EDUCATION

BY

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A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the problem of understanding how preservice teachers shift conceptual lenses from their own successful experience as learners to the pedagogical stances necessary in today's complex and diverse classrooms, and revealed what might help or hinder the development of those stances.

A research design of narrative inquiry presented an account of the development of educational beliefs, teaching skills, images, and practices of eight preservice education students over the course of their final certification year. The case studies involved three streams or curricula: early years, middle years, and senior years, all of which were pilot programs at the University of Manitoba.

Each student was interviewed once before the first practicum, with particular emphasis on significant educational memories and influences from the learner's past up to the present education course work, and possible goals for student teaching. At the mid-year point, documents such as evaluations, observation notes, journal reflections, and portfolio statements were collected. The students' language was analysed for rules of practice, principles, and images.

Final interviews took place after the last practicum. Each set of data was collected, organized and analysed from a beginning to end pattern to show changes in educational perspective over the year, and to reflect interpretation and connections made among aspects of educational experiences, theories, and practice.

The concept of caring and Nel Noddings' elements of moral education (modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation) were related as positive influences in each preservice student's perspective. The feminist theme of "voice" was especially important in the senior years case studies of science majors, and in the early years program, but was ultimately a factor in all programs.

Careful attention to collaboration and group cohesion within the programs was also a factor, with each story yielding positive and negative results related to contextual and personal factors. Clandinin and Connelly's themes of sacred, secret, cover stories, and safe places, all aspects of their "professional knowledge landscape", were explored.

In presenting the rich data of students' lived experiences and language through case study, I emphasized the power of words, the importance of learners' participation in their own constructions of personal meaning, the importance of collegial support from peers, cooperating teachers and faculty advisors, the need for time and shared negotiation in the understanding of new approaches such as integrated curriculum and portfolio assessment, and the need for listening and true collaboration at all levels of school and university.

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INTRODUCTION

While working with preservice teachers in seminars, as well as when supervising certification students in their practicums, I became increasingly aware that some of these students experienced major difficulties with analysis, interpretation, and holistic understanding of their experiences in the schools. The commitment of the students who did meet the challenges and stresses of today's schools and were thoughtful about underlying, sometimes contradictory, philosophies was, unfortunately, offset by the "unrealistic optimism" (Weinstein, 1989) of some students, or their passive acceptance of the "historically dominant and common sense view of student teaching as an exercise in apprenticeship" (Zeichner and Liston, 1987).

Education students, unlike those in many other fields of study, come to the university's program with a long history of associations with the field, the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), as well as theories of action that are "deeply embedded in... cognitive and behavioural repertoires" (Sanders and McCutcheon, 1984, p. 181). Strong beliefs might have been reinforced by personality factors or authoritarian modes of teaching, and since most of them come from relatively stable, middle-class backgrounds, they have had little experience with the complex problems facing inner city children (Hollingsworth, 1992).

From direct observations in schools, conversations with student teachers, cooperating teachers, and colleagues, as well as participation in seminars and writing for postgraduate courses in curriculum studies, I realized that a number of factors might be influencing the students, both in their university course work and in the field. Multiple

perspectives (beliefs and assumptions), competing paradigms (conceptual lenses), and ambiguity that helped to provide "rich confusion" or "productive uncertainty" (Schubert, 1986) for curriculum writers and educational theorists, might also have led to confusion and incomplete understandings for preservice teachers, especially if time and opportunity for discussion about theory and practice was limited (Holt-Reynolds, 1992). Financial cutbacks that affected workloads, class sizes and morale in both institutions of the school and university (Goodman, 1988; Winnipeg Free Press, 1996), resulted in fewer contact hours with individual education students and less time for cooperating teachers to discuss practicum issues. Further complications were the increasing concerns about troubled, alienated, sometimes violent students in the schools (Valpy, 1993) as well as an increasingly conservative approach to school funding, curriculum standards, and teachers' contracts.

Two incidents helped consolidate further my decision to study teacher student cognition and perspectives. One involved a fourth year certification student who refused to engage core area junior high students in learning. The student warned the cooperating teacher and me that he had not taught lessons to a whole class before the practicum, and was looking forward to the final practicum in his rural home town's high school, where students would be more ready to listen. After some tense counselling, and with the help of a patient, committed cooperating teacher, the student managed to reveal enough commitment to work successfully with the class, admitting insightfully that he had been trying to maintain a student's, rather than a teacher's, point of view, allowing him to avoid responsibility. Seeming arrogance masked a deep-seated insecurity, preventing him from

taking a risk to abandon the controls of teacher-centered methods with unwilling adolescents from social and cultural backgrounds greatly different from his own.

Another preservice student completely changed her analysis and understanding of her school experience after long conversations with fellow education students who were in the same car pool but assigned to different teachers. She realized, by talking to them and hearing about different placements in seminars, that the teacher "control" she so admired in the first days of school experience was a stultifying nightmare that restricted the students' (and her own) growth. The implication of these seemingly unrelated stories seemed to be that principles deemed important for education students, such as peer group interactions, multicultural and socio-economic factors in schooling, and need to involve students in their own learning, might have been actively engaged by education students haphazardly, insufficiently, or not at all, by the time they arrived at their certification year.

However, during this same period of time, I had also met a number of preservice teachers who worked successfully through constraints and complexity to achieve a remarkable understanding of themselves and other participants in their practicum, beginning (and ready to continue) the lifelong cycle of productive learning and reflection with each new group of students (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988; Schön, 1983). I was curious about what factors appeared to have allowed, encouraged, or stimulated some students to achieve far greater understanding than others by the time the students reached the final practicum. I believed that a description and analysis of a small number of education students' thinking and actions had the potential to provide not certainties, but some insights and tentative information about the way in which personal perspectives

about teaching and learning interact with the intensive content course work and the longer, more demanding practicum experiences in the final year of preservice education.

Since 1989, the textbook for the initial year of education at the University of Manitoba had been George J. Posner's *Field Experience: a Guide to Reflective Teaching* (1989). Since students and seminar leaders had used the text for a number of years, and some education courses emphasized the keeping of journals, most students now in their final year were accustomed to a degree of reflective thinking and writing in journals. I interviewed a number of fourth year students at the beginning and the end of course work and the practicum to uncover the nature, extent and quality of their reflective thinking, as well as their educational beliefs and attitudes about teaching and learning. I analyzed the students' language in interviews and journals, observed their practicum teaching at least once, collected documents, integrated the separate data into cohesive stories and asked the participants to read and contribute to the final narrative account of their certification year in education.

Because the University of Manitoba's Education Faculty had been undergoing program changes, I assumed there would be interest in the influences that students perceived as having had an impact on them, as well as interest in the development of students from varied backgrounds and differing programs within the faculty. Elements of educational practice that were parts of students' experience before and during the final year, were described in the students' own words. Overall, the main importance and purpose of the study was to deepen and extend our understanding of individual education students and their interpretation of teacher education programs, to construct their stories

of their year, as well as to point to ways to facilitate education students' developing understandings of teachers, learners, and themselves.

CHAPTER ONE: The Problem

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem was centered on how to help preservice teachers to shift conceptual lenses from their own successful experience as students to the pedagogical stance they would need in today's multicultured, gendered, diverse, and crowded classrooms. Drawing upon the educational principles of accessing prior knowledge and paying attention to how individual learners construct personal meaning about experience (Bruner, 1990; Ebenezer, 1993; Twomey-Fosnot, 1989), I proposed that an examination and narrative framing of a few preservice teachers' thinking and interpretations of teaching and learning experiences throughout their final year would provide some insight into what enabled or impeded the development of that stance.

The purpose of the study was to present a narrative account of the development of the educational beliefs, thinking, and practice of representative certification year education students over the course of their final year.

ELEMENTS OF THE PROBLEM

In a study of this nature, there are a number of ways of collecting qualitative data, and a researcher needs to do the following:

1. Explore the preservice teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning at the beginning of their final year, as well as uncover autobiographical influences on their educational philosophy.
2. Devise open-ended questions to elicit full responses and reflective thinking.

3. Analyze language patterns in journal writing, documents, and in the interview transcripts for rules of practice, principles, and images, and also for content themes, such as egocentric concerns, emphasis on students' learning in the schools, contextual issues of class, race, and gender, interactions with fellow education students, evidence of implicit and explicit theories of teaching and learning.
4. Review all data for each student and organize into a narrative account of that student's final year.
5. Distribute accounts to participants for reading and revising where necessary.
6. Review all participants' narratives together and analyze for shared or differing themes that emerge from the researcher's narrative accounts of the students.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Because of the time-consuming nature of qualitative data gathering and analysis, only a small sample of students was asked to participate in the study. Two main interviews and one mid-year meeting took place and observations during the practicum were fitted around the official supervision. An attempt was made to include representatives from a range of different programs.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation was the amount of students' time needed to participate in interviews and keep a journal during an already stressful and busy final year. No student approached by me declined participation in the study in the first term; two students withdrew in second term.

Another limitation centered on potential problems with individual cooperating teachers or education faculty members but students were free to withdraw at any time without penalty. The needs to develop trust with the students and to ensure anonymity in the accounts were important, and were helped by my knowledge of most of the students from shared experiences in undergraduate seminars.

CHAPTER TWO: Review of the Literature

> *For unless we can begin to prepare teachers who are willing to assume more central roles in shaping the direction of their own work and school environments, the kinds of changes which may be on the horizon with regard to the occupation of teaching will continue to maintain the familiar pattern of "change but no change." The preparation of reflective student teachers is a necessary first step...*
>
> (Zeichner and Liston, 1987, p. 45)

> *... some change in prospective teachers' thinking may occur spontaneously as they confront the reality of the classroom and interact with their peers. Such change will be haphazard, however, unless teacher education programs include experiences that require prospective teachers to reflect on their preconceptions and to consider alternatives....More deliberate attention to our students' beliefs about teaching and learning is necessary if teacher education is to bring about positive change.*
>
> (Weinstein, 1989, p. 18)

> *Surprisingly, teacher education programs seem rarely to be influenced, to any substantial extent, by an understanding of how student teachers learn to teach.*
>
> (Calderhead, 1992, p. 139)

While trying to follow a coherent thread of connection throughout the readings on teacher education, research on teaching, and reflective teaching, I began to believe that I had reached the outer limits of my own personal understanding. Since I wanted to study in what way, or if, student teachers changed or developed as a result of teacher education, I needed to study the background of reflective teaching, which had been advocated (at least in the initial year) at the University of Manitoba, and by most writers discussing the present state of teacher education (Weinstein, 1989; Zeichner and Liston, 1987).

However, the more I read, the more confused I became about the nature of reflection and its role in teacher education.

Finally, however, I found a book edited by Linda Valli, called *Reflective Teacher Education: Cases and Critiques* (1992), and realized that my cognitive ability was not entirely to blame. In the foreword to the book, Alan R. Tom documented how his 1985 study of inquiry-oriented teacher education had "fuzzy" parameters, that inquiry-oriented teaching was "now commonly called reflective teaching, a change probably attributable to Schön's influential book published in 1983" (p. viii), and that the subsequent "explosion" of interest in reflective teaching led to major "differing terms" about the essence of reflective teaching and teacher education. This "fluidity" or "disarray" was indicative of the major changes that were occurring in how we viewed teaching and learning, research, knowledge, and teacher education, and Tom felt that the confusion and ferment at least acknowledged the complexity of the problem, a complexity similar to the differing "conceptions of curriculum" of Eisner and Vallance (1974), and Schubert's curricular paradigms (1986). These different perspectives had very different goals for reflection and inquiry, but a theme emerging was the use of narrative inquiry to help construct a personal narrative of experience, through which a change in perspective, a transformation could occur. (Diamond, 1991)

Working from the present backwards, then, how could it be that the examination of the thoughts and interpretations of a few education students in a Western Canadian university might be considered worth researching? Those "major changes" that Tom referred to contained some of the reasons, and I tried to narrow the vast expanse of

possible research literature to provide some of the main proponents, summaries, or change markers that indicated a shift in emphasis ultimately affecting teacher education. Topic organizers chosen were:

1. Views of teaching and learning.
2. Views about research.
3. Views about teacher education.
4. Views about knowledge. As is common in education, these topics were interconnected and overlapped.

VIEWS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

In describing the gradually evolving specialized field of curriculum studies in the twentieth century, William Schubert (1986) portrayed the seminal role of John Dewey's ideas and writing in education: the child is an active maker of meaning in social interaction, children need to be involved in democratic principles and problem solving in experiences of everyday living, and teachers need to transcend routine thinking, remain open-minded, and reflect responsibly on the basic principles underlying their teaching practice. Dewey (along with Boyd Bode) was also ahead of his time in recognizing the interdependence of, and need for balanced attention to, the learner, society, and subject matter (Schubert, 1986, p. 80). Now, nearing the end of the century, after the extremes of progressivism, the technocratic mindset, and behaviourism, these topics were still being debated (Greene, 1984; Berlak and Berlak, 1983; Bruner, 1986; Bowers, 1987) and advocated, but the principles underlying them had finally begun to make important

headway, thanks in part to the continued curricular attention to Dewey's thinking and writing (Schön, 1983; Grimmett, 1988; 1994; Valli, 1991; Diamond, 1991).

Teacher education had only recently become a focus in research, but the history of research on teaching itself was not much longer. The first *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Gage, 1963) emphasized the then-dominant behavioural psychology with process-product studies searching for laws, objectivity, causes, predictability, with outside experts choosing the questions for research. No wonder there was little success (useful to teachers) to document, and then great difficulty in finding new significant research to report by 1973, the second edition (Shulman, 1986, p. 5).

By the time of the third edition, however, (Wittrock,1986) a great ferment had taken place in all the disciplines and in curricular writings, emphasizing new, more wide-ranging, humanistic approaches to teaching, learning, and even research. The topics in the chapter headings gave clues: "Qualitative Methods in Research on Teaching" (Erickson); "Teachers' Thought Processes" (Clark and Peterson); and "Classroom Discourse" (Courtney Cazden). Cazden's work helped to highlight some of the connections among the areas of sociology, linguistics and cognitive psychology (Vygotsky, 1962), singling out the importance of social interaction, and revealing the new complexities and responsibility for positive communication in the classroom, recognizing especially the role of cultural differences and varying interpretations of teacher talk. In general, research such as Cazden's pointed up the shift from research documenting external analyses of teacher and student behaviors, to work portraying how the doing,

saying, thinking, and feeling of all participants interacted and affected teaching and learning in Geertz' "webs of significance" (in Shulman, p. 18), in the ecology of the classroom (Shulman, 1986, p. 22).

An example of the power of the empirical-analytic paradigm in controlling and influencing teachers, research, and teacher education, a collection of rich data portraying the states of being in schools, was a decision to omit a study from the 1973 *Handbook of Research on Teaching*. Philip Jackson's *Life in Classrooms* (1968) was a collection, but was deliberately not considered for the Handbook because the qualitative method was deemed unscientific (Shulman,1986). Ironically, the study was read widely and had profound effects on educational thinking, portraying the classroom's crowding, the socialization, the complexity, the control, the power, the decision-making, all in a richer and more memorable way than some of the carefully controlled and narrowly construed studies of the dominant, analytic paradigm. Interpretive research such as this raised further questions and possibilities to study, such as the framework of preactive and interactive decision-making that did become useful for both pre- and in-service teachers. Recently, Jackson admitted that the dream of finding "once and for all how teaching works" had changed to the "much more modest goal of trying to figure out what's happening here and now". In this, truth "takes a very different form than it once did" (quoted in Lytle and Cochran-Smith, 1992, p. 465).

Jackson's work was not the only omission from the research handbooks. Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Susan Lytle noted that Wittrock's 1986 edition contained no research

written by school-based teachers, silencing the "voices", the questions, the "interpretive frames teachers used to understand and improve their own practices". In a stinging indictment that strongly spoke to teacher educators and researchers they charged:

> *Limiting the official knowledge base for teaching to what academics have chosen to study ...has contributed to a number of problems, including discontinuity between what is taught in universities and what is taught in classrooms, teachers' ambivalence about the claims of academic research, and a general lack of information about classroom life from a truly emic perspective.*
>
> (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990, p. 2)

The shift to teacher-initiated and teacher-based research, long advocated (Stenhouse, 1975), had finally been brought into the literature.

VIEWS ABOUT RESEARCH

The overall change in research focus was characterized by Shulman's division into two main areas, the one derived from psychology, the process-product tradition looking for laws and instances (generalizations), and the other area, drawing mainly from other disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, and linguistics, looking for meaning in the particular, using descriptive cases and interpretations to build mental models or "systematic unpackings of the conceptual world" (Geertz in Shulman, 1986, p. 19). The latter was sometimes called ecological research, with these general characteristics:

1. Attention to personal interactions, not one-way causality.
2. Teaching and learning are continuously interactive.
3. Seeing the classroom context as nested within other contexts, all of which influence what happens in the classroom.

4. Treating unobservable processes, such as thoughts, attitudes, feelings or perceptions of the participants, as important sources of data (Shulman, 1986, p. 19).

Once again, there were echoes of Deweyan concerns for the interests of the learner, opportunity for social interaction, and attention to the principles underlying thought. William Pinar also referred to Dewey's use of the term *intuition* to refer to the "reflexive grasp of problematic qualities of situations". The personal element in such research was what made it memorable and therefore capable of having an effect on others, possibly by raising to consciousness what had been implicit before. Pinar used an apt phrase to criticize research that, even though purportedly qualitative, reported only the surface, calling it a "perspectiveless perspective" (Pinar in Taylor, 1986, p. 21). Well-written case studies could provide part of the data needed for synthesis of understanding about the classroom, thus helping student teachers to connect with more aspects of the ever-increasing complexities of today's classrooms.

Dewey also emphasized the ongoing nature of reflective practice, so that teachers could be not only consumers, but also producers of knowledge about teaching; teachers should be students of learning (Dewey in Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990). Cochran-Smith and Lytle, then, focused on the need for the teacher's inside knowledge in research, the point of view not even considered in Wittrock's *Handbook*, and a clear example of Wagner's "blind spots", an area in which "existing theories, methods, and perceptions actually keep us from seeing phenomena as clearly as we might" (Wagner, 1993, p. 16). Teachers and theorists (Gilligan, 1982; Clandinin, 1993) were working to

illuminate some of these blind spots. By far, the earliest and richest sources of research by teachers themselves had been the works in research on writing, as teachers struggled to participate in, describe and help the difficult processes of thinking, writing and composition (Bissex and Bullock, 1987; Calkins, 1983; Goswami and Stillman, 1987; Graves, 1983).

Teachers who researched their own everyday practical problems were engaging in "action-research", involving participants in self reflection and dialogue (Elliott, 1978). Their teaching was transformed, enriched by collaborative methods, and resulted in greater confidence, enthusiasm and ability to assess current research, providing a stimulating environment for student teachers to see theory and practice united in a meaningful way (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990; Clandinin, 1993). Another benefit for teacher education was the greater amount of data collected over a longer period of time and phrased in teachers' language. Analyses could be used by preservice or inservice teachers to learn from the documented experience of others, to note discrepancies, to determine situation-specific variables, or to stimulate a new cycle of inquiry. For example, Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1992) described six different researchers, a student teacher among them (exploring the theme of balancing structure and freedom within a third-grade classroom), and their stories show the power of teachers and children to "construct the curriculum" together (p. 454). This knowledge was "inside/outside", challenging the views of university research experts and the notion of pre-service training as transmission and implementation of knowledge from outside to inside schools (p. 469). This empowerment of teachers was an important source of knowledge building for education students and

their educators, but was also problematic, if teachers were not aware of contradictory and implicit underlying assumptions that might be affecting the "communicative competence" and explorations of "cultural literacy" in their classrooms (Bowers, 1987). These concerns would surface and be examined if journals and discussions stimulated reflective thinking about personal, social, and political issues in the schools.

TEACHER EDUCATION RESEARCH

The change in the approaches to teaching, learning, and teaching research, had also been affecting teacher education, although with some significant problems, as noted by Jesse Goodman (1988) and William H. Schubert (1989). The curriculum questions raised and still being debated in the broad field of education had won some important issues, but had also faced strong political struggle. Schubert felt that teacher educators needed to understand the main paradigms of curriculum and inquiry, know how they were different, and ask important questions about what effect those differences might have. For instance,

> *How would the many teacher educators who maintain faith in expert knowledge react to the hermeneutic and critical assumption that knowledge is created by interaction of persons most closely involved in educational situations?*
>
> (Schubert, 1989, p. 30)

Schubert referred to the assumptions about knowledge, social justice, and the roles of teachers and students that would be reconceptualized by viewing them through critical or hermeneutic inquiry, and seemed to dare teacher education to consider them together, providing broader and deeper perspectives.

Goodman commented that teachers were often blamed for inhibiting student teachers' reflection and experimentation, but the university culture could also frustrate

efforts to reform field experiences, by co-opting the language of reflection or empowerment, and by assimilating reform proposals "in a way that reinforces traditional practices" (Goodman, 1988, p. 51). A major concern for all areas was lack of funds and resources, and Goodman questioned how effectively education students would be able to engage in serious reflection and extensive dialogue with school and university teachers whose time, and even jobs, were under siege.

The roots of these present problems were found in the same historical developments that had affected curriculum thinking and research on teaching, and more recent studies revealed that teacher education programs did struggle to deal with the implications of the new ways of conceptualizing almost everything (Bowers, 1987; Liston and Zeichner, 1991; Smyth, 1987). The work and thinking of educational theorists such as Shulman and Fenstermacher did show a shift toward the need to include teachers' perspectives and practical arguments (Wittrock, 1986), but they were still looking for the certainty of a knowledge base about teaching. Because teacher education had for so long been "conceptualized in hierarchical, patriarchal, technocratic and psychologized terms" (Beyer, p. 19), the dominance of technical rationality, with its disturbing tendency to trivialize the relationship between teacher and learner, was still a major problem (Beyer, 1987; Bowers, 1987).

Even with the crytallizing and extension of Dewey's central ideas about reflection, teachers' thinking and practice in Donald Schōn's influential work about the reflective practitioner (1983), and the great attention and acceptance of the need for reflection as

noted earlier by Tom (1992), researchers had noted the lack of effect of teacher education programs on students (Goodman, 1983; Zeichner and Liston, 1981).

> *The knowledge structures that students confront and the way in which knowledge is communicated to children are largely accepted as natural and right. The school serves as a model for accepted practice... There seems to be little understanding of the socially constructed nature of knowledge or of the school itself, and almost no searching for alternatives...*
>
> (Beyer, 1987, p. 21)

There were probably many reasons why the early hopes for the liberating effects of reflection had been disappointing, not the least of which was the simple factor of time, time for education faculties to absorb and reflect on the meaning of change, time to implement changes in programs, time for preservice teachers, in turn, to absorb, think about, and use the changes, and time for the real collaboration needed among university educators, practitioners, and the students who were expected to bring about change and improvements in the future.

VIEWS ABOUT KNOWLEDGE

The changing views about what knowledge was of most worth were implied in the above examination of changes in research issues. The turning away from reliance only on external, "outside" experts seeking laws and one universal truth to the search for "inside" personal perspectives of actual participants in the interactive processes of teaching and learning had greatly stimulated practitioner research.

> *The present interest in story or narrative may be seen as the expression of an attitude that is critical of knowledge as technical rationality, as scientific formalism, and knowledge as information. Interest in narrativity may express the desire to return to meaningful experiences as encountered in everyday life - not as*

> *a rejection of science, but rather as a method that can deal with concerns that normally fall outside of the reach of "normal" science.*
>
> (Van Manen, 1994, p. 159)

Research about the personal, practical knowledge of teachers (Elbaz, 1983), and research into collaboration of teachers with student teachers (Clandinin, 1993; Feiman-Nemses, 1992) served to legitimate the personal knowledge of teachers in practice and student teachers, and the accounts of that knowledge that were most understandable and memorable were framed in narrative inquiry (Elbaz, 1983; Clandinin, 1986).

Jerome Bruner (1985) referred to narrative knowledge as a legitimate form of reasoned knowing, one of two types of cognition, the other being paradigmatic. Polkinghorne (1995) used this distinction to describe two separate groups of narrative inquiry:

1. *Paradigmatic* - analysis of narratives to produce categories or taxonomies out of common elements across the database (producing knowledge of concepts).
2. *Narrative* - narrative analysis in which events or happenings are gathered to produce explanatory stories (case studies, for example). This narrative produces knowledge of one particular situation.

Both types produced useful knowledge, but the narrative "story" might have had more meaning for student teachers and cooperating teachers who might identify with, and be affected by, the framing of personal events of the final certification year of specific education students.

> *Stories express a kind of knowledge that uniquely describes human experience in which actions and happenings contribute positively and negatively to attaining goals and fulfilling purposes.*
>
> (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 8)

It seemed that the "human experience" was too often missing from the research accounts presented to student teachers and their cooperating teachers. The language and strategies of teacher education were "disconnected from the meaningful experience of our lives" (Clandinin, 1993, p. 2). Clandinin felt that narrative inquiry offered an opportunity for student teachers to "have their personal knowledge become part of a narrative of experience" (p. 6), and to stress the importance of reflection in all its forms: reflection on selves as "knowing, teaching beings" (p. 6), reflection on research, on practice, on students, and their own relationships with them.

To return to Polkinghorne's words, it is hoped that the positive and negative "actions and happenings" in the lives of certification year students, if described fully and coherently, could be examples to explore or signposts to look for, for education students, teachers, schools, and educators in faculties of education.

NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin, in their 1990 article *Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry*, outlined different forms, criteria, and methods of narrative inquiry in educational research. In this, they distinguished "story", the phenomenon, from "narrative inquiry", the method. Student teachers told stories; researchers collected the stories, descriptions, events and relevant data and synthesized all into a narrative of experience.

Just as in all other aspects of teaching, the establishment of a collaborative, trusting environment was all-important. A caring concern for the participants in research was vital, established through careful listening, negotiation of meanings, and attention to mutual construction of the stories.

Connelly and Clandinin recommended a variety of forms of data collection such as autobiography, interviews, journals, field notes, assignments. They referred to several narrative criteria, with ones most applicable to a one-academic year study being:

1. noting of change or development from beginning to end
2. plausibility
3. authenticity

They also cautioned against the illusion of causality in describing events linked in time but not necessarily examples of cause and effect.

The narrative elements of plot and scene were depicted as time and place. Time was given the usual past/present/future treatment with "significance" attached to the past, "value" to the present, and "intention" to the future. Place or scene was recommended to be described as fully as possible, to render the "lived experience" aspect.

RISKS OR PROBLEMS

Ivor Goodson (1995) notes that personal stories needed to be used with care to avoid such things as the disturbing trend in the media to use human interest stories in a sensational way, sometimes at the expense of silencing or trivializing more serious issues. He asked that stories not become ends in themselves, but that they should be interrogated and analyzed. In this way they might be used as a starting point to understand the "deep social structure and embedded milieu of schooling" (Goodson, 1995, p. 97).

Connelly and Clandinin also admitted there might be problems, such as being too subjective, or succumbing to the "Hollywood plot" of having everything turn out all right when there were anomalies and contradictions apparent. Their advice was to be honest

and declare openly the biases, choices, and possible alternatives. (This was assuming that the subjectivity or "skewing" was apparent to the researcher.)

Even with possible weaknesses, narrative inquiry promised a method for furthering understanding of how teachers, learners, and student teachers made sense of their lives together in the classroom, creating new stories as "curriculum makers" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 12).

CHAPTER THREE: Research Design

a) General Method

The research design was a narrative inquiry, or the description and analysis of development in a number of selected preservice teachers' thinking, beliefs, and practice during their final certification year.

Recent interest on the part of educational theorists about the use of narrative inquiry was exemplified in these quotations:

> *... the process of forming a teacher identity is one of negotiation of meanings among persons in context...*
>
> (Bullough and Stokes, 1995)

> *... the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways.*
>
> (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990)

> *The purpose of narrative analysis is not simply to produce a reproduction of observations; rather, it is to provide a dynamic framework in which the range of disconnected data elements are made to cohere in an interesting and explanatory way.*
>
> (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 20)

b) Procedures and Research Population

1. I requested and received permission to conduct the research from the Faculty of Education's Research and Ethics Committee.
2. I prepared a brief outline of the purpose of the study, the expected time lines for interviews, and explained about other possible sources of data that might be

requested, such as journals, copies of assignments related to study, portfolio choices. This outline accompanied my request for participation in the study.

3. In October, 1995, I obtained class lists of students enrolled in certification year in Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba. I selected students from various programs and arranged to interview them.

c) **Collection of Data**

1. In October and November, 1995, the initial interview was held, using very open-ended questions (see Appendix 'A'). I requested students consider documents to be provided to me after first term. The selection was their choice.
2. November 15 - December, 1995 - The field notes of observations in school were written, where applicable. Because of various reasons, such as the abbreviated practicum and students' illness, not all students in the study were observed in first term.
3. In January and February, 1996, informal conversations and collection of documents took place.
4. March/April, 1996 - In the final practicum, all students remaining in the study were observed; field notes were written.
5. In May and June, 1996, final journals and portfolios were collected and recorded, and the final interview took place.

d) Treatment of the Data

The interviews, journals, and field notes were ordered chronologically at first, in order to discern, from a "beginning to end" description of the academic and experiential final year, any developmental changes in beliefs and practices of each student.

The sets of data were examined for time elements of "past" significance, "present" value, and "future" intentions. Of special significance were the natural language and images discerned in the students' own words in transcripts and journals, and references to rules and principles of practice, and images:

1. Self-identity as a teacher (the student teacher's own voice).
   Images of good teaching.
2. Interaction with others (voices of fellow students, cooperating teachers, classroom students, faculty advisors).
3. The voice of theory and university course work.

The research participants who completed the study were given the opportunity to read and respond to the narrative account of their final year. The data that was chosen and treated as significant was selected on the basis of patterns in the language, such as repetitions in various interviews or in different documents. Additional inferences were made from tone of voice, body language, and other indicators of emotional intensity. Not all of the data collected was used in the narrative structure; particularly effective or "telling" events and actions, or reflections, were selected to fit the holistic framing of

the narrative. I have included a commentary chapter in which similarities and differences among the students' narratives were noted (Polkinghorne, 1995).

e) Summary

Teacher educators often asked student teachers to consider the prior knowledge, beliefs and understanding of the learners they encountered in schools. It seemed only fair then to begin to consider the same for the student teachers themselves. As learners in a complex, ambiguous, and multifaceted environment, they needed to be listened to in a way that captured some of that complexity and ambiguity. I hoped that a narrative inquiry focusing on students' coping with the demanding tasks of certification year would shed some light on what discouraged or allowed positive development of preservice teachers.

CHAPTER FOUR: Context of the Study

> *Conflict, tension... battles over turf - seem to be an inevitable part of the change process.*
>
> (Ann Lieberman in Grimmett - 1994 - p. 25)

> *The task of program development is a continuous one and even as the proposals of this Report are debated, further developments are taking place that will require the Faculty to continuously modify and update the program.*
>
> (TITEP, 1993, p. 52)

In response to Manitoba's program reviews in the late 1980s, a Task Force on Initial Teacher Education Programs (TITEP) was established. This group reported in 1993, just as a new Dean of Education, Dr. Judith Newman, arrived. Because the report recommended significant changes, there was understandably a period of delay and further debate. However, the conjunction of two major changes (new institutional leadership and program restructuring implicit in the TITEP report) meant a significant increase in tensions and polarization of perspectives in an institution already beset by major shifts in the political and economic environment.

The Manitoba political environment contained trends found throughout Canada and elsewhere. Economic instability and downsizing had led to a variety of related changes, such as: a cry for balanced budgets; funding cuts; and streamlining of public institutions. Ultimately, federal and provincial decreases in funding for post-secondary education meant that the Faculty of Education's budget was drastically reduced.

Thus, with major changes on the horizon (after the 1993 report) but not yet implemented, as well as the cutback of funds leading to instability and stresses in the

workplace, the strains on Faculty staff members were great. These strains, as well as wide philosophical differences within and between departments, culminated in a deep rift between some Faculty members and Dean Newman, ultimately leading to her early resignation in January, 1996. Because her resignation was not effective until June, 1996, there was a time of ambiguity and further strained relations affecting staff throughout the remainder of the academic year.

Compounding these tensions (and also partly affected by financial cutbacks), the University of Manitoba's Faculty Association called a strike on October 18, 1995. The strike lasted three weeks (relatively long for a university strike). In general, the public seemed not completely sympathetic, since many people in the economic climate described were facing cutbacks and layoffs, unprotected by tenure. On the other hand, the Faculty Association countered that the real issue was academic freedom, since the university administration sought matters of control that were unacceptable to Association members. Both sides became entrenched; the strike dragged on.

Education students and teaching staffs in schools had mixed feelings but became more frustrated as the strike continued. Depending on which stream or program the certifying students belonged to, some students were strongly affected, having no instruction in the three weeks just before the first major practicum of the final year. However, other students, such as the early years group, were already in the schools in an early start to their practicum, and continued working under the supervision of cooperating teachers or sessional staff.

Cutbacks and political pressures were also affecting practitioners in the field, as the provincial Department of Education proposed reductions of teachers' starting salaries, curtailing of increments for extra training, and removal of the system of contract negotiation and arbitration that had worked well for forty years.

> *The last thing this province needs is a policy that will scare away young people from the teaching profession ... Yanking away financial incentives to enhance teachers' education makes no sense either. It would be an odd irony if the professionals who educate children were told that their own supplementary education has no value. Teachers who staff the front lines of the education system deserve better treatment.*
>
> (Editorial "Targeting Teachers", February 5, 1996)

In all, then, a number of external and internal factors combined in academic year 1995-96 to place extraordinary pressures on both students and staff at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.

Having said this, it must be noted that a number of initiatives in program development continued throughout the year. For example, committees for the pilot projects in early years, middle years, and senior years carried on with administration of current programs while also receiving and organizing feedback to continue the processes of modification and renewal.

The early years group, by 1995, had had the longest history of sustained, coherent philosophical underpinnings for their integrated program of theory and practice (Status Report, TITEP, 1993, p. 135-143).

The middle years program began with their first pilot group in 1994, after recommendations from TITEP (1993) and Faculty planning. The program emphasis is on

early adolescent development, interpersonal relations, and broad curriculum areas of study.

The senior years pilot project has increased the field experience time allotment and has made progress in developing relationships and strong connections with partner schools, where school staff collaborate with university faculty to provide professional seminars on current topics. Students are encouraged and supported in professional development, especially in the creation of personal portfolios. Portfolios are developed in the other programs as well. Other senior years groups are also being run, with varying requirements, for field experience and professional development (Working Paper on Reform of Teacher Education, 1996).

CHAPTER FIVE: Case Studies

ANNA

Of all the research participants, Anna was the only student I did not know at the beginning of the study. From class lists, I had selected the other students according to names I recognized from previous undergraduate seminars. Anna was picked from a list of volunteers, a list provided to me by a professor from the Early Years Program.

ANNA'S EARLY YEARS

In the first interview, Anna was friendly and relaxed, easily discussing the early influences in her educational life because she had already been working on her own personal narrative, "Science in My Life" assignment for university course work. Her description of her own "early years" reveals clearly the genesis of her questioning, thoughtful, observant stance toward her world, then and now.

> *I think I have always been curious. Much of my curiosity was focused on the natural world... I remember lying on our front lawn, looking up at the sky imagining... I remember going on road trips asking my parents endless questions... they were my first mentors.*
>
> (February 9, 1996, p. 2)

Anna remembered the enjoyment she had in play in kindergarten, and "if teachers somehow recognized me". Looking back, she realized that, although she "always did well" in school and remembered "successes", she also had areas of concern, such as oral reading, mathematics and science.

> *I got so hooked on reading the words to sound right and not reading for real comprehension... that affected me and slowed me down. (Howard) Gardner talks about different learners. And I*

truly believe I'm one of those academic learners who can follow the system and can play the game to get by well... but does not have a good understanding of what I've actually been tested on.

(November 24, 1995, p. 5)

In trying to recover science memories, Anna noticed a disjunction between her home's acceptance of, and the school's reaction to her questions.

I'm a very curious person... and the difficulty I was having was matching my curiosity to the teacher's idea of what science was, and we had such different ideas of what science is.

(November 24, 1995, p. 1)

Grade four science was a time of "conflict", and was "stressful" because most of the time was spent writing up experiments. "I always had difficulty writing... in the required, step-by-step method" (February 9, 1996, p. 2).

In the present, after reading about different ways of thinking and differing learning styles, Anna recognized her difficulty as possibly an "early example of how a random thinker responds to a sequential act" (p. 2).

Grade seven involved "hands-on science", with personal observations and analysis, field trips, and explorations of environments, both natural and celestial, all of which Anna "really enjoyed". The stimulation was short-lived, however, because science in the remaining junior high years meant "the lab coat", "structure", "a textbook", a "worksheet" and experiments. Anna commented "The minute I had to put on a lab coat, like a cat, the hairs on the back of my neck stood up" (p. 2). In high school, Anna's choice of courses such as chemistry and physics depended mainly on what other people in her life declared to be helpful or useful for university, or "to get ahead in the world". Even though her real

interest was in biology, she didn't study it "because I was told it wouldn't be useful... I still struggle with that decision".

Anna gave heartfelt praise to all her teachers, but especially to her high school Social Studies teachers.

> *The people who made the greatest impact on my life... all of those teachers really cared... that's when I started to develop my political beliefs and philosophical beliefs that continue today... the fact that I was recognized as a person who had ideas and theories, and that they were valid, was very important.*
>
> (November 24, 1995, p. 6)

Unfortunately, the interest in the social sciences sparked by these teachers was soon to be tempered by experiences at university.

UNIVERSITY AND WORK

Enrolling in basic arts at university meant that Anna had to take one required science course. She dropped physical geography, a "lab coat" class, and was very happy to study the history of science instead. Here, the scientific person, the society, and all the influences on theory were "on a continuum... I could see the whole picture... it made a lot of sense to me" (November 24, 1995, p. 2). However, content alone did not mean good connections for Anna; she also realized how important teaching style was. After great interest in social studies in high school, she found political science at university disappointing and "dry"; "it didn't matter what you thought". The personal interactions with the teachers and the subject matter were of utmost importance to Anna, and with a strong interest in art and a love of history, she found her place in art history studies.

Following graduation and after advice from friends, Anna worked in pharmaceutical sales and marketing for four years, and did very well, by external standards. Within herself, however, Anna felt the job was "unmotivating" and not right for her.

> *I would not trade this experience for any amount of money. It taught me that in order for my life to have meaning, I needed to be passionate about what really mattered to me. I am a better teacher today because I discovered what I am and what I am not.*
>
> (February 9, 1996, p. 3)

This search for meaning had been, and would continue to be, a common thread throughout Anna's own educational experiences. Gradually, parallel to finding meaning for self, and through better understanding of her own learning, Anna began the educational shift to the search for ways to stimulate and allow opportunities for meaningful learning for others, her students.

CERTIFICATION YEAR: First Half

Anna strongly credited the Early Years Program, its goals, preparation, assignments and educators for helping her to uncover the ideals embedded in her own life's story, to understand the background of her mathematics-science anxiety, as well as to stimulate questions for further study.

> *Because I was able to learn more about myself, that has empowered me to find out more about how to do things right... Going back to do this narrative has made me write down what my questions are... I'm trying to discover alternative ways of integrating science in my classroom.*
>
> (November 24, 1995, p. 3)

Anna found some of the assignments challenging. The personal narrative was "not easy" and the community exploration (a joint project of science and social studies) made

her at first "unsure", "troubled", and in a state of "disequilibrium". At one level, she admits, going through these experiences "made me much more sensitive to the difficulties children face in new learning situations". At another level, the readings, writing, dialogue with faculty members, and collaboration with peers, while leading to initial doubts and confusion, began to open up deeper levels of awareness of the complexity and inter-connectedness of learning.

> *I began to see the value of questions. For every new observation I had, I found a new question to be answered. I was now starting to think in terms of processes and principles...*
>
> (February 9, 1996, p. 5)

In creative images, Anna referred to "exploring the mental habitat of the naturalist", and her desire to help her students "get caught up in the wonder and magic of the natural world and... get their perceptual juices flowing" (p. 5). As she came to terms with her own anxiety as an adult learner, she realized that the science processes she had been so worried about (with respect to teaching) were either already part of her own repertoire, or were ones that she could train herself to use, now that her own self-confidence as a learner was restored.

PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE

Since the first interview with Anna took place near the end of term one, following course work and the five-week practicum, Anna's thinking was centered on questions about, and reformulations of, principles of theory and patterns of practice.

> *I'm struggling with the whole idea of science in the Early Years classroom... where science fits... I'm looking at a constructivist view... and I'm just starting the readings... I'd like to focus on*

observation skills. It's a multiple way of seeing the world and there's a way to train yourself to see everything around you in a new way.

(November 24, 1995, p. 4)

Anna revealed how thinking about her own experience as a learner helped her to connect with and begin to understand the constructivist approach, with its emphasis on the learners' own thinking and needs and on providing opportunities to construct personal meanings from experience.

Children have a different conception of what science is and the meanings behind scientific words than teachers do... There is a discrepancy... and that's exactly what happened to me.

(November 24, 1995, p. 4)

She also remembered her own curiosity, her propensity to ask questions, and her frustration with schools' demands for predetermined topics and sequential structures.

There's got to be another way to learn science... to tap into children's natural curiosity and to provide them with the tools to discover and answer their own questions... because they do have their own questions. I believe in a negotiated curriculum... I believe that you need balance, and I'm not sure what the components are.

(November 24, 1995, p. 4)

After the initial catalysts of reflection about theory, dialogue with others, and her own narrative inquiry, Anna's five-week placement with a well-respected, experienced early years cooperating teacher in a central Winnipeg grade two classroom "with a lot of needy children" again raised a series of questions for her.

With the help of her students and her cooperating teacher, she realized that although her classroom was not explicitly structured every day with specific subject matter lessons

(such as science), "we do do science-related" things such as a trip to Fort Whyte's wildlife sanctuary with students observing, talking about animals, and writing.

> *We do science in an everyday way. We have choice time where the kids are allowed to explore what they want to. And I think that's very valid.*
>
> (November 24, 1995, p. 7)

Also, Anna wanted to try out the concepts of negotiated curriculum and community exploration that she had enjoyed so much at the university. However, she began to realize that her own experience as an adult learner could not be translated directly into a meaningful research experience for the children in her classroom.

An attempt to negotiate curriculum with a small group of students who expressed an interest in dolphins ultimately fizzled out, and Anna was concerned and ambivalent. She thought maybe she would have to become more teacher-directed.

> *I thought it's important that we have closure, but maybe that's not what was needed... It was only through initiating the kids to go that step further in a small group setting that I realized that I needed to think much more deeply about those kinds of things.*
>
> (November 24, 1995, p. 9)

Typically, Anna's difficulties led to further questions, readings, and dialogue with her cooperating teacher, the resource teacher at the school, and her university professors, about how to develop alternative ways of integrating science in her classroom and how to attend more closely to the learner in negotiating the curriculum. From having had this opportunity to try out ideas with real students, Anna faced her own doubts and concluded, "What I have learned is that I have to know who my learner is in my classroom" (p. 9). She realized that she needed to focus on the characteristics of young children, their skill

development, and what's the best way to connect those skills to meaningful learning. In discussing use of themes, integration of subject areas and the role of technology, Anna revealed her uncertainty, combined with strong commitment to the students, while she grappled with theory and the self-questioning arising from dilemmas of the practicum.

> *I'm in a placement that is very language arts based... the children are highly motivated. In choice time, they do a lot of open art activities... There's an art centre every day that they can go to... It's always full of people. I'm not pushing myself to be working in that discipline because I know that I can do it. The areas I'm pushing myself in the classroom are the areas I'm unsure of... I haven't found my balance yet. I believe that theory drives teaching... or that theory drives the way you choose to do your activities. And if I'm confused about my theory, then I'm confused about the activities that I'm planning, because everything should be in context and planned in a meaningful way.*
>
> (November 24, 1995, p. 10)

Throughout the first interview, Anna described her early and present experiences with deep intensity, thoughtfully presenting underlying principles of teaching and learning and interconnections that were beginning to emerge more clearly. At no point did she mention classroom management concerns, or specific rules of practice that are often uppermost in the minds of certifying student teachers, even though the children attending her large school were "very needy", with a full time counsellor and "our own resource teacher for grade two". Obviously, the placement with a role model of an early years specialist helped Anna see a community of learners in action, and her full interaction with that community had resulted in positive struggles, growth, and renewed commitment to the goal of her search for meaning.

> *I thought I would have the answers by this point... but I just have new questions. I struggle... but, you know teachers are*

> *researchers. I believe that entirely... If you want predictability, you will not find it in the teaching profession.*
>
> (November 24, 1995, p. 9)

DOCUMENTS

Before the final practicum, Anna completed her science narrative, I documented one observation of her classroom during her practicum, and Anna also wrote a report on technology education. From these three aspects of Anna's experience emerges a clearer picture of Anna's beliefs and goals near the end of her certifying year.

By now, instead of worrying that science was not given a specific time-tabled slot, Anna realized the value of reading and writing to make sense of information, with the scientific process skills of observation, experimentation, and communication skills development taking place through reading and play.

> *My cooperating teacher values learning through play. She believes children develop knowledge by being encouraged to explore, to express themselves, and to learn by doing... science education is a celebration of children's freedom to search for their scientific spirits and be able to come up with individual solutions to their own questions.*
>
> *At first, the materials and equipment (sand, water, blocks, art, drama centres) around the classroom provide all the structure the children need. Later, as an observant teacher, she provides expanding opportunities for children to learn from their own actions and observations as well as from being told or showed natural phenomena that surround them.*
>
> *She is a master at knowing how to intervene, rather than interrupt learning, with appropriate comments and questions. I consider it an honour to work with my cooperating teacher. I too value science learning through play.*
>
> (February 9, 1996, p. 7,8)

Other beliefs articulated by Anna included the need to connect science to the lives and interests of the students, the need to allow students freedom to explore, to take risks, the need to help students gather and organize ideas, to develop "curiosity, perseverance, and open-mindedness". Also very important to Anna was creating "a supportive climate" for work and learning, where students did not always look to others as experts, but saw themselves as "capable of constructing answers", and willing to work together as a community.

> *Writing my story has helped me generate knowledge. My convictions now encompass broader perspectives. I look in terms of principles rather than rules. I value both process and product... It has helped me take responsibility in directing my teaching life.*
>
> (February 9, 1996, p. 12)

In my own observation of Anna on March 13, 1996, I saw a poised, confident, warm teacher totally focused on her students, helping them make choices and decisions about their learning. The cooperating teacher was absent, a substitute teacher attended, but Anna and the students were completely relaxed and intent on their own activities. Inside the room, on walls and display cases and hanging from "clotheslines", as well as outside in the halls, there was much evidence of the classroom's activities and learning. Blow-ups of historic photographs on two walls emphasized the pioneer theme, and artifacts were grouped on a table nearby. One activity centre was set up with quill pens and ink for writing or drawing. A book display featured a wide variety of books, many on the pioneer theme, as well.

The classroom was self-regulated with only a few signals from Anna, and seemed to follow routine patterns smoothly, such as the opening with notebooks and "meeting-time"

to share their writings, and gathering for praise and closure before going outside for recess.

The children moved confidently and eagerly to choices of activities and separated into groups or pairs to play with large building blocks, pattern blocks, computers, quill writing, play figures, and later, the water table, and the beginning of construction of large cardboard "log" houses for their pioneer village. After recess, Anna read a story, *Dance at Grandpa's*, (also with a pioneer theme), and discussed elements in illustrations and story details that connected with the theme.

There was a busy hum of activity and discussion in the room, with very little sign of tension or conflict. One small disagreement between two boys meant separation and a brief time-out within the class, but was handled calmly by Anna. For the most part, the students had been encouraged to mediate their own problems, and to negotiate patterns of cooperation. Anna said she and her teacher used the motto of "You can't say 'you can't play'" based on ideas of Vivian Paley (conversation, March 13, 1996). The only other rule I saw being used was the reminder to students to clean up the area they were playing in before going to the next. Anna circulated, talking and listening as she watched and questioned the students with obviously genuine interest.

In her assignment on technology education, Anna talked about the final product of the pioneer life inquiry.

> *A wonderful pioneer village was built all out of the children's initiative. It started out with one child's amazing log cabin and blossomed into a village with a background mural, general stores, barns, and at least seven log cabins. The children were just making plasticine people and furnishings before Spring Break.*
>
> (March 1996)

Later, in the final interview, Anna proudly showed photographs of the class attending the museum, the pioneer classroom, "This is what started everything", and then the finished village, "This is how it turned out".

> *That was such an epiphany for me, because it took one student's interest and... a learning environment that supported that kind of flexibility to happen, across time, across space, across subject areas... For two days we spent time on constructing our pioneer village...*
>
> *I'd been reading about self-initiated inquiry but this is happening in front of my eyes... I was in the background and they really were taking the lead... That reinforced everything that I believed.*
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 3)

The only regret Anna had was the lack of time for debriefing with the students, as the project was still in progress when her block time in the school ended. She set herself a new goal for inquiries with future students: "Now my job is to collaborate more with the students" so that all of us can recognize more fully "what kinds of things they learned" (p. 4).

EMANCIPATION

> *This whole year has been about authentic learning and teaching and assessing that in authentic ways.*
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 10)

In contrast to the serious, sometimes hesitant, often questioning student of the first term interview, I faced a confident, positive radiant young woman in May 1996. She was eager to share information about her completed portfolio which she and a fellow student had been asked to present and discuss at a professional development meeting in Seven Oaks School Division in Winnipeg.

> *In December, I was just starting to realize what kind of journey I was on as a learner and a teacher... For years I had been trying to please others... Feeling safe enough to take some risks allowed me to discover that I had ideas, thoughts and values. The Faculty (of Education) listened, honoured and respected, not only my voice, but those around me. I began to delve deeper into my inquiries and take full responsibility for my learning... This essentially is my underlying story, being free now to think for myself and to be valued.*
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 1)

For the above reasons, Anna titled her portfolio "Emancipation Through Critical Inquiry: personal evolution and learning/teaching in curriculum". The portfolio's cover and layout provided testimony of Anna's artistic creativity, and the contents embodied Anna's educational philosophy, starting with a conceptual framework encompassing her views of knowledge, community, curriculum and evaluation.

> *I then looked at my disciplines, because I believed that all inquiries in early years start with an inquiry in social studies or science. And then you learn through those disciplines (art, drama, music, movement and language arts) to get at those inquiries... They're all integrated in here.*
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 2)

Throughout, Anna included examples of students' work, photographs, and references to significant readings and theories. The way Anna organized her portfolio ("because this is the way I think") parallelled the way she had dug underneath the surface activities of an interactive classroom to find the deep central issues and recurring motifs in the complex reality of teaching, and had not committed herself to collecting activities and separate strategies without understanding first where they would fit into her own "big picture".

> *If I didn't start with the big picture, my activities would be meaningless, because my central focus is to make sure that the learner's voice is honoured and respected and plays a central role.*
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 11)

From that central focus, however, Anna does not leave her thinking in broad generalities. "Now I have to find the structures in my classroom to facilitate" the students' learning, and "I still believe we need to be explicit about the processes we're using", are but two examples of her thinking, as Anna refers to such "interwoven" processes as observation, analysis, and problem solving that can be used, but always starting with the learner's inquiry.

True to form, at the end of the academic year, Anna was still inquiring, investigating such topics as a science workshop approach (after reading Wendy Saul's book); "I'm still continuing my dialogue" (p. 8) and feels she is on the "right track" in attending to science and the "whole learner", in much the same way as a writer's workshop is run.

LOOKING BACK

Anna considered her portfolio more as a "progress" or "process" folio, emphasizing her belief in learning as something not linear, not even cyclical, but "continuous".

> *The 'science in my life', that was really my first time that I had to formally synthesize my ideas, and from that, it's grown into this.*
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 10)

In the first draft of the 'science in my life' assignment (September 21, 1995), Anna used a travel image in the title *My Journey in Science Education.* In the final interview (May 6, 1996), she also referred to her "journey" as a learner and a teacher, and left the way open for further places to discover, as she describes the latest books and practice that

were still informing and guiding her thinking. The portfolio was her evidence of her continuing journey, a process, not a destination. Implied in the image of the journey was a quest, an inquiry, a search for something, and for Anna, the questions and struggle involved in the certification year were constantly geared toward a search for meaning, authentic meaning for herself and the learners whom she accompanied on their individual journeys.

MEANING: "A Living Example"

> *This Faculty has been so important in challenging my thinking and making me look at things different ways, and through conversations, through collaboration with others, I'm a living example of this whole inquiry* process.
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 8)

I attended the professional development meeting at which Anna and a fellow student clearly and with conviction described the "powerful experience" of engaging in inquiry and building a portfolio that portrayed authentic assessment of their own learning. They acknowledged that it took a great deal of time and was hard to do, because it was more than "just documenting experience".

They were challenged to go deeper into finding meaning behind their experience, "whether it actually improves or changes the way you teach", or what it means to "the way you perceive learning".

Anna referred to an example of collaboration with the Faculty about her portfolio in December 1995, when these "friends, colleagues, mentors" helped deepen her understandings. "They challenged my conceptions of evaluation... a cute 'stars and wishes' page my kids were using" (p. 11). By confronting Anna about something that did not fully involve the learner and was not flexible to the needs and interests of the students,

her mentors "drove" her to seek out different ways of assessing. Challenges such as this really made Anna focus on the learner and the learner's voice, and as she came to appreciate the respect for her own "learner's voice", she realized that that role modeling could be extended to the "learners' voices" among all of her future students, as she looked for what counts as evidence of learning.

Anna showed an intuitive understanding of narrative inquiry by ending our last interview not just with a look back, but with a concerned look ahead. Again, she was focused on a question of meaning, on what would happen in a "big push for standardized testing for accountability and responsibility" (May 6, 1996, p. 13). She did think that accountability and responsibility were vitally important, but "the person who needs to be involved in this is the student, the learner", not just some "outside" body (p. 13).

In words echoing her past aversion to "lab coat" procedures and sequential, controlled thinking, Anna stated how "nervous" she was about the "push" to find some kind of continuum for everything.

> *That means that someone else is taking the responsibility for the learning of my kids.*
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 13)

She felt strongly that learning is not standardized, does not fit into boxes, checklists, and very linear continuums or rubrics, but that learning can be intentional, it can be observed, and the learners themselves can be a part of that process.

When asked how she would handle a move toward "centralized" learning and outcomes, Anna was undecided but laughingly quoted advice from an unknown source, "You have to be subversive".

She felt that although many people agree with her about children's learning, "their voices are not heard".

Assessment and evaluation were key issues to Anna, and especially in the present climate of calls for accountability, she hoped teachers will continue to take responsibility for their classrooms and not rely on someone else telling them how learning takes place. Perhaps Anna's case was an example of a happy coincidence of an excellent cooperating teacher, compatibility with faculty advisors and educators, and productive collaborative peer interaction. Perhaps Anna was an outstanding student who would have been successful regardless of external factors. In any case, the power of her own vision and the influences she described have great potential for study to uncover and appreciate their origins. Her case can be an example approaching an ideal of what is possible in teacher education.

> *We need to value teaching... We need to give teachers power and responsibility to make those kinds of decisions in their classrooms.*
>
> (May 6, 1996, p. 16)

KATE

Kate entered the Faculty's Four Year program in 1992, after graduation from high school. She was a positive, confident member of my seminar group for her second year placement, and participated fully in discussions in seminars and in school activities with students, providing strong connections for them in art and drama. In certification year, Kate opted for the interdisciplinary Early Years Program.

> *The program is different from the regular elementary stream in that it focuses more on child-centered learning... The focus is not teaching us how to teach... but actually on learning.*
>
> (November 17, 1995, p. 1)

EARLY INFLUENCES

From discussions in the first interview about early educational influences, Kate appeared to be from a close-knit, supportive family. Although the family had moved fairly often during her life (since she attended schools in Germany and Ontario before coming to Manitoba), Kate was outgoing, personable, and full of initiative in seeking out new experiences; she had learned to adjust well to changing situations.

Kate specifically credited family influences for stimulating her love of music and art. Her mother and other relatives once performed on stage in England, her sister was a dance instructor, and Kate characterized her mother as "very artistic"; music, dance and art "have brought much joy to my life... and are reflected now in a lot of the things I want to do in the classroom" (November 17, 1995, p. 4).

Within the first interview, Kate explained her perspective on her own schooling. "I was a pretty successful student... always knew the teacher's expectations" (p. 4). School was traditional, with "rows", "everything really neat", and no "choice time" (p. 2). In art, Kate remembered being able to duplicate a picture easily, and creating Christmas craft "treasures" saved by her family.

In the primary grades, while with her family in Europe, Kate remembered a school camping trip in the Black Forest of Germany, and a trip to an historic village there. Kate feels that the "history, beauty and workmanship" encountered in these early travels helped foster her love of social studies.

Back in Canada, in the middle years of schooling, one teacher stimulated some interest with nature walks and a science experiment to insulate ice cubes, but Kate mainly

remembered copying notes, until a junior high teacher inspired her to set her goal to be a social studies teacher. She enjoyed the group work and relative freedom allowed to do research and present information in a variety of ways, such as the mock trial of an historical figure. She began to realize the power of active, personal involvement in learning.

High school, for Kate, meant "good marks", responsibility and caring, "I was always wanting to help people", peer counselor's training for her own level, as well as specialized training for help and mentoring of junior high school and mentally challenged students.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

In university, for the most part, Kate did not enjoy the Arts courses she took. The history texts did not interest her, and she did not read beyond the requirements. Undergraduate seminars in school experience were enjoyed, especially in the first year, but by the third year, were not helpful and repetitive, although Kate acknowledged that, for that particular group, "when there was time to talk, nobody wanted to" (p. 11).

Before certification year, Kate enrolled in a two-week long Early Years Summer Institute, an immersion in art, music, drama and language arts combined, and found that it was an excellent preview of the year. She struggled with the concept of the portfolio, "I was pulling my hair out", not knowing what was wanted in it; she also realized that, by the end of her final year, her own personal enjoyment of, and ease within, some areas of the creative arts, would not necessarily translate directly into ease of teaching and learning with children in ways best suited for them.

As I reflect upon my approach to these disciplines early in my education career, I realize that I didn't know as much as I thought I did. I still have a lot to learn...

(Portfolio Overview, April 18, 1996)

In the first interview about certification year, from the vantage point of just finishing the first five-week practicum, and after initial university course work, Kate was positive and upbeat. There was a close "family" relationship among the students in the class, who felt free to contact each other by phone, and who met socially as a group during the term. Now, in contrast to the regular elementary program, the Early Years group, at the end of term and before Christmas break, was preparing to resume university courses, "sharing ideas and experiences" and developing portfolios about learning, their own as well as their students in their placements. Kate was beginning to realize the scope of the Early Years approach, as well as some potential problems with her cooperating teacher coming to the surface.

Everything is totally different than when I was in elementary school. I think it's preparing us a lot more than... if I had gone to the regular (elementary) program... I'm really glad I took it.

(The teacher) wants to break out of that (regular pattern)... we're working together... but I have to explain it and give ideas because sometimes I don't always agree with (her).

(November 17, 1995, p. 2)

Kate appreciated the close connections in course work between theory and the practical knowledge of co-instructors, classroom teachers who brought slides, examples, and specific curriculum work such as mathematics puzzles and other projects to examine. She and fellow students were aware of the irony of sitting for two hours talking about

"hands on, doing, doing", while "taking notes, notes, notes" (p. 12). However, the course work was worthwhile, Kate admitted.

> *I think I don't need C and I (curriculum and instruction) courses, but when I think about it, I am learning in them and so I do need them... I find myself bringing ideas into the classroom.*
>
> (November 18, 1995, p. 13)

Kate also realized she was behind in her readings for the courses, as well as in her journal writing, and mildly complained "we do get journaled out" by the number of different requirements for journal writing. However, there was also awareness of her own complicity in this problem. "I still procrastinate" and her part-time job during the practicum meant she was "going right from the school to work".

> *You sit back and reflect in your own way but you don't bother to write it down, which I should... to show evidence that you're learning.*
>
> (Journal, p. 13)

A partial interpretation of educational and personal influences shaping Kate's philosophy revealed a combination of traditional approaches to teaching and learning, a generous, "always helping" nature, and a pragmatic approach.

> *I wouldn't pass up taking the Early Years Program... that's what School Divisions are looking for now...*
>
> (Journal, p. 14)

There seemed to be some uncertainty in Kate's understanding of the goals of the program, as she admitted, "There are times when I think there could be more structure..." (p. 14) but she also wanted students to have an opportunity to play, to have more freedom. In acknowledging the need to complete more readings and journal writings,

Kate seemed to be resisting full engagement with the underlying tenets of the program's philosophy at this point.

Perhaps, however, the main reason for Kate's confusion lay with problems within the school placement. Her cooperating teacher, a resource teacher for many years, was just beginning to handle the complexity of a two-grade, multicultural classroom, with a number of students from needy social and economic backgrounds. Although she was friendly with Kate and said she wanted to try the new approaches, the changes in practice (or support for Kate's changes) did not come about, or if they did, not for long enough to make a real difference for the students or for Kate. There was little or no opportunity for Kate to engage in authentic dialogue about new approaches, or to see in action the interdisciplinary, inquiry-based, developmental, and learner-centered ideals espoused by the Early Years Program.

FIRST PRACTICUM

Kate confessed that, from the beginning of the year, she was "really worried" about her placement, especially when her cooperating teacher commented (prophetically) that she might find it hard to "give up the reins". Gradually, however, the teacher began accepting more of Kate's ideas, and some strategies suggested for inquiry-based learning were implemented: a community exploration to a nearby bakery featuring Portuguese specialties, theme work on space, a trip to the Planetarium and its Touch the Universe Program for children. Yet the learning potential for both Kate and the students was somewhat compromised by two things: a general set of problems with classroom

management, and seeming contradictions or mixed messages in the curriculum approaches handled by Kate and the classroom teacher together.

For example, Kate explained that one strategy that "my teacher wanted to try", with Kate's help, was the setting up of a weekly list of expected tasks to do, and having the students be responsible for completing and recording "jobs" or tasks in a book; then they could "play". As Kate noted, the plan was successful only for the self-motivated students, not for the ones who needed stimulation to complete their work. The underlying assumption that jobs or work in mathematics, art or writing were completely separate from "play", (and therefore not as enjoyable), seemed to lessen the effect of the attempt to build responsibility and increase motivation in the students. Surprisingly, Kate did not explicitly connect the problems with misbehaviour or with general classroom management to the lack of opportunities for students to pursue their interests and be involved in activities integrating different ways of knowing. Again, the effect of being in an environment that did not fully support the theories and practice of teacher education prevented a more questioning stance and increased understanding for Kate at this early stage in the final year.

However, Kate did note some areas that she felt could have improved the situation in the classroom, revealing a beginning sense of the rules and principles of practice that are encompassed within a teacher's personal practical knowledge (Elbaz, 1983).

> *One thing that needs to be established in my classroom is routine... Just in the sense that they come in every day and they know what's expected of them so they're not wandering all over... I'd maybe have them write in their journal... so the day starts off right.*
>
> (November 17, 1995, p. 17)

Other important principles for Kate included the need to include students where possible in decision-making, and the need to encourage visual displays and aesthetic arrangements to bring an added artistic dimension to the classroom. In the first week of school with the teacher (before students arrived), Kate offered to prepare welcoming bulletin boards, because the teacher "hadn't thought of that", and then continued to work on them with changing themes after school started. She soon decided to include the students.

> *For Halloween, we sat down and discussed what we wanted and everybody took a job, and it turned out really neat. The new unit is space... we're hanging papier maché planets from the ceiling... It's important to have an enriched environment, pictures, different stimuli, other classrooms (in the school) made me cry, they're so dark and dull with nothing on the walls.*
>
> (November 17, 1995, p. 19)

The inclusion of students' decisions, as well as the validation of students' work and ideas through sharing and displays, were now an important part of Kate's repertoire, but the elements of the extent of teacher direction in learning, and the complex understanding of the integrated approach to learning in the early years were still problematic. While discussing implementation of her suggested "space community" theme combining elements of Science and Social Studies, Kate noted ideas such as the writing of astronaut logs, "space" music and stories, a simulated shuttle take-off and a field trip to the Planetarium (taking place a few days after this interview).

> *I'm going to make up activity expectations in booklet form and then once these activities are done, they can play around with different things, but I wanted them to actually learn something, not just go and play...*
>
> (November 17, 1995, p. 23)

Here, the idea that children are able to construct meaning from engaging in activities that allow opportunities for individual choice and connection to personal interests seems to be mixed in with more traditional ideas that only the teacher as expert knows what is worthwhile to learn, and that learning and enjoyment (play) are two separate, sometimes opposing processes. Later, Kate disagreed, saying she just wanted the students to realize that they were learning while they played.

Unfortunately, since Kate and her teacher were not connected authentically in their philosophical emphases, the opportunities to challenge and question underlying assumptions and purposes of their practice were not fully explored. Kate explained later that she never really talked about educational issues with her cooperating teacher, just about personal issues.

In such conditions, not surprisingly, the images of good teaching for Kate did not seem to emerge clearly, but were hinted at as she struggled to make sense of conflicting messages between what she heard in the university setting and what she saw and experienced in practice.

> *My personal goal would be... it's personal and academic freedom... kids learning for themselves... to enjoy learning...*
>
> (November 17, 1995, p. 14)

What is very clear, though, is the warm, caring environment that Kate established with the students. As in her own schooling, Kate continued to be "always helping", attending respectfully to the individual needs of children. In referring to the transiency of the population in the inner city, Kate explained:

> *We lose quite a few students. And that's hard... you build a relationship with each one of them.*
>
> (November 17, 1995, p. 16)

About a new student who wouldn't talk at first, and then only to Kate in a whisper, Kate was visibly concerned because school records indicated the student might have a learning disability, based mainly on her non-communication. "She has the ability. It's just because... she's very shy. She had just moved to the city from a reserve and was having language difficulties at first." Throughout other stories, Kate quietly revealed her sensitive attention to the special needs of the economically disadvantaged children in her class, such as buying a loaf of bread to share in the classroom with students who couldn't afford to buy a treat from the bakery expedition, or creating a "writer's notebook" from old Christmas cards and her own paper for the students to record their own ideas and pictures.

> *Some of the kids have really taken off on it; even ones with low skills in writing draw pictures and then tell me the story. They've taken them home; they're doing them at recess.*
>
> (Journal, p. 3)

Kate's joy in seeing her students connecting so well with this writing approach was short-lived, however, as her idea was not sustained after her first practicum, and the students returned to the teacher's structured framework for writing topics. To Kate, "that's not their (emphasis on their) writing", and a teacher's potential connection to the students' own thinking and learning became lost.

SECOND PRACTICUM: Regret and Small Victories

> *Sometimes I regret that I didn't change my placement.*
>
> (May 2, 1996, p. 2)

Although Kate had reservations about her placement after the first term, she did not change schools. Her first term student teaching report, prepared jointly by her teacher and her faculty advisor, referred to a "good first term" characterizing Kate as "enthusiastic" and "organized", with a "variety of activities", "rapport", and she "always involves the children". In the comments about behaviour management, "she continues to show growth", as well as "is positive but still needs to be more consistent", there is irony, given the general problems that were waiting to erupt for all of them in the classroom.

In the final interview at the end of the year, Kate spoke plainly.

> *I had problems in my second term because I was becoming stronger in my beliefs of how early years children should be learning... I was beginning to have conflicts with what I saw my teacher doing... It was the end of February and none of the students had done creative writing and published a piece of work that was their own... I tried to implement a steady time for writing... so many other classrooms had writers' workshop every day... but things I was trying to implement were never given enough time...*
>
> (May 2, 1996, p. 1)

Kate also tried to implement a reading workshop approach called "literature circles", after readings and discussion in her education course work. The students were excited to be reading their first "chapter" book, (each had a copy of the book Kate selected from the Public Library, as well as a response journal, and a bookmark). However, their reading did not get beyond the individual response stage because of "the teacher's agenda"; Kate (and the students) were disappointed, as "their thinking was being extended" by the reading, questions, and further responses in the journal writing. The vital next "circle" stage of social interaction about the reading, "how it affected them, any personal connections" was not allowed the time. After quoting from a paper given to her by her teacher, Kate noted in her final portfolio statement.

> *It still puzzles and frustrates me that she has such hand-outs and does some professional reading (I shared my Lucy Calkins text with her) and the opportunities for complete immersion in literature were still not given to the students.*
>
> (LA, April 16, 1996, p. 2)

Kate also "tried to have a journal" with her cooperating teacher, but that was dropped, again possibly because of a lack of time.

> *I would write... and she'd say, 'we'll talk about it at lunch' and then we never talked and then she never took the time to respond...*
>
> (May 2, 1996, p. 5)

There did not seem to be personal antagonism between Kate and her teacher, just very different philosophies about the students and their learning, a difference that had grown even deeper by the time of the second practicum in late February and March 1996. To be fair to the cooperating teacher about her seeming lack of connection with Kate, there were also contextual issues described by Kate that were affecting the classroom. Grade three mathematics was to be assessed at the end of the year according to provincial standards, and Kate realized that her cooperating teacher was concerned, although she noted that very little work (tracing shapes, pattern blocks) in mathematics had been done the first part of the year. In an abrupt change, suddenly it became the "only thing that was important"... (p. 11). In the second term, Kate also referred to a classroom visit by a divisional mathematics coordinator to discuss problem solving strategies with the students and teacher. External pressures about the curriculum and its assessment were increasing. Another issue was an escalation of problems with classroom management.

> *There were a lot more discipline problems in the second term where I thought she needed to be more consistent... I had students throwing chairs at me, and swearing and calling me names...*
>
> (May 2, 1996, p. 2)

The teacher visited a behaviour modification program at another school, and new policies of negative reinforcement were started but not carried through, and little or no long-term benefit resulted. The cooperating teacher's years of experience as a resource teacher had possibly not transferred well to handling a larger group, and the additional practices of individualized work, drills, repetition, and separation of grades and subject matter seemed to lead to further fragmentation of activities and loss of group focus and harmony as the school year progressed.

My one observation of Kate in her placement in early March 1996 showed indications of the concerns Kate expressed later. The students were divided according to grade and subjects, with Kate and the teacher handling separate groups. The students worked with Kate (a lesson on created colour cube patterns and individual problem solving and prediction), and then were each encouraged to draw and write how he/she had solved his/her problem. There was a large checklist chart with all the students' names recorded.

The "shadow" pictures were publicly displayed outside in the hall, and one small table inside the classroom seemed to be the focus of much positive attention once students had finished their assignment, as it was piled with different books and pictures of beavers, the focus of Kate's collaborative inquiry that was just beginning. Other than these two bright spots, there was little evidence of opportunities for exploration and play, as Kate

noted. One very rough measure of this happened by way of comparison with an observation of a grade two classroom in a school a few blocks away (with generally similar socioeconomic indicators for school and families). For Kate's class, I collected three file cards of notes on evidence of classroom "happenings" and learning; for the observation in the other school, the grade two class using a fully integrated early years approach, I completed eleven file cards of notes and could have added many more details.

Notwithstanding the "chair" episode, Kate did seem to have good rapport with the students, and even commented that the students seemed to cooperate better when the teacher was absent, such as on the celebration day for the science theme - Shadow Day.

> *In terms of my growing professionally, I had to do it on my own, or through the University and through collaboration with peers because I wasn't getting anything from my cooperating teacher, and I recommended that (the teacher) not be part of the early years program next year.*
>
> (May 2, 1996, p. 2)

SMALL VICTORIES

Despite the drawback of not being a part of an integrated model of teaching and learning, and not being fully supported in attempts to develop her own integrated approaches, Kate achieved some successes and small victories. In the face of obstacles, she tried to live out her ideal image of a caring teacher stimulating students to enjoy learning through experiences with music, art, and drama, and through reading, sharing, writing and play. An important success for Kate was her initiative in preparing her students for the school's Winter Concert.

> *They worked hard organizing the script, making scenery and costumes, and rehearsing the choral and dramatic parts. We were the only early years grade who attempted to put on a multi-sign system show. We had singing, story and drama.*
>
> (Portfolio - Answers - April 19, 1996, p. 5)

A few months later, when responsible for the primary assembly program, the teacher had the class memorize one poem and sing one song, which disappointed Kate for the students' sake: "I knew what these kids were capable of doing".

Kate also wanted to increase opportunities for students during their choice time. Art supplies were not readily available, but Kate searched school and personal resources to set up an art centre where, for example, the students could try self-portraits from mirror images, with connections to the shadow theme. The students revealed to Kate significant insights about their self-perceptions as they discussed and created their own portraits and the accompanying black paper "shadows".

Kate was able to combine music, art and story most effectively with her students in the collaborative inquiry on beavers. As part of the curriculum goal of the study of life cycles, and as an important link to themes and stories in aboriginal culture, the study involved storybooks, informational books, videos, a simulated environment with a mural and a beaver "stick" dam, as well as background music with sounds of water, leaves, and birds. The students read, discussed, painted, drew and described "before-and-after" beavers, created new stories and dramatized them, wrote letters, and imitated beaver movements. The celebration day, an "exciting event" showed evidence of their learning, when all students took an active role in helping.

> *Nothing like this had ever been done in my classroom before, but I have always believed in the importance of involving parents... I hope that by initiating this relationship that it will continue... We had thirteen parents and the principal show up to our celebration and that made the students feel proud.*
>
> (Answers, April 19, 1996, p. 9)

Kate's caring attention to the need for opportunities to share and celebrate learning, so important and necessary especially within the context of a multicultural setting, showed that Kate was still working hard to "help" others, to boost self-esteem in the students, and instill parents' pride in their children and their community's school.

GROWTH AND CHANGE

At the beginning of the year, Kate admitted she was neither an avid reader nor a strong writer, and seemed to feel confident that her love of children and active, enthusiastic, positive approach to life and learning would carry her successfully throughout the year.

Gradually, as shown in later reflections, Kate began to connect more meaningfully with the philosophical underpinnings and practical implications of the Early Years Program, began to see conflicting goals and finally, by the end, realized how problematic her placement really had been.

> *There was choice time in my placement, but not many choices for the students to make... I feel many important (students') self-initiated learning opportunities were lost...*
>
> (Portfolio, Answers, p. 2)

> *I regret not being able to witness student-led conferences in my placement; it was a practice my teacher did not do.*
>
> (Ibid, p. 7)

> *I regret not having the opportunity to observe and be a part of a learning environment where reading and writing were valued...*
>
> (Portfolio, Language Arts, p. 1)

Fortunately, in the end, Kate's basic positive approach did help her through, and characteristically, her guiding image of herself as the caring teacher, helped her decide not to change schools.

> *... the reason I didn't leave is because of the kids... I worked well with them and with some, I'd seen an incredible amount of growth.*
>
> (May 2, 1996, p. 2)

Possibly the main area of growth for Kate herself was the capacity to see and understand the students' learning on a deeper, more holistic level, with attention to broader encompassing principles, rather than divided attentions on school work versus play. Music, movement, drama, and art became authentic ways of knowing and sharing, and language (oral and written) helped students construct their own meanings and make it accessible to others.

Experiences outside of her placement's classroom, such as seeing dance and movement as cultural expression, helped Kate understand another aspect of her culturally diverse classroom. Kate spoke of the powerful impact of an aboriginal guest's singing and drumming for their university class, and of a Grand Entry performed by young aboriginal singers and dancers at an education conference in Saskatoon, "a rich experience I know I will never forget".

The power of language to create and share meanings was underscored (even though incompletely) in Kate's literature circles, the writer's notebooks, and in her invitations for students to respond personally to their experiences in the classroom.

In her portfolio, Kate candidly admitted to her evaluators (faculty).

> *You scared me this year, because when I started I felt I knew all I needed to know in order to be a good teacher. I am glad I had the rude awakening of just how weak I was in the realm of teaching language arts... now with my commitment to continuous growth I will be able to provide my students with the empowering and enriching experiences they deserve. Thanks.*
>
> (Portfolio, Language Arts, p. 9)

Kate began to develop an expanded understanding of the role of evaluation and assessment of learning, from the strategy of using students' art work for pre-theme and post-theme understandings of the beaver, to the overall portfolio assessment of her own growth and development as a teacher.

> *The portfolio was difficult but it was something that I think we all need... it helps you take a stance... you had to state what you wanted and what you believed in, and how those beliefs and goals help you to be stronger as a professional.*
>
> (May 2, 1996, p. 16)

Kate credited her professors in the program for helping her to understand that she needed to be very selective, choosing best examples to show beliefs and learning, and that she should provide a written synthesis, a document "to pull together" her beliefs and "take a stance".

Kate received a glowing final evaluation from her teacher and faculty advisor, but from Kate's point of view, her school placement had mainly "reinforced the things I do

believe in" and given examples of "what not to do". She credited collaboration with peers and professors for giving her "most insight" and was going to miss this "powerful support network of educators" (April 19, 1996, Answers, p. 9). The role modeling of this group helped Kate set herself a goal for further learning and research about the role modeling she did not receive in her school, "I want to read more and develop my understandings of how to implement a writers' workshop and a reading workshop" (May 2, 1996, p. 8).

Throughout her reflections about the year, Kate kept coming back to specific students who accepted her invitations to respond to learning experiences with a personal connection, such as the little girl who spontaneously wrote a poem about beavers, or the student who found "a shadow" in a "rapper's" song. In her future as a teacher, she now knew the potential stories and unique connections that were waiting for the opportunity to unfold.

> *And I keep on learning. It is very odd being in a culture so different from my own but it is one of the best learning experiences I could have.*
>
> (November 30, 1996)

Kate added the last comment from her teaching position in a far northern Manitoba community.

JOANNE

In early 1995, Joanne had been in my school experience seminar while taking her second undergraduate practicum. She and another student had expressed concerns after their first two once-a-week visits to the school because they were asked to help a special needs student all day and thus missed observations and interactions in the classroom.

(Joanne and the other student were assigned to the same classroom, but attended two different days in the week.) When I counselled them to wait longer, saying the cooperating teacher might be indirectly assessing them, the one student adamantly requested direct contact with the school to lodge a complaint. Joanne, however, was ready to compromise, to wait a little longer to see if the pattern continued and needed intervention from the university's school experience director.

Fortunately, Joanne's strong beliefs and determination combined with her readiness to listen and compromise did bring about positive results, as she recorded in her final written reflections on her placement:

> *My work with the student who was a victim of child abuse and who had ADHD helped me to discover that teaching was more than formal instruction; it also required being compassionate and empathetic with all students... The more time I spent with (the student) the more I had to examine myself to see if I had the maturity and skills to deal with similar situations in the future. My teacher began to see me adjust to (him) quite well, and this gave her more confidence in my capabilities to teach.*
>
> (Final Report, April 1995)

Joanne went on to explain that later in the term, her teacher had encouraged her to teach specific lessons and provided "consistent advice", even though she (Joanne) was hesitant at first. Joanne also repeated that even though she complained initially, she felt she had greatly benefitted from the opportunity to develop the special relationship with that emotionally needy student.

I had become interested in some apparent contradictions in Joanne's approach to teaching. She seemed outwardly very positive and forthright, with high expectations for herself and others, but also needed a great deal of structure and support. Although she

was very uncomfortable at first with the special needs student, she did persevere and acknowledged how much she herself had learned from him. I thought it would be interesting to follow Joanne's experience in the often ambiguous, demanding and complex tasks of the certification year.

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

Joanne arrived at the University of Manitoba from Ontario. She had lived in a large metropolitan area in southern Ontario, graduated from high school and university there, and worked for two years as an executive assistant in a telemarketing firm, also in the same area.

As biographers show so well, the documented "bare facts" of life do not always convey much about the struggles and meanings contained within that "frame", and Joanne's life was no exception.

Joanne's parents were immigrants who worked hard to establish a family restaurant in Toronto. They also had certain cultural expectations such as very strong ties to family and respect for tradition, as well as a highly developed work ethic and a strong desire for their children to succeed through education. As the oldest child, Joanne's performance in school was obviously very important, and Joanne noted how difficult it was for all when her school notified the family that she needed "special education" help in spelling, grammar and language arts beginning in grades three or four through to grade seven. Joanne spoke very positively about the special education teachers she had, with good memories of a personal project about her own culture, "I made my father bring in

baklava". She also remembered another teacher as "one of the nicest persons I've ever met... she really didn't make me feel like I didn't know anything." (November 13, 1995)

Joanne also really appreciated her grade eight teacher of language arts, history and mathematics.

> *He would always reward you for things... I felt I wasn't good in writing or didn't think I did well in Math... but he would always say, 'Good for you, you've really done much better this time!' Hearing him say it, I felt so good because I had gone through all this struggle to improve. To hear him say it out loud to everybody, I think it made other people change their perception.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 2)

Hidden behind Joanne's comments were some indications of the personal distress of being labelled as "special needs" or as "not knowing" anything.

Later in the interview, Joanne revealed that this positive year in grade eight had followed a terrible year of "bad experiences", with other students (whose families were mainly "very wealthy"). She received "a lot of teasing" about her clothes and her "plastic bag to put my books in". She did explode in anger and tears once to one of the ringleaders of her torment, and that seemed to make things somewhat better, "But it really hurt." Later, during her education studies, Joanne as adult teacher would again face adolescent volatility and would see the hurtful effects of students' negative comments towards their peers, and realized it could still make her very angry.

Fortunately, the year in grade eight, with a new group of students and a positive, affirming teacher, allowed Joanne to begin developing more self-confidence until problems

developed again in grade eleven. Here, the different expectations from her parents meant once again not fitting in well with her peer group who were allowed to go to all school functions.

> *I had to be home, do homework, help out and, on weekends, I'd have to help out sometimes at the restaurant.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 10)

By this time, Joanne was also dealing with the stigma of failing grade eleven physics.

> *I failed physics, and that really brought my self-esteem down. I lost a lot of friendships. I broke myself off from a lot of people... It was just a horrible year.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 10)

Although Joanne had earlier stated that high school had been positive for her and that she had very "supportive" teachers who were "a lot of fun", the reference to the physics failure did bring out concerns about that teacher. He was a "really difficult teacher to get to know", and was a "big guy". He would be "intimidating", with a very "authoritarian" style.

> *I worried a lot about this course. I got 48... when I went back in the summer to another school to take physics, the teacher was so much more relaxed. He didn't pick on me, he didn't make me stand up or do exercises on the board... He taught at a very slow pace and I was able to understand.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 13)

Joanne received an A grade in that summer course. She showed her personal determination by continuing to study astronomy and physics in grades twelve and thirteen, and also did well in them. This experience of failure in high school had reinforced her belief that students, especially insecure ones like herself, needed to connect with teachers

on a personal level, and then they could connect well with the subject matter. It also increased her empathy for other students' difficulties.

> *I now really know how people feel when they don't do well in a course... this stigma you feel, it takes so long to get over it.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 14)

Joanne recovered well from the academic setback and continued in science studies at the University of Toronto. The social and psychological independence from her family, however, proceeded more slowly, as she commuted from home and began to experience conflict with her mother about too much studying, being absent, and not helping at home. However, through her own determination and hard work, Joanne continued her studies, realizing she needed to move from the sciences to more arts related courses. During this time, her former experiences teaching dramatic arts in senior high school and her current regular volunteering in a nearby school both led her to realize what she really wanted - to be a teacher.

COMING TO MANITOBA

Application to education faculties became an issue, then, as Joanne's requests were not accepted at several universities in Ontario. She was accepted for an interview at the University of Manitoba but declined it in favour of working one year, and then applied again and was accepted for the following year. Joanne did not say directly, but the dependence factor with her family may have influenced her decision to delay one more year. In any event, her work within an "aggressive field of telecommunications" helped push her even more towards teaching, as she sought out more positive experiences by

arranging time off to volunteer regularly with one classroom. She found this background experience very helpful when starting education courses at the University of Manitoba.

Joanne noted that she was able to recommend volunteer work to fellow education students who complained that they didn't "have enough information yet". Besides the obvious benefit of working with children, she had gained practical information about stressing her science minor course work (for jobs needing women in science), and now knew more about how to make connections with school administrators as well as students. At university, after her work and school experience, she also had more self confidence about asking professors for help, or about changing courses for more compatible teaching styles.

EDUCATION COURSE WORK

In general, Joanne found the requirements and expectations well organized, but found initial communication about course work difficult over the phone while living in another province. She would have preferred a general orientation prior to the beginning of courses, an overview of the process of the year. She did benefit from, and enjoy, the undergraduate courses of psychology of learning and the social foundations course, and also learned a great deal from working on group presentations in various courses.

In her certification year, Joanne registered in the Middle Years Pilot Program, with its focus primarily on grades five to eight. The group consisted of thirty-seven students whose course work centered on curriculum and instruction issues in language arts, social studies, science, mathematics, art and physical education, as well as one general "philosophy of the middle years" course.

> *I've enjoyed everything so far because I've become really good friends with these people and it's like high school... It's a lot of fun. At my school, we'll talk and provide support for each other.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 1)

At this point in first term (before the first major block of time at the school), Joanne and fellow students had been in their school placement for the first week of school and had been attending once a week since then. In these first months, Joanne noticed a good match between the content of much of her university course work and her cooperating teacher's classroom, especially in the language arts areas. The main reference book being used in both cases was Linda Rief's *Seeking Diversity*, and Joanne was able to connect really well with the ideas and specific activities used by her cooperating teacher, especially the concept of the workshop approach for both reading and writing, an approach outlined in earlier works such as Nancie Atwell's *In the Middle*. Joanne enjoyed the chance to bring in specific examples, such as students' collages of a novel's events, and also appreciated the opportunities to explain how her teacher interpreted the methods with the grade eight students. (Joanne was not directly involved with the teaching of language arts, which later became an issue causing tension with her teacher).

Joanne also described the mathematics course work positively:

> *It's really a lot of fun. You learn how to explore... so (your) students can do it as well... and do group work activities and journal writing as well.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 19)

Joanne's cooperating teacher did not yet use journal writing extensively in mathematics, but did have them (the students) "do some form of writing after a test to

explain what they did wrong, and make corrections, and show it to her" (p. 19). Joanne mused that regular journal writing might have potential to help some of her classroom's grade eight students, as all of them "seem to be intimidated by maths", but she would need to think about it more deeply.

Joanne referred to other course work as well, and was less satisfied with areas that did not have direct relation to her classroom's subject matter. Joanne seemed to be looking for very specific strategies that could be applied directly to her classroom, such as the reading and writing surveys her curriculum class was asked to do with students.

> *I really saw how you could use that survey as a tool to set up a workshop for reading and writing... Atwell's book had it structured so that all I have to do is just give it to the kids and they could write in what they like...*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 23)

Because the block of time in the schools was just beginning, Joanne seemed very anxious about her responsibilities.

> *You feel that the University is your security and you become very attached to the information learning and when you go into the classroom you're kind of scared to try new things out... You don't know if it's consistent... if the cooperating teacher is going to like it... You're really hesitant.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 23)

Besides classroom management, Joanne was worried about how to plan lessons and related special events in meaningful time sequences. She felt that the faculty strike with the three weeks of missed curriculum courses had increased her insecurity as she had reacted visibly when the cooperating teacher asked her to teach science, social studies and mathematics.

> *I got a little nervous because I haven't had any instruction in any of this... Do I know enough to do all of this?*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 26)

The teacher was very understanding and changed the suggestion to two subject areas, in spite of the fact that Joanne had turned down an earlier request from the teacher to arrange more student teaching days at the school during the strike.

> *I said 'I'm not going to come in more than I have to. I shouldn't be put in that position either, to have to come in more days.'*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 27)

I felt that I was missing something in Joanne's account. She was anxious about teaching and wanted the opportunity to try out ideas with students, but had turned down an offer to spend more time with her students and the teacher. After probing, some of the underlying story began to appear.

In the middle of September, Joanne had taught her first lesson, an art lesson about landscapes. Her journal captures her feelings when, after showing the examples she had brought, and using her discussion questions, she faced an unresponsive class:

> *I found I was not really getting the answers I wanted. I began to feel like I was losing control. I tried to make the answers from the students fit but I had a hard time dealing with the lack of response.*
>
> (September 15, 1995)

After the discussion, two boys refused to start the assignment and the cooperating teacher had to intervene. Later, the teacher discussed the lesson with Joanne, and asked her to make a list of classroom management techniques she could observe the teacher using. The teacher's comments did not seem to me to be overly critical, but Joanne was upset and now confessed (in the interview) that she felt "intimidated" by her teacher. She

did not want to go to the school for extra time during the strike because she felt she would be doing only "paperwork, photocopying, as well as working with students", and also because she felt very insecure.

In the early weeks, Joanne had become very nervous and afraid of a negative evaluation from her cooperating teacher.

> *When she was in there (the classroom), I'd be shaking and tongue-tied... and things wouldn't go smoothly. When she left, I felt much stronger.*
>
> *She was taking notes... I got really nervous, and then I got angry with myself, because I had worked so hard to get to this point.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 7)

This anger eventually fuelled a more positive response from Joanne than just being nervous. One of her greatest problems with presenting information in a mathematics lesson stemmed from problems with the overhead projector cart. Joanne was very short; her cooperating teacher was very tall, and the cart was set up for height, leaving Joanne in a very awkward position for seeing and writing. After the problem class, Joanne's solution was to work on the blackboard, which was a very comfortable medium for her, and her confidence improved immensely. The technical areas of presentation can be extremely important.

There had also been another episode when the teacher was "curt" with Joanne and the students. When Joanne called her faculty advisor, she was assured that the problem was a "very bad day" for other reasons, not any problem with Joanne.

> *I realized how quickly you think it's you (the problem)... because of the position you're in as a student teacher. That really scared me.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 28)

Thus, there seemed to be a continuing source of tension and a strong need for positive affirmation and special support in Joanne's relationship with her cooperating teacher.

Yet somehow the affirmation that was being given to Joanne did not seem to have as great an effect as the negatives. For example, Joanne had been asked for suggestions about extensions of content topics, and Joanne had provided excellent resource ideas: the phone number of an archaeologist who later spoke to the class about research in "digs" for connections with their study of ancient civilizations in social studies, the ideas to go to the Aviation Museum for an extension of a science unit on "flight", and to a Greek restaurant for a connection to the study of Greek civilization. All of these ideas from Joanne were validated by being used with the students and worked well, but the "intimidation" factor still seemed to be there for Joanne.

Near the end of the interview, Joanne began to focus once again on the needs of the students in her classroom, not just her own anxieties. She had given examples earlier about how the students really wanted to get to know her. "They don't like this façade that teachers sometimes give", and they "open up to me when the teacher's not there" (p. 3). Through this personal connection and genuine interest in her students' lives, Joanne learned about absent parents, a motherless student, and an anorexic student whose faintly pencilled assignments echoed another kind of "erasure".

Joanne learned about the cycle of action and reaction when she changed her approach with a "smartalecky" boy after learning that his mother had just died. "I really took a different attitude with him and I think it's been much better." She was surprised at

how touched he was when she lent him her poppy for the school's Remembrance Day service: "I think that he really felt like somebody cared" (p. 4).

As referred to earlier, Joanne had reacted strongly to the students' misbehaviour when a substitute arrived one Friday:

> *I'd never seen them this way... making comments about each other. They would jab at each other, hit each other... I was just furious. They really saw this, and went dead quiet... I never expected that from them, but I was very upset.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 5-6)

It seemed that the teasing and hurtful behaviour of others towards her in her own school days seemed to have resurfaced, as Joanne surprised even herself with the intensity of her reaction, and her further comments, that "You need to look out for each other; you all have to try to help each other", reinforced the caring and mutually respectful relationship that Joanne wanted them all to maintain.

Thus, just before embarking on the four-week practicum, Joanne decided to focus more on the students, not her own worries:

> *I'm here to help these kids. I'm not here to help her do her job, I'm here to help them learn... Now it's going to be totally different.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 29)

FIRST TERM PRACTICUM

Despite Joanne's resolve, she did still worry about being evaluated. She continued to be very aware of the cooperating teacher's writing of notes about the lesson while she (Joanne) was teaching, even though many of the comments were positive ones, such as helpful suggestions about organizing small group work. She was also nervous just within

the teacher's presence, so Joanne asked her faculty advisor to ask for more "breathing space". This seemed to work much better for Joanne, and at the mid-point of the practicum when she received a very positive formative evaluation from her advisor, she gained even more strength. In her journal, she showed evidence of greater awareness of her own teaching and areas to improve in her self-evaluation with her advisor.

I observed a mathematics lesson when Joanne was on her next-to-last day. She seemed very confident and focussed with the students, and quickly settled them down with a brief oral test of a few review questions. Homework answers were handled smoothly, with Joanne constantly checking their understanding. A few more difficult questions were worked out on the chalkboard, with input from the students for each step.

Her obvious caring for the students showed in her reassurance about the next day's test. She reminded them of procedures and reviewed important terminology. She also role modelled tact and patience when she reminded students about the importance of courtesy in listening to questions other students might have and repeated: "It's all right to ask questions if you don't understand" (December 7, 1995).

The students responded well to Joanne. She talked to them naturally and in a friendly tone, but remained firm with them; a number of students seemed very restless, but were not disruptive.

Joanne's final evaluation of the first practicum was prepared jointly by the cooperating teacher and faculty advisor and was very positive. They noted her "excellent planning and implementation skills", her "positive reinforcement" skills, and "clear appreciation of the needs of middle years students" (December 7, 1995).

Actions that displayed Joanne's teaching strategies included her use of concrete visual aids such as the home-made oil pump model used to introduce fossil fuel energy. She set up a classroom "mailbox" where students could send letters to her and receive written replies in private communication. She also assisted with the school's sports program and coaching volleyball.

In all, by the end of first term, Joanne seemed very committed and confident, in spite of the inner turmoils of the previous weeks. The echoes of her past were found in the present, in her wanting (sometimes demanding) independence, yet at the same time being afraid of it, and needing a great deal of support throughout. Underlying both the wants and the fears was a deep determination to persevere, to work hard to overcome problems, and reach her goals.

SECOND TERM - 1996

Joanne decided to change to a grade seven classroom (in the same school) at the end of the first term, even though she had received a very positive evaluation from the grade eight teacher. The reason for change was ostensibly because she wanted broader experience through dealing with a different grade and curriculum, but the main reasons centered on Joanne's uneasy relationship with her former cooperating teacher, as well as her desire to be responsible for the language arts areas with the students, which she felt would "never happen" with the grade eights.

Joanne again showed determination by persevering with her goal to change, saying, "That in itself was difficult", but did not elaborate the reasons why. In the new classroom,

Joanne did not have to worry about being allowed to teach, since from the start, she was left alone, mainly responsible for the class on each Friday that she came to the school:

> *I began to tell him, 'Don't worry about language arts; I'll take care of it when I come in' and I began to prepare for that each week... By the time I hit the block I could assume 100% (of the teaching load) and he didn't have a problem with that... Before, I had a difficult time taking charge of certain subject areas. My teacher wouldn't let me and it was just very constraining...*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 1)

I did not see Joanne very often during the second term course work at university. I checked briefly with her, and found her to be very happy with the change of cooperating teachers, and also very busy with assignments and preparation for the once-a-week visits to the school. Not until the final interview in May did I fully realize another reason for her detachment, namely the deteriorating atmosphere and low morale within the middle years group of education students, as Joanne mentioned, not only in the small group in her school, but in the university classroom.

> *The issue of the lack of collegiality... this year especially, the middle years program lacked that... In the certifying year, instead of having a more professional outlook, by the second term, we really weren't getting along... Some students would make comments to the professors in our instruction, very negative... done in a way that everybody heard and saw it. I think if you have a problem with a professor, you go during office hours, and deal with it then.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 6)

Joanne had alluded in first term to sharing her concerns about her cooperating teacher with one other classmate assigned to the same school. Later she regretted telling him, as he had talked with other students and staff at the school about her situation with

the result that further tensions developed for Joanne. In the final interview, Joanne again brought this up.

> *By second term, I very rarely saw them (the other student teachers in my school), and I was happy. I stayed in my classroom, did my work, and didn't have much to do with them, because of my personal experiences at the end of first term... That was an indication to me of what might happen... just the politics and the gossip, so I just steered away from them.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 6-7)

The lack of support for each other even extended to problems with deadlines for group assignments at university, as Joanne found out when one member of her group procrastinated. She felt almost ostracized for her own commitment to course work and the school, and felt the resistance from a number of fellow classmates.

> *It was almost... if you really cared a lot about what you were doing, that wasn't the right attitude. (They'd say) there are other things... it's not all teaching... and it is, for this year, to me, I mean... I noticed it was the men, a lot of the guys... were trying to get away with as much as possible, handing in things as late as they could. I have to admit I handed in one assignment late but I got a penalty. And I'm glad I did... At the beginning it was wonderful, great. We were working together. At the end, nobody trusted each other much... It was disappointing.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 14)

FINAL PRACTICUM

After the stress of negotiating a move to a different classroom at the mid-point of the year, Joanne worked very hard to prepare herself for the last block of teaching. She began teaching each Friday in the subject area she loved and was most comfortable with, language arts, and was able to get to know the students early in the term.

Again, it was interesting to see how the technical, physical aspects of the classroom affected Joanne and needed adjustment to help her comfort level with the group. The room was a science room, large (wide), with a raised platform area, large tables, and only one blackboard. Joanne moved things so that the tables angled toward the blackboard and overhead projector screen where Joanne could change easily from one to the other. She brought in a bench to reach the too-high blackboard and changed the seating to alternating boys and girls, rather than a block of girls together on one side of the room, and boys on the other. Joanne also set out to organize supplies and plans for each of the five main subject areas. One continuing problem was not having her own key for the classroom, as she had with the former class, but the advantages of having the chance to work and plan on her own far outweighed this small detail.

> *My relationship with the cooperating teacher in second term was one where I had self-confidence. I felt I could do everything that I wanted and he would support me 100%... I was in charge, and the principal would always ask me things (about the students) and not my cooperating teacher.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 2)

Joanne noted that she planned an outline for each student for all their courses to show them what they would be doing (and the marks) for the next five weeks. She used cooperative group work extensively, such as the jigsaw approach in social studies based on the model of group work in her curriculum course work earlier in the year. The students researched countries of Europe, and Joanne brought in visuals, movies, and her "personal experiences in my own travels to Europe". She received encouragement from her professor, whom she called for help, and heeded his advice to be very "structured and

organized" which worked very well for Joanne as the group's attention tended to drift without a solid framework to help them focus.

The unit ended with the creation of a travel brochure by each set of students. I was fortunate to observe a classroom mini-festival in the last week of Joanne's time there, when the students presented and explained their travel brochures, as well as displayed artifacts and foods from their chosen countries. Most of them had done an excellent job and proudly shared their artifacts such as a great-grandfather's embroidered shirt brought from the Ukraine to Winnipeg in 1910. Of course, the food sharing was popular, too, and Joanne had created some of her own culture's confections to add to the pool. Throughout the presentations, Joanne remained organized and focused, but also stayed warmly encouraging to the sometimes-shy presenters.

Joanne described excitedly the main reason why she had gone through all the trouble of changing classrooms:

> *Language Arts was my favourite course. I enjoyed it thoroughly. I was able to set up the reading workshop and the writing workshop idea. I needed more time, but the reading workshop went wonderfully... they loved the idea of writing in their response journals... It was just a great experience to see in action.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 3)

What was exciting and gratifying to Joanne was knowing that even though many of these students were designated as "low achievers", with great problems of motivation and work habits generally, they all began to enjoy the regular reading and the discussion or writing about the themes within the reading, such as "conflict and friendship". Joanne especially enjoyed the reactions of others from outside the classroom who knew the group

to be active, restless, and prone to outbursts (as are many grade seven classes). While undergoing evaluation by her faculty advisor, Joanne demonstrated part of the method, with reading, stopping for predictions and discussion, and then continued silent, individual reading.

> *The class was quiet, reading for fifteen minutes straight. My advisor was in shock. 'I've never seen this before. How did you get them to read for that long?' I said, 'It's the reading workshop. We've been doing it for three weeks.' I'll never forget her reaction. It was hilarious.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 4)

Joanne admitted that the writing workshop process did not go as well, because of the time element. She suggested that the curriculum courses could have helped with this, with suggestions about what to do when there was a severe time handicap. She referred to a guest lecturer sponsored in second term by the Student Council, a teacher who was using the workshop approach and "walked" the audience through a typical language arts day with her. What Joanne liked was her incorporation of the writing tasks with the reading (more than an open response journal), so there could be "connected" reading and writing, but this would require careful planning and actual curriculum creation of mini-lessons to get maximum benefit. In any case, for Joanne to have these particular grade sevens visibly enjoy reading was no small feat.

> *I got a lot of ideas from the curriculum course: core reading, poetry, drama. I was able to do almost everything we talked about... I allowed it to happen.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 11)

Other teachers who came to the classroom for science supplies also were amazed at the quiet reading times in the room. One said, "I've never seen them like this before" (p. 12). Later on, Joanne noticed that particular teacher's students were also doing sustained reading. The "words" were spreading.

Another general principle (discussed in the middle years philosophy) that Joanne was able to effect was integration of the curriculum. One example she gave outlined the connections that were drawn among clay vessels in art, soil management and soil in science, with references to where clay is used and pore size affecting clay, and farming and soils in geography, with references to European countries and comparisons to Manitoba soils.

By the end of the practicum, Joanne had fully established herself with the students and had organized many opportunities for productive learning. Others in the school had obviously noticed this too, since she was invited in her last week to give a presentation of "the middle years philosophy and whether this school was following it".

> *I presented it to a group of about eight teachers plus the principal, plus the Guidance Counsellor as well as the student teachers.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 7)

Joanne thought that the school did not as yet have an official written policy about this. "They've just taken elements of the middle years school and tried to incorporate it" (p. 8).

Near the end of the last interview, Joanne returned to the negative element within her university middle years program.

> *I felt that a lot of the people weren't authentic. They were looking out for themselves at the end of the day, but acted like they weren't... In second term in the school I decided I wouldn't confide in any of them... What I would do was talk directly to the teacher if I didn't like anything. Many times I told my cooperating teacher things I didn't like or couldn't do; he heard about it first... and I got support from the principal.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 10)

Joanne had taken a major step forward from the insecure, dependent young woman who in first term quickly turned to fellow students for support rather than confronting directly some of the major concerns she had about her placement. She had been a little naive, perhaps; "Maybe I should have seen it" (p. 10). In the process of working through her difficulty and concentrating on the needs of her students, she matured.

Joanne did give great credit to her faculty advisor, who was always there for her.

> *I would go to my faculty advisor. She would hear from me all the time. I think I drove her nuts.*
>
> (May 10, 1996, p. 10)

She also received help in general from all the school's staff, but in particular from one mentor who really listened and encouraged Joanne to "make a difference" and "do all of it".

Having the opportunity to work hard to implement ideas directly with the students allowed Joanne to receive positive reinforcement and to make great progress from being a vulnerable, dependent student to becoming a discriminating, assertive, confident teacher.

CAL

Cal was an after-degree seminar student whose requirement for the first school experience was waived because of his extensive experience as an educational assistant. In

the seminar I was leading, he was mature, thoughtful, and willing to raise issues and expand on concepts during seminar discussions. He was especially helpful with fellow students' concerns about handling special needs students within the context of the regular classroom, and willingly added specific examples to clarify situations.

For the written assignment aspect of the seminar, Cal researched the classroom management style of a teacher with whom he had worked, and also investigated the school's progressive management policies which allowed his special needs student to adapt well to consistent, supportive procedures. In a well-written report, he noted the beneficial effects of students' active participation in their own learning and evaluation and in regulation of their own behaviour within a supportive environment of school, parental, and community goals. He connected the students' criteria-setting and self-evaluation to an education course on school organization, where he and his classmates were given the option to choose from among a variety of forms of evaluation, including a presentation, poster, a painting, or other approved method.

> *Most students decided on writing papers and some even chose to take tests... It was very educational for me to discuss my thoughts with the professor and express the fact that I found it challenging to cope with the freedom and the option for ingenuity...*
>
> (Progress report, December 1994)

Cal showed that he was thoughtful about underlying reasons for educational practice, and wanted to delve deeper into these issues. He conducted interviews and provided more than was required as he learned about "ownership" and learning, his own as well as students' learning in schools. Later in the year, after he had changed to the second

term's seminar, I discussed his studies briefly, and learned that even though exempted, he had asked for a school placement in second term in order to start seeing the classroom with new "eyes", as a teacher of the whole group, not just individuals. He said he missed the connections with students and the school, and wanted to relate more directly what he was learning in the course work in education to what was happening in schools. I thought that his well-developed reflective skills and previous background experience in schools would make him an interesting research subject during his certifying year.

CAL AS LEARNER - Early Years

Cal noticed that, when preparing for the interview, and thinking back to his own life in school, the negative memories returned first. "I had a whole list of negative incidents before I had positive ones" (October 31, 1995, p. 2). For instance, his grade five teacher hit him in the head with a piece of chalk for talking, and also kicked his chair out from under him one day. In earlier grades, he and a friend were punished for cheating, a necessary punishment, he acknowledged now. Cal also remembered heading a junior high delegation to petition the principal to allow a live band for a school dance, and being asked:

> *'How can I take something coming from you seriously when you're dressed like that?' I remember feeling livid, but not being able to express it... I lost all respect for that principal, as did my friends.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 2)

Cal noted that these memories mainly dealt with the relationships between teachers and students, and that the feelings accompanying authoritarian or denigrating relationships were potent and long-lasting.

Fortunately, the relationships that were positive and affirming were also powerful, and again, Cal himself noted that a thread running through his memories involved a "lot of out-of-traditional style, making connections (in the real world) and learning" (October 31, 1995, p. 3). His own primary schooling had been spent in a school promoting progressive educational ideas. He had been a part of "multi-grade, open area learning", and remembered vividly such things as seeing the life cycle in an incubator where eggs hatched into baby chicks in the classroom.

> *It wasn't structured. We didn't have to study and write notes; we just watched and learned. That was a really big part of that year for me.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 2)

Another highlight involved a winter camping experience where he and the students had choices about which activity to do "as long as you were doing something".

> *Because I was able to make a choice, it gave me ownership of the things that I learned. That was a kind of kick-off for me. I have a lot of outdoor experience, and now I always look forward to it whenever I can do that in the school system.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 4-5)

The elements of choice and application to active learning were also important in junior high, where Cal worked hard in close personal relationships with other students and teachers in theatre productions.

> *It makes me think now that the best teacher training is how to foster that sort of thing. If a kid feels it's important, he'll be there and he'll do the work. Again, it's outside the set kind of parameters.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 3)

Cal also recalled two high school teachers, in psychology and history, who fostered small group discussions and encouraged active participation in perception experiments or

responses to readings. "It was more facilitation of learning than spoon-feeding". He realized that the role of the teacher was very important in providing a "structured setting" that would allow student choice and relatively "unstructured" learning, where students and teachers could get to know each other and share their knowledge.

While in his school experience in the year just before his certifying year, Cal met a teacher who exemplified the kind of ideal teacher he would like to be. The teacher taught in the shops program, the technical applied arts, and integrated students' work with the outdoor education program. Work that involved overhauling equipment and building canoes provided students with direct application of skills and accountability for their learning, and did lead to the goal of a canoe trip near the end of each school year. What struck Cal was the commitment of the teacher in working all lunch hours and one day each week after school, and his establishment of great mutual respect with the students. In a basic framework of attention to work and safety, he allowed social interaction and encouraged extra projects if necessary jobs were completed first.

> *Those kids, they listened to him in hallways, they listened to him everywhere, because he always listened to them.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 22)

When questioned about whether the success of this teacher might be due to the content, Cal replied, "I'm a big believer in hands-on work regardless of what the material (to be taught) is" (p. 6).

However, Cal also acknowledged, with an example from his own school placement this present term, that in some cases, allowing the hands-on work was difficult to do. He

had organized an astrolabe activity to be used with two classes of grade seven science students. At the end of the first group's lesson, the teacher pointed out that he had spent more than twenty minutes "lecturing" or explaining before students started, taking up one quarter of the allotted time, and suggested that Cal should write the directions on the board for the next "rowdier" class.

> *I finished writing... I stood in front of the board, and the kids just got to work. They had twenty-one more minutes to work on it. I circulated and answered questions. It was great. At the end, then we talked about it. So, even myself, who believes in it (hands-on learning), I can see how teachers can fall into that trap.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 6)

EDUCATION COURSE WORK

In talking about the importance of teachers' allowing learning to happen, Cal expressed concern about the discrepancy he had seen in some education courses between what was advocated for teachers to do and what was actually done by university teachers. One educational psychology course involved discussion of teachers' needs to allow leeway for different learning styles, but the course itself used only lecture methods and multiple choice tests for education students who were supposed to continually adapt to their learners' needs. Cal also referred to a social foundations class in which he and others received relatively low grades. The questions asked dealt with details, multiple choice statements, questions that would try to "trip you up" (p. 15), rather than questions that asked for interpretation and application of ideas and theories.

Interestingly, Cal credited one short lecture on the philosophy of middle years' learning with helping him to understand what was happening. The professor talked about

different levels of learning, "descripting and attributing", and urged that middle years' students need to be challenged and given opportunities to move from describing to analysing, interpreting, attributing reasons, to all such higher order thinking skills. Cal realized that, with some undergraduate courses, the students were being tested on descriptions, on discrete details, more than on their ability to analyse and interpret ideas.

> *As a teacher, that little half hour lecture was probably one of the most valuable things we've heard all year so far. You have to recognize where your students are at; move them beyond description; teach them how to collect data, analyse information and make interpretations.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 15-16)

Cal commented that he hoped in certification year to learn more about how to facilitate that kind of movement.

After two months in this year, however, Cal felt that he was "not learning much here at the faculty" (p. 8). He did not see much "connection" between curriculum and instruction courses and student teaching. The courses dealt with concepts and some activities but "I don't understand exactly what we're supposed to be doing. It's a lot of busy work" (p. 8).

> *We might have some exposure to ideas but... how do we use this concept with students? How do we recognize which method is going to work better with which class?*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 7)

Cal acknowledged that connections needed to be strengthened and mentioned that maybe because it was a pilot program, that had not been worked out yet.

In general, for all the subject areas, Cal recommended a standard overview or introduction to the curriculum for middle years (for the first two classes at university), "so that you have an idea of where things are inside the continuum". Then, the working through specific activities would make more sense to student teachers. For example, Cal referred to the same Language Arts reading and writing survey that fellow student Joanne had enjoyed using.

> *Excellent textbook, wonderful reference material, a very valuable tool, a very good activity... but we didn't do anything with that... What do we do with this? Where do we go with it?*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 10)

Cal seemed to be wanting to see more of the whole picture of language arts learning and felt that, for him, references to other language arts courses (that were not prerequisites) did not help to clarify the rationale for the activities.

Cal did not feel that the social studies curriculum course had accomplished very much, since the strike had "taken out" their professor. He did enjoy the integrated, interconnected community assessment project involving social studies, language arts, arts, but did also want to know more about the rationale and whether it was for his own learning, or for "an example of something I can do with kids" (p. 12). Later, Cal referred to this project again, saying each separate activity involved important skills, but "we never took that next step further. We just did the activity and that was the end of it" (p. 17).

When asked why some of these questions were not asked directly, why concerns were not raised, Cal talked about matters of trust, and evaluation, and communication.

> *Usually I have a pretty good relationship with most of the professors that I've had... I take my education seriously and I think*

> *it's a two way street, you need to have communication. I hope that I would be valued as a learner to be able to voice some... not criticisms, but questions... It's a matter of communication, and I think on the part of the instructor, there needs to be a sincere invitation, not just a written statement on the course outline... You can tell, if they set up a structured thing, if they spend a little time before and after class, if they actually talk to students, know their names... I work hard for that personally (with students in schools).*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 14)

Cal also described how some fellow students had figured out what sorts of things to present to satisfy certain instructors and urged others, "Don't rock the boat; just work through it". At this point, he seemed genuinely upset with himself and the system, upset that he did not feel "safe" enough to "voice" his questions and concerns.

EXPERIENCE AS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT

> *Maybe I'm a little too cynical because of my experience.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 18)

Cal felt that his more than five years of experience in the schools had affected his assessment of courses at the Faculty of Education. Because he had been in a number of different schools, had worked individually and as a part of teams, he had seen a "vast array" of programs and knew some of the changing pressures and dynamics of schools and classrooms that had shifted even within that five year span. Other mature students who had been away from schools for a long time, or younger education students from protected, traditional schooling might not have had the background information to formulate some of the questions that were boiling around within Cal's thinking as he listened to recommended strategies.

> *It certainly gave me the opportunity to work with all the marginalized and special needs population. I've worked with*

> *really difficult students who do and say all kinds of bad things. It's allowed me to get some training in classroom management techniques and working effectively with violent and aggressive students.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 18)

As Cal continued in the interview, the important aspects of relevant learning from his work as an educational assistant became turned into recommendations for study at the Faculty.

One recommendation was the obvious concern that student teachers should have more direct help with training programs about special needs students, especially along the lines of prevention, of recognizing signs of imminent "blow-ups" of anger and frustration, and what kinds of measures could help at the different stages. Cal described how his cooperating teacher was amazed that he calmly handled a mini-disruption (that could have become major) from one of the special needs students in his grade seven classroom. During the lesson he just walked over and talked the student down naturally. "I didn't even realize that's what I was doing. It's second nature now" (p. 20).
Following from this was the recommendation that education students should know something about the role of an educational assistant, and "how to give that person direction" (p. 19) with curriculum content and with the students' behaviour. Teachers also should learn how to relate to the assistant as positively as possible, as a team member within the classroom, with experience and knowledge to bring to bear on difficult issues and specific students.

Cal was also concerned that there should be a course about classroom management, considering all the changes and larger class sizes there are now in schools. There needed

to be some alternative to throwing kids out of the classroom, or repeating strategies that did not work. You need to establish rules with the students, set up realistic consequences, really listen to the students, were paraphrases of Cal's thinking about this, but he realized that practising all of these in the "heat" of the practicum was dangerous. He referred to social workers' training that involved a great deal of role playing.

> *They do a lot of... understanding where that other person's coming from and I don't see that in the Faculty. I don't see us saying 'Where are these kids coming from?' And yet, it seems to me that more and more, society is expecting teachers to understand where kids are coming from. We're not being taught how to know the students.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 23)

Cal referred also to guest speakers brought in by Student Council, such as John McGee and Dr. Sharon Hamilton, who provided interesting insights about special needs children and labelling, but that there had been relatively few students attending, and little or no chance to follow up with discussion in other course work.

Cal also thought it would be helpful to have information sessions or a forum about such issues as parent-teacher conferencing or student-led conferences and portfolio assessment. These issues were currently being discussed in schools' inservices for teachers, but little had been done directly in the Faculty.

> *I'm supposed to be developing my own professional development portfolio, literacy development and art portfolios, but no one's actually taught us - here is an example... I understand portfolios can take any kind of form, but give us some examples so we can at least have a starting point.*
>
> (October 31, 1995, p. 24)

Cal felt very lucky that he and the students assigned to his placement school had seen students' portfolios when touring their school at the end of the previous school year. His cooperating teacher had invited them to look through these portfolios, where "each teacher had a different style of setting them", but at least "I had an idea of what's possible" (p. 26). Other education students who had not been this fortunate in their schools, found the portfolio assignment "vague", "distressing", and they were really "floundering" (p. 27).

In a final recommendation, Cal wished there could be a structured opportunity to interact, share and collaborate with fellow students in the middle years program at his own school in small groups, and in the whole group as well, during the block time. This need for discussion and social interaction was an aspect greatly enjoyed throughout Cal's early educational life; he wanted to continue that process now.

PRACTICUM - Term One

Cal completed a very successful practicum with two grade seven classes, one of which contained more hyperactive students and students with special academic needs than the other. He taught mathematics, science, language arts and social studies.

The final student teaching report, jointly prepared by his faculty advisor and two cooperating teachers, was completely positive, with almost two typed pages full of comments about his planning, monitoring of students, variety of teaching strategies and activities, rapport with students and staff, and general overall capability. Some of the specific references included "organized", "took particular care in grouping activities", "was self-reflective", "willing and able to act upon advice", "very considerate of students'

needs", "creative and willing to take on anything", "consistent and fair", "has gone above and beyond expectations", and finally, his "professionalism is of the utmost quality" (December 7, 1996).

Cal's interactive journal with his cooperating teachers, as well as his formative evaluations from his advisor and teachers corroborated the final positive comments. Cal did successfully involve the students in hands-on activities as much as possible, especially in the science unit on astronomy, and incorporated a good deal of productive small group work in other subject areas (which was recognized as being potentially risky with these particular students). His calm demeanour and presence, and his ability to prevent or defuse tensions really ensured successful classroom management. I observed a language arts class near the end of his practicum, and observed a confident, focussed, friendly leader, respectful and firm with the students, and also very encouraging.

SECOND TERM

In second term, I did not see Cal as often as first term. He was active on the Student Council which had organized a special event "ED EXPO" for bringing in special guest speakers and providing workshops for specific topics and students' concerns.

Finally, we were able to set a time to meet and for me to receive documents (journals and teaching reports). Cal seemed tired, drawn, depressed even; he was almost curt and distant. I knew through conversation with Joanne that the morale of the middle years group seemed to have deteriorated greatly. The group had had no continuity throughout the faculty strike in first term, and the returning professors had met a very disgruntled, negative group upon their return to classes. There had been questions and

concerns (before the strike) about issues of relevance, and worries about preparedness, but by second term, after a shortened practicum, concerns had changed to anger and negativity.

In conversation, Cal briefly stated that his practicum had been very successful, and that he enjoyed especially being treated as an equal partner in the school, even included on committees, such as the Gordon Foundation school committee on authentic assessment. The respect with which the school and teachers treated him was seen by the students, and he felt helped to model the respect that he earned from them as well. His faculty advisor had also been encouraging and supportive, especially with help about lesson planning. He had missed being in the school second term, especially since the regular once-a-week day, Friday, was so often cancelled because of school division events, or the weather (in the particularly nasty winter of 1996). Could a different day (not Friday) be chosen for scheduling school experience days? Cal wondered.

Returning to university in second term, Cal was struck by the contrast in how he felt now compared to the way he felt in the school. There he had been very busy, tired, but felt buoyant and productive; at university he noticed again the "lack of quality" and "lack of relevance" in the curriculum and instruction courses (February 29, 1996).

Cal was also concerned about what seemed to be a lack of respect for students' questions. He had raised concerns about the focus and emphasis in the language arts classes. He quoted the instructor as saying in response to his queries: "Well, maybe you're not a language arts person". Cal said he felt really "hurt" by that. He had written stories; he had been published. He felt "put down", he said (February 29, 1996). In his

work on student council, and throughout preparations for ED EXPO, he had noticed that no faculty attended any of the sessions. (The council had requested superintendents submit names of innovative teachers in their school divisions, and had selected a number of teachers to come to the university as presenters at workshops.) Cal was concerned about the basic lack of role modeling of being interested in the students' work and concerns, and making connections with current teaching strategies in the schools.

In concluding, Cal again brought up the issue of evaluation and assessment and an education student's ability to be honest or "authentic" in writing assignments. Paraphrasing from notes of our conversation would sound like this. When the assignment asks for personal philosophy, if a student is honest, the work receives only B marks. If the student takes the perspective of the professor (even if the student disagrees), there is a likelihood of an A mark.

> *Basic honesty of expression is not allowed, and causes great frustration.*
>
> (Conversation notes, February 29, 1996)

As with other research participants, later in the year I waited to contact Cal about a final school visit until the final practicum was nearly over (to avoid the overlap with faculty advisors' observations). Cal told me when I phoned that it would not be convenient for me to come to the school because of various projects that were being finished in all classes. I felt a definite chill in our conversation which I put down to the basic fatigue accompanying all practicum experiences. However, when I attempted to contact Cal on several different occasions in May 1996, there was no response at all to my messages and I did not hear from him again.

I do not know for sure why Cal did not respond and why he did not wish to continue with the research. Perhaps by the end of the academic year, he was tired of our conversations, and anything to do with the University was anathema to him.

SARA

Sara was the third member of the middle years group that I chose to interview for research. Her educational background had been mainly traditional in a large northern Manitoba town. She was a good student and "quiet" in class, and really liked teachers who were organized. "He(she) was so organized" was repeated three times about three different teachers. The main method of teaching she remembered was "notes, notes - lots of notes (p. 7). There were no small groups, projects, and few experiments in her experience.

Sara loved mathematics and science but avoided them in university, because her older friends had warned her they were too "hard", and she knew it would be hard to adjust to life in the city and at university. One telling quotation early in the interview seemed to indicate Sara was not fully committed to teaching:

> *My thoughts are still changing. I'm only twenty-one so there's lots of things I still really want to do and I'm thinking of doing besides teaching.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 8)

At the time of the interview, Sara felt unprepared to go into the block of student teaching. She referred to the faculty strike in saying that it was hard to be motivated to finish the four or five assignments that were due. She had tried to work but "couldn't accomplish" anything.

Sara felt confident about teaching the subject matter, but was concerned about what would keep the grade six students "happy" and "wanting to learn". This was rightly a major concern; they told her they were the "worst class" in the school. She admitted they were "rowdy" but she liked them. Her main thoughts seemed to centre on what management strategies she could use. Her cooperating teacher seemed to use a mainly behaviourist approach, as Sara mentioned that she might remove their "candy privileges". (The students had trays on their desks full of their own candy throughout the day.) For now, she mainly used disapproval, as they liked her and she usually did not get angry. However, she did not know how effective this would be during the block.

As Sara talked, and casually referred to what she "might do" for different subjects, I realized that she did not seem to have thought through fully what she was going to do the next week in the schools.

When she raised some concerns about her cooperating teacher's approach that differed from what she really wanted to do, I encouraged her to talk to him about it. Sara replied that she didn't want to "barge in".

> *It's a great year when we get to do all this experience, but I think our main experience is when we come out and we actually have our own room and we can do what we want to do... We'll learn from our own experience.*
>
> (November 13, 1995, p. 25)

It might have been interesting to follow Sara to find out whether this discounting of educational theory and reflection on practice continued, but Sara did not respond to further requests for meetings, documents, or a final interview.

THE MIDDLE YEARS CASE STUDIES: A Cautionary Note

Of the eight research participants, two students withdrew from the study. I believe it is no coincidence that both students belonged to the middle year program which, in 1995-96, seemed to have great problems of group cohesion and focus.

By second term, Joanne and Cal's cases revealed how negative the general atmosphere was within the group, and how much conflict developed with instructors over course goals, content, and assignments. Joanne referred to "the men" and "competition". Intrigued by this, I noted the gender division in the group was almost equal, whereas other groupings with strong collaborative ties, especially the early years program, had as few as eight or nine per cent male students. Did that make any difference?

Certainly, the faculty association's relatively long strike at a potentially crucial time for students about to begin their major practicum was a factor. (The early years program, with an early practicum, had missed most of the strike's effects.) However, very similar pressures on senior years programs did not seem to produce as negative results, as Leslie noted that even greater closeness and bonding developed among students as they tried to help each other in a difficult time.

There seemed to be a mix of dominant, rather aggressive personalities, and immature trusting students, with a few mature reflective students who shied away from leadership in an increasingly negative environment in the classroom. What was the role of faculty in such a situation? Most teachers have faced particularly difficult or abrasive student groups in their careers, and would empathize with the downward spiral of negativity that sometimes overwhelms everyone. Could more have been done?

ROBB

I first met Robb in 1993 when I was a seminar leader for the undergraduate school experience program. He was slightly older than most of his fellow seminar students, articulate, thoughtful, questioning, and increasingly aware of the complexity and challenge of teaching. Even though Robb was in the secondary school program, he was required (as all first year students were) to be in an elementary placement for the first term. Overall, he completed his practicum very successfully, and I remember his concern for the students, particularly one young boy who seemed to be always in trouble with the teacher in a busy, multigrade classroom. Seeing signs of negative expectations and misinterpretations of signals for help, Robb tactfully intervened, with beneficial results for the student, the teacher, and the whole classroom. He was not judgmental, just keenly aware of that young student's distress while trying to negotiate the interpersonal minefields of the classroom.

My first contacts with Robb, then, revealed two strong tendencies: emphasis on critical thinking skills, and a focus on a caring relationship between the teacher and the learners. These were not surprising characteristics for education students, but I wanted to find out where they had come from, whether they would develop or change throughout the final year in Education, as well as what other influences were affecting Robb's developing perspective on teaching and learning in this time of increased responsibility in the schools.

In his final year (1995-1996), Robb was enrolled in one of four possible choices for secondary stream education, the Secondary Project: Eight Month Placement, involving

school experience of one week's orientation at the beginning of the school year, then one day a week while university courses were running, until the five-week block of full time in the schools at the end of first term, November and December. Generally, the secondary students remained in the same school for the next term or semester, but not necessarily with the same teachers or groups of students, as happened in Robb's case. The pattern of university course work, and then the final five week block of teaching was repeated in the last half of the year.

The first interview, on November 6, 1995, (shortly before the final practicum) was loosely structured, with open-ended questions mainly about Robb's educational experiences up to now.

THE EARLY YEARS

In his own school life, Robb remembered that he did "very well academically, with very little work", but potential problems of boredom were offset by strong family support and challenges to be involved in "productive things", whether in work on the family farm, or in church, music, sports, drama, or community participation. Robb's mother, a former teacher, and his father both provided strong role models, and Robb expressed concerns about those students not fortunate enough to have the support and positive options outside of school that had been made available to him. He also realized that his parents had allowed and encouraged his critical thinking faculties to develop, even within the context of sometimes confining school policies and church and community norms. Some of his peers had reacted in very negative ways to those restrictions, but firm parental guidance kept Robb aiming for constructive involvement for change.

At the beginning of this final year, then, Robb was already setting himself the tasks of reaching alienated students and also of aiming for "real life" applications and connections for work in schools, while also realizing the difficulties of accomplishing these tasks in the present system of high school studies. Meeting this dilemma later in the year would engender some problems for Robb but would also produce some small victories.

Exceptions to Robb's "general non-interest" in school were two high school teachers who strongly affected him, changing his way of looking at the world.

> *That history teacher turned me on to philosophy and politics. He was very critical of any dogmatic approach... always asking questions, pushing to know where your boundaries of your world view were... always integrating what was happening in the larger world with the course work.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 4)

Robb also praised his English teacher who combined a wide ranging knowledge of world literature with specific knowledge of each student's personal interests and needs. From a framework of many choices of books for novels studies, she made personal recommendation for each student, often challenging the students, Robb noted, in that Vygotskyan zone of "meeting the students just above where they are". One of the novels he read was Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, a connection with creative thought and language that obviously resonated strongly with him.

For Robb, both teachers emphasized not so much specific facts and detailed content, but "a mind set, a way of looking at the material" that would carry on later outside of the classroom. He acknowledged with deep emotion their effect on him.

> *Those two people were very instrumental in shaping who I am as a person, not just how I approach education in the classroom.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 9)

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES AND SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

When discussing experiences in undergraduate courses and seminars prior to the final year, Robb expressed dismay at some of the ultra-conservative views of some fellow students whom he considered to be from well-off, "very comfortable, middle classish" backgrounds. Now, he felt he had been "more outspoken than I should have been", a change reflecting what he had learned from being with the youth and the elders of a northern Manitoba aboriginal community the previous summer of 1995.

> *... if somebody is in a stage, and they're working through it, even if you disagree or may not find it completely healthy, it's usually a good idea to have them learn those things, from their own experience... My ideal now has become to allow students in my classes (that opportunity).*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 12)

This realization, that someone else cannot be given one's own experience and understanding directly, led to Robb's conclusion that he would opt for the indirect approach of modeling "a way of looking at the world" that students will pick up and find helpful. He referred again to the critical thinking approach used by his high school teacher, and the fact that he, Robb, was receptive because of other issues in his life, while many students in the same classes were not. Different students have different needs at different times, and trying to meet all those needs would mean "a very, very different way of looking at school".

Outside of the course work and interactions with fellow students, the first two school placements, in schools with strong academic focus and parental support, proceeded well for Robb, and elicited no major comments. However, the third placement, at a junior

high with students from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds found Robb in familiar territory (not personally, but with memories of public school).

> *(The students were) inherently suspicious of academic knowledge... very similar to my peer group's experience... they think that school is going to be used against them... that is where a teacher needs to be challenged all the time.*
>
> (November 6, 1996, p. 15)

Despite the familiarity with these alienated students' attitudes, and the challenge involved in helping them to think and act more positively toward themselves and their world, Robb felt that this school experience did not go well. Two reasons were that he and his cooperating teacher had "very different approaches to classroom involvement", and that lack of time, in that brief school experience period, did not allow enough time to develop trust with the students and make a difference for them.

A third important reason for failing to connect with the students was Robb's recognition of his tendency to be "very teacher directed, to talk too much, to go against my own philosophy of things". Characteristically, then, in his final year, Robb faced this dilemma by challenging himself to learn as much as possible about areas such as cooperative learning, cognitive coaching, and Edward DeBono's interactive thinking exercises. He was aiming for teaching as an "indirect process", the setting up of experiences in which the students can learn.

NORTHERN REFLECTIONS

Following the third school practicum, and just before his final year, Robb accepted a position as activities coordinator in a very remote northern community. Robb credited the vision of the Chief and Council in wanting someone who was "genuinely curious and

willing to learn from them" in trying to help their young people to bridge the considerable gap between their native culture and "white society". He acknowledged initial tension at first, as he was the outsider, but by the end of the summer, he had become very comfortable developing a kind of "freedom" to have people learn according to their needs. He had become much more sensitive to cultural expressions, to appropriate interactions with others, and to how vulnerable and "dysfunctional" a person feels in a different cultural setting. He also realized (in the way he was treated) how important it was, under such circumstances, that people were "generous and kind and willing to teach me".

From his reflection on the experiences in the northern community, Robb concluded:

> *... One of the big lessons that will stick with me is that... a lesson that can't be applied, or can't be put into place in a relationship between people, won't really be learned, which raises a lot of questions for classroom interaction.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 27)

Robb also realized that, the more he experienced in the native circles, "the more I don't know", and this led to his discomfort while trying to prepare a group project teaching unit on native studies at the beginning of his final year's curriculum course in Social Studies.

> *We were always treading a fine line between a valuable instrument of cultural education and a distancing thing... with the danger that it gives students and teachers the good feeling that they know about this group now.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 29)

Robb stated his belief that, when studying an area where there are not many first-hand experiences or chances to develop relationships, teachers need to pass on to students

at least the awareness that the study is "only a narrow picture", only a small part of what is possible to be learned about others. Once again, Robb's basic fairness and desire to avoid dogmatic certainty was revealed.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END

Prior to beginning the final year, then, Robb was ready to interact more fully with students, to help them make connections with the world outside of school, and to help them set positive goals for themselves.

> *I think the challenge that I see for an effective teacher is to get students to have ownership, to seek out situations in which they can be effective and in which they can learn effectively.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 21)

Ironically, Robb found that this ideal was very hard to apply to himself in his final year's practicum. Even though he had registered in the Secondary Project, "a step away from the regular program", he found that he was set up in a classroom structured in a very specific way, to get through "a set of academic materials". Only a special effort on his own initiative allowed him to trade part of his academic load for working half-days with a teacher in an experimental modified program for Senior One "at-risk" students; "we're experimenting with it together".

Characteristically, again Robb eschewed the safe, predictable path, seeking the challenge of making learning "real" for students who were alienated in social and personal, as well as academic ways, from the worlds of school and the workplace. The requirement to develop real life connections in which to apply and extend school learning was ideally suited to Robb's life experience. For instance, he helped the teacher to arrange for these

students to help early elementary students from area schools with reading, writing, and other interactive tasks. The Senior Ones' input was solicited to carry out the plans, and positive results were obvious as both sets of students achieved success and accountability in this "fresh start" in a new setting.

The students were also assigned short periods of work experience, and Robb saw students go from being "completely negative" at school, to doing "astoundingly well" within the context of the workplace, handling business mathematics, journal writing, punctuality, interaction with authority figures, as well as specific skills such as welding.

Robb talked enthusiastically about the changes in students as they interacted with the program's strategies and the consistent, caring support from leaders. He confessed to being drawn to and intrigued by these students much more than to the academically successful students, especially the ones reluctant to move away from the comfortable transmission model of learning that had worked well for them. For Robb, motivation involved a curiosity to find a new way of doing things.

> *I have to realize that, for a lot of students, there is no intrigue, and I find that difficult to deal with.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 24)

REFLECTIONS ON THE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Near the end of this first interview, Robb refers to his own perception of the Faculty of Education program in general. On the negative side, he felt that undergraduate courses lacked coherence.

> *There was a strong sense that these courses were needed, but not a really strong sense of what students should actually learn.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 30)

He also felt that early school experiences were not of long enough duration to be worthwhile, and that more direct connections between undergraduate courses and these practicums would be very helpful. Robb was concerned about the attitudes of many fellow education students who seemed more concerned about functioning professionally, interacting successfully with staff, "without a corresponding emphasis on the students". He felt they viewed students as "products" and were concerned mainly with the ability "to fit into a neatly defined institution" (November 6, 1995, p. 22).

As mentioned previously, Robb was also concerned about the handling of his all-important school placement in the final year. He recommended more opportunity for education students to "examine and challenge" the program. Students less determined, mature, and self-confident than Robb might not have risked asking for a change in teaching assignments, missing the opportunity to work successfully with an innovative, alternative approach to secondary education. He felt some regret that he had not applied for the pilot program, where he perceived there was more opportunity for communication among teachers, student teachers, and university advisors (November 6, 1995, p. 21).

However, after two months into this last year, "finally, finally there is that mesh of Faculty of Education requirements and student teaching, and that's excellent". Robb enjoyed the specific curriculum courses, such as English and Geography, and their realistic issues of content, classroom management, provincial standardized tests, and relationships with colleagues, students, parents and the community.

One aspect of this particular year for all education students at the University of Manitoba was the Faculty Association strike which began October 18, 1995, and ended

three weeks later. Because Robb's classes were mainly taught by contract staff, he was not as greatly affected as some students were. However, he did offer comments at the end of the interview (with the strike still in progress), that the strike had seemed to exacerbate an already deepening divide between the schools and the university, with the perception of the university as very "introspective" and "separated off from the real world".

> *It seems to mean that working teachers are going more and more towards a very suspicious and frustrated working relationship with the Faculty and that's too bad. I don't know what else to say... it's too bad.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 33)

Robb referred here to the negative consequences for the schools, if each side becomes more isolated.

> *Teachers are becoming more suspicious of the research that is going on in the Faculty. That my experience is what teaches me... is a more prevalent mind set than I thought...*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 33)

Robb deplored this "anti-education mentality" which cuts off the teaching community from sources of renewal and constructive criticism and sees the university only as a big "series of hoops" to go through. He felt that the Faculty of Education could take a stronger leadership role in setting up a more "interactive relationship" with the teachers.

> *There is so much hope... so much potential. If only the Faculty and the teachers could all get together and actually use some of it.*
>
> (November 6, 1995, p. 36)

RULE, PRINCIPLE AND IMAGE

The works of Elbaz (1983) and Clandinin (1986) have validated the importance of personal practical knowledge, teacher's knowledge that is based on the narrative of

experience. Elbaz's framework of image, practical principle, and rule help to structure that knowledge, and provide ways of analysing the language and thoughts of preservice teachers.

Thus, after analysing early life influences, the undergraduate courses and beginning work in the certification year, Robb's educational perspective had already shown the presence of personal constructs about teaching. Rules have the least reference at this point, understandably, because of the limited chances available for student teachers to develop these specific guidelines for themselves; usually they are implementing someone else's rules until they begin the longer blocks of time and greater responsibility in the final year. In the first interview, the only rule mentioned as important was the idea of presenting the agenda for the course at the beginning of the year, semester, or five-week block, as both of Robb's role models from high school did.

Practical principles emerged much more clearly and were derived from Robb's personal biography. One principle centered on the need for practical application of school learning toward something productive in real life. Another was the importance of personal relationships, knowing and respecting the needs and interests of others. A third was the need for challenge, the idea that motivation to learn begins with being curious or intrigued to try something new and that, to be more effective, the challenge should be slightly beyond what the student can accomplish on their own. Robb also wanted to work toward balance with the "real" extension of school learning integrated with the academic pursuits, for both students and teachers.

The main image arising from Robb's language centres upon the metaphor of people or strategies being a "key", with related pictures of a "doorway" or "gateway". Those two special teachers in high school provided a "key" out of dogmatism, out of confining ways of thinking: Robb wanted alienated students to be able to view school as a possible "key" to help them move from disadvantage to more positive opportunities. He thought of teacher experience as being a "doorway" to help students see their own lives and the world in a new way. He and some like-minded education students wanted their secondary students to understand that the tools and skills of school work could be a "gateway" to effective interaction and production in other areas.

Robb also frequently refers to "balance" and the importance of finding the balance between the "real" and the "academic" worlds. Here, the central image of "key" could be thought of as the agent for connecting and providing interactive access for students to both worlds. Again, the terms "doorway" and "gateway" seem to imply that there are two separate areas, with specific access through one narrow passageway, and also imply that there is potential opening up ahead, if people or teaching strategies can be found to help students through.

The element of caring relationships is also a strong image throughout Robb's life influences, beginning with the obvious security, support, caring and challenge within his close-knit family. This theme was repeated in the strong, mutually respectful relationships with the aboriginal people of the northern community where Robb spent one summer. The teachers he had for role models knew him well enough to know what would be the

keys to his awakening intellectual, personal and social development, profoundly affecting "who I am" and unleashing within him the awareness of the great potential influence that mentors and role models can wield.

THE JOURNAL

The first term block of teaching turned into four weeks instead of five, because students were asked to return to university for one week of classes to make up for time lost during the faculty strike. This change of plan caused some problem for Robb, since the fall time had already been planned with the teachers.

Robb kept a reflective journal during this block, and again the rules, principles, and images began to emerge. More rules were evident this time, a few conveyed by the cooperating teacher, such as the suggestion not to cover too much new information all at once in one class period. Robb learned this when providing information about how to write a formal essay on *Macbeth*. Robb also realized that the wording of questions and providing of all necessary information when creating tests was vitally important to give the students a fair chance to succeed. He also learned to over-prepare and check again when needing information for vital meetings with the principal about field trips, especially after an external contact person did not prepare as promised. He learned to wait until final approval had been granted before discussing future exciting camping trips with students. Finally, he learned to check on parental approval before allowing students to videotape each other even for worthy causes such as health and language arts interviews. These rules were not always stated as rules, of course, but arose out of the descriptions of issues and episodes that happened at school.

The practical principles or guidelines that began to develop from Robb's biography and the language of his first interview are deepened in some ways and are absent from other aspects of his teaching after the weeks in the school. Robb used a variety of approaches in teaching the Shakespearean play and was struck by the variety of reactions when he asked students to evaluate one specific medium. Two principles were thus shown: teachers must actively search for different strategies to reach different students in the same class, and a caring teacher asks students to express how they are affected by what happens in the classroom. The essay writing showed Robb that students can be provided with new information as they need it, and can work at their own pace.

However, the principles of finding applications to the real world of the students, and of helping students to be curious, to be challenged, were noticeably absent from the English teaching. The strong academic focus and the predetermined essay topic meant that there was little room for much personal engagement with *MacBeth*, either from Robb or from the students. Robb wrote much less about this class than the other, the modified program Senior One, and even admitted openly "I find the Senior One class a lot more interesting and intriguing than the other one" (Journal, p. 2) and "the biggest rewards and the biggest frustrations are in this class" (Journal, p. 3).

In discussing the first week with the Senior One class, the principle of allowing enough time for the building of a trusting relationship with students, especially alienated ones, is of utmost importance to Robb.

> *I don't want to push too fast... I think that distance is an important part of what security and confidence the students have. If I push*

> *too hard into their space, they will push back and that will be the end of my helpfulness...*
>
> (Journal, p. 2)

Robb's journal was prophetic; by the end of his weeks there, Robb had become fully established with the group, and teamed well with the cooperating teacher, while a teaching assistant's extroverted attentions and invasion of personal space had led to a blow-up with the students.

After the problems with the field trip approval process, and also with the videotaping of students' interviews containing controversial, potentially harmful information concerning legal and ethical issues, Robb's realization framed another guiding principle or "lesson" as he calls it.

> *I should be a lot more careful about preparations and larger implications of the actions that I take or allow in the classroom.*
>
> (Journal, p. 8)

However, the technical problems and rules about approval were completely offset by the challenge and stimulation of working with the Senior One group. Most of the content of Robb's journal discussed interesting dilemmas with the group or with some of its individuals and there was obviously a bond, a strong, caring relationship between Robb and the students, and the ideal of providing a "key" to a more positive, productive life was evident in Robb's words.

> *(The students)... get put at the bottom of the social and academic heap... If a teacher can make a positive connection with a couple of students, the potential for valuable difference is so great... I have to admit that my primary concern right now is hardly academic; it is a social and personal goal.*
>
> (Journal, p. 11)

Robb was also confirmed in his view that one of the main "keys" to helping such needy students was to help them build authentic experiences and connections with the real world.

> *I was amazed at the change in the students once they... get treated like adults, given real responsibility, and are not on the bottom of the social ladder.*
>
> (Journal, p. 10)

WINTER CAMP

In a document written for a curriculum course in social studies, Robb described the two-day winter camping trip for the modified program Senior One students, which had been approved, finally, for the end of the school's first semester.

The description of this experience, coming as it did after his first practicum, warranted special attention because it seemed to embody all of the rules, principles, and images of Robb's teaching philosophy within the one event. As part of a team of leaders, Robb paid full attention to the rule of careful planning and checking ahead of time about preparations and equipment, especially because of the setting (an abandoned rock quarry), the time of year (January on the Canadian Prairies), and the nature of the students ("at risk" adolescents). With hindsight, Robb and the leaders realized anew the importance of division of tasks and assigning of roles, both before leaving and, again, upon arriving at the actual site. (This held true for the leaders' team as well as for the group of students.) Had this rule been more closely followed, Robb realized, some off-task behaviour and a "school-type lecture" might have been avoided on the second day. Treating students fairly and consistently was a strong concern for Robb.

However, Robb did not want rules to stifle enthusiasm for the trip. His own principles of allowing flexibility and opportunities for a variety of experiences were played out within the framework of this unique setting, away from the comforts and technological trappings of urban life. The basic tasks of providing food, shelter, and maintaining interpersonal communications kept everyone occupied, with much of the "decision making and enforcement" handled by the students. Robb credited the leaders' team with some excellent ideas; a talking stick proved an invaluable discussion tool around the night's campfire, where more "reticent students... opened up to an extent that I had not seen before", and the more outspoken ones learned to hold back "to come up with some careful thoughts" (February 1, 1996, p. 5). Robb even led his own small group on a walk after the campfire experience, a walk initiated by the students.

> *We walked to a large rock about a kilometre from the camp and stopped to talk. We talked about rocks and astronomy and international politics and school politics and music and philosophy... in the space of an hour I think that those students picked up more from the surroundings, each other, and me than they had the whole year of school.*
>
> (Journal, p. 6)

The next day, the final activity of the trip involved rappelling down the steepest cliff face inside the quarry, which only a few of the leaders (and not Robb) had ever done. "I was as scared and inexperienced as all the students", claimed Robb, but he did it, and went on to help the others, "an amazing success", with the students all learning to explore "positive aspects of discovery and risk taking". The images of teaching and learning as challenges to be met and overcome are thus embodied here, combining with the images of

good teaching centered in authentic experiences in the real world, experiences augmented by caring, trusting relationships among all the teachers and learners involved.

Robb provided excellent descriptions and analyses of this field trip, with specific reference to how to improve things for the next group. "I feel more positive about these two days than I can express on paper", he emphasized in conclusion. The trip was the "ideal climax" of the school's modified program, with debriefing discussions, stories and even formal examination writings much later on from the students, showing that the trip had indeed been, for them, a "formative high school experience" (Journal, p. 10).

I contrast the enthusiasm and depth of reflection evident in Robb's report on experiential learning in a web of caring relations with his rather subdued, workmanlike approach observed directly in the senior English classroom a few weeks earlier. Granted, the students were working on the writing of an assigned topic, a formal essay on the role of ambition in *Macbeth*. The students were conferencing diligently and patiently with Robb and the cooperating teacher, but there seemed to be little enthusiasm, curiosity, or engagement with the topic or the writing. In the final interview with me a few months later, Robb said that he could scarcely remember what had happened with the first term's English class, but he would never forget the winter camping trip.

MID-TERM CONVERSATION - February 1996

In a very busy second term, Robb and I discussed briefly the changes within the second semester at his school. He was still interested in following the students from the modified program, who had now been integrated into regular classes, and was dismayed that they were already being stereotyped and labeled very negatively by a few of the

teachers on staff. Robb's basic sense of fairness and caring for these students was evident. What chance could they have to succeed, he wondered. As usual, Robb balanced this viewpoint with acknowledgment of the school's general support given to all student teachers; the principal and staff were willing to share ideas and discuss perspectives, but some attitudes about students in the school troubled Robb.

In a new setting, and referring to academic English studies (Robb's new assignment involved teaching a Senior Four Advanced Placement class), Robb was concerned that academic goals were predetermined, that novel study seemed to deal mainly with types and literary forms, with "no connections to students' own lives", "no emphasis on students' own strengths in writing", and no connection of the ideas to present day political and cultural currents. Robb had once again set himself a challenge, that of finding a way to help students connect more personally with the academic agenda before all of them in the final practicum; the influences of his own learning past were interwoven with the ideals for the future as he set himself this goal.

FINAL INTERVIEW - "So glad to be done"

At the last interview, a month after the end of Robb's practicum (and just the week of his graduation), Robb appeared to be still strongly affected by his final evaluation from the school. He spoke of it first, as uppermost in his mind, and subsequent references took up almost one third of the interview. Robb explained, by way of background that, shortly before the student teachers left his school, they participated, with other staff, in a divisional professional development day centered on teacher evaluations and discussions of changes and improvements. They found the topic very interesting and noted the

constructive suggestions from administrators about more self-evaluation and reflection, informal feedback and teachers' collegial evaluation of each other. The student teachers also listened carefully to their cooperating teachers' concerns about supervisors' final reports made without prior consultation and without chances to address or resolve issues.

Robb explained the irony of his situation, then, after receiving his own final report.

> *... my supervising teachers were quite outspoken on that, and yet, when they were put into the supervisory position, there were things on my files, criticism that they made of my teaching, that they had never brought up in a classroom. I was quite disappointed about that.*
>
> (May 31, 1996, p. 3)

The principle of fairness in treating others in a relationship and the concepts of respect and caring for others, were obviously still important issues for Robb, whether dealing with his own students or his own professional evaluation. He did not imply that he was above criticism; criticisms were "areas that I had struggled with", such as clarity of written assignments, but "not areas they (the teachers) had offered any assistance on, or not areas that we had talked about" (Journal, p. 4).

He also described the unequal power relations involved in the timing of his evaluation meeting with the faculty advisor and his supervising teachers, sandwiched as it was between two classes for which he was still responsible.

> *I had just taught a class and still had that class in my head and went straight to the meeting and there were these criticisms that I had never heard before, and what was I to do about them? And so I didn't have time... I didn't say anything... I didn't have time to get my head together to have some discussion...*
>
> (May 31, 1996, p. 4)

Robb realized that the change of semesters had meant a great change of pace in the classroom. In first term, there had been different expectations for the extended program students, requiring more time to implement curriculum goals than now in work with regular and advanced placement students, where the pace was much faster. However, he felt that the issues of timing, pace and clarity had at least been partially resolved, "but the evaluation doesn't necessarily reflect that" (Journal, p. 5).

Robb also reported that he appreciated the independence the supervising teachers had granted him, but he also would have benefitted from more consultation, some "regular dialogue", especially in the final weeks, and especially if the report was going to be critical.

> *That criticism was one I felt keenly because it came right at the end... it was a bit unexpected... I had thought that things were going very well towards the end...*
>
> (May 31, 1996, p. 6)

Later in the interview, Robb stated that his final report was not as "drastic" as he first thought it was, although "I still would disagree with some of their judgement calls..." What makes his comment poignant was that there had been no real opportunity for Robb to explain his point of view. Tellingly, what did matter the most to Robb was that the final report did recognize that "my rapport with the students had been very strong and my inter-staff relationships had gone really well." Caring relations with others, always a central goal for Robb, that, at least, had been strongly validated in the final report.

In Robb's specific teaching tasks in the last terms, and in keeping with his images of good teaching as being authentic, connected to something real and productive, as well as to something that has personal meaning for the learners, Robb found a "key" to help his

senior English students engage with and transcend their academic requirements. This time, the "key" was not a field trip but a writing project.

> *I had them doing ten minutes of writing at the beginning of each class and then, at the end, I had them submit their favourite piece, final edit it and I put together a book... 'Ten Minutes of Consciousness' was a student's suggestion for the title.*
>
> (May 31, 1996, p. 7)

However, as Robb explained, this project did not happen as simply or smoothly as the above description might imply. And yes, the challenge of getting the students involved was formidable because, at first, the students were "vocally against it", saying Robb was "infringing on their rights". Here, the example of a university writing course helped him; the adult students there had reacted even more negatively towards their professor; yet in the end they, as a class, had accomplished great things. Therefore, Robb persevered; the students wrote, and thought, and wrote again, and connected with their texts, their literary forms, their world, each other, as they used this opportunity to grow and create personal meaning for themselves. In various phrases, Robb revealed his great pride in their accomplishment: "astounding work"; "powerful writing"; "amazing pieces".

Yet, this work did not replace the curriculum themes in any way. On the contrary, Robb found that the students' understanding of form and style and author's intentions were all greatly enhanced by attempts to use the strategies themselves. Of course, Robb played a vital role by providing the context, the opportunity, and each day the stimulus or catalyst, a "jumping off point" to write about, as well as expending a great deal of energy to prepare copy, collate, and bind the forty-two page book. Again, careful attention to the needs and privacy of the students meant that the book was distributed just locally among

the class members, as was their wish. Perhaps tellingly, Robb did not mention how regular novel studies proceeded. There seemed to have been little dialogue with his cooperating teachers, as explained in his concern about his evaluation.

In all, then, the writing project was handled in much the same way as Robb's role models had handled the courses he had enjoyed so much in high school, where the course's general goals would be set out, and the students would be encouraged to focus on connections and personal ways of challenging and meeting those goals.

Robb regretted that he was not able to do the same with the geography class in the final practicum. He fulfilled the requirements, but found the full teaching load of four periods out of five every day meant that he did not have the extra time needed to "make a class really click" together.

When asked about his own perception of his development as a teacher, Robb responded with two main points that became intertwined with each other, as his images of good teaching connected with the practical and technical demands he had become so acutely aware of during the weeks in the practicum.

> *I think I became less idealistic during my student teaching... in good directions... I did wind up distancing myself a little bit more from the students than I had in earlier times. I recognized that as a teacher I will need to have other roles than just the guide in the classroom. I also have professional relationships with my colleagues and parents and community... that are going to expect things that will conflict with the teacher's (ideals)... (p. 13).*

> *I need to learn to be a little more hard nosed in the classroom, especially with classroom management, like setting up deadlines and a formal structure... I can learn that from some of them, and I hope that they (other teachers) could also learn from me that the students in their classes are real people and have the potential to*

be interesting people who think interesting thoughts, have the potential to grow a lot in their classes and not just to fill time there. That is one bit of idealism that I hope I can hold on to...

(May 31, 1996, p. 14)

Even Robb was surprised about the vehemence of his own last statements, as he commented a short time later, "I don't quite know where that came from...". Perhaps the feeling of not having a fair chance to defend his record with his supervisors had resurfaced, or the frustration of seeing student potential not fully explored had returned.

Robb referred at the end of this interview to his earlier viewpoint that the University of Manitoba and the schools should have much closer connections than was evident to him or his fellow teachers in his experience with schools. He had changed somewhat, having now had first hand experience with the "wide variety of perspectives", the "strong opinions" of teachers in their own settings, and realized there was a reason for the distance and leeway allowed between the two institutions during the student teaching supervision process.

Disparity (in evaluation) is a reflection of how well my philosophy of teaching correlates with my supervisors...

(Journal, p. 17)

However, he had not given up his contention that the University still has a vital role to foster a broader perspective in student teachers and among teachers in general about the issues and problems of teaching, and cites the great help that he received from both of his curriculum instructors.

At the same time, I think that the University could benefit, probably more even than the teachers, from periodically asking (of teachers) what's actually happening in your classrooms.

(May 31, 1996)

CAROL

In January 1995, Carol was a member of my seminar for students completing their second school experience before certification year in 1995-1996. With her academic background in the sciences, and life experiences of travel, a family business, and children in the school system, Carol brought a wonderful blend of humanistic and rational approaches to discussion and interpretation of issues in education. More than that, though, she also displayed a perceptive awareness of the needs of fellow students, offering support quickly to a distraught young man trying to articulate his frustration with the computer program requirement of the course, and providing practical advice (while in a small group) to another science student seeking help to motivate and control his very large classroom during the once a week visits to the school. Carol's own school experience that year was "a dream placement".

> *My cooperating teachers introduced me to their classes in such a way that the students seemed to have respect for my knowledge and abilities from the first day. I felt welcomed... the students would ask me questions and accept my explanations without any hesitation.*
>
> (Reflective Review, April 26, 1995)

Carol taught for two teachers in the senior secondary sciences, and experienced the "great opportunity" of being trusted with their students.

My first contacts with Carol, then, revealed a caring, knowledgeable, and responsible student who often had a ready smile and stories to share. Her journal reflections emphasized her needs for establishing mutual respect with the students and for the freedom to develop her own approach to the content, internalizing and reorganizing

materials to make better sense of it to herself and to her students. Carol raised important issues in seminar discussions. As a seminar leader for three years in a different role (for a required course for secondary science and mathematics students prior to their final practicums), I had become very interested in the attitudes of a significant number of secondary program students who displayed very conservative thinking about such things as cooperative learning, gender equity, attention to the learner's prior knowledge and interests, reflective thinking, and journal writing. Since I was at that time working as a faculty advisor for the humanities and social science areas, I did not typically see these students later in their school settings. I did wonder, though, how these student teachers dealt with their students in the areas of secondary science and mathematics, how or if some of the learner-centred strategies advocated by some course work and teacher education literature were being used, and if so, with what effect?

I felt that Carol's background in science and business, combined with a caring, thoughtful stance toward teaching strategies and interactions with high school students, promised to provide an interesting point of view to follow in her final year.

CAROL IN SCHOOL

When asked about her own experiences in school, Carol began with a self-assessment, "I've always thought that I have a very strong personality, and that... throughout my life, has been pretty consistent" (November 8, 1995, p. 1). Part of that strength may have come from overcoming adversity in the first few years of school, since Carol's only conscious memories were quite negative. She did not go to kindergarten,

and in grade one, she was "totally overwhelmed", but soon had to make a new adjustment. Moving mid-year from Winnipeg to a smaller city nearby was traumatic, at first because the teacher was a man, and then because of his actions.

> *If you got too many questions wrong or you didn't do well, you got strapped in front of the class... I used to sit near the back of the class... I was frightened every time it happened... One time, I got three mistakes on a test and he called me up too, because I shouldn't have had any wrong and I got... I was devastated, I thought I would never go back to school. And that's all I remember. I obviously went back to school and I survived.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 1)

Carol remembered little of grade two, except that a "matronly" teacher became angry with one girl for missing too much school and not bringing notes.

> *Whenever teachers would get angry, it would really, really bother me. It must have, because those are the only things I remember.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 2)

One positive memory involved a grade five teacher reading to her class from the book *Old Yeller* every morning and afternoon. "It was wonderful hearing those stories". Other influences in Carol's life, such as family support and friends, must have been very positive too, as she was a very successful student and was involved in sports, student council, and school activities throughout these years and high school.

One later realization about the policies of school organization did come from this general school experience, however. In junior high school, Carol's family moved again to a large town with "four classes in each grade... It (school) was tiered", and in grade nine, Carol was in the "high level" class. This tracking was significant to Carol later when she

realized her husband was there at the same time, in the "dummy" class, and the "last thing he is is a dummy". Carol explained that he wanted to play hockey, and the expectations of the grade were so low, he didn't have to do anything (in school). "That's coloured a lot of my perspective on how things are done, too" (November 8, 1995, p. 2). In general, though, for Carol, school was "really positive".

Carol's account of her vocational counselling involved gender issues. She wanted to be a doctor, but discounted it herself because of cost, time and distance. The school counsellor suggested nursing, to which Carol agreed and began training, but soon dropped it because her future husband's career had moved him to Vancouver. In trying to counsel Carol to stay, especially after checking her high scores on admissions tests, the director of nursing was "adamant" that she should never be following a hockey player, she should be pursuing "a PhD, not just an RN". Although acknowledging it was a "very tough" decision at the time, Carol now seemed very happy and comfortable about it, "It was the right decision because I like my life".

Later, after travels to different cities in the United States and Canada, Carol and her husband returned to Winnipeg to set up a business and raise a family. In 1992, Carol decided to return to university, succeeded in gaining high marks in chemistry and biology, and then, in consultation with her family, realized she had options other than medicine. Carol's husband and children were very supportive, "As a family, we decided... they were willing to back me", and once she started student teaching, "I just loved being with the kids".

I think I needed challenge and the kids in school are definitely challenging right now.

(November 8, 1995, p. 4)

In the personal data included with her portfolio, Carol refers to another reason besides the need for challenge for her interest in being a teacher. She states that she had viewed the educational system as a mother of two unique children and "I have seen the effects of the system on them".

Her oldest child, always curious, questioning, alert at home, was not challenged enough at school, Carol felt.

Without putting any effort into it, he still gets it all. That's not the way school should be.

(November 8, 1995, p. 5)

Again, thinking about how the system affects individuals, Carol had doubts about the school's Challenge Program, a system for dealing with high ability students, by pulling them out of one subject to be "challenged" in another,

I didn't like the set up. It was all pull outs... Kids need to be challenged in different ways.

(November 8, 1995, p. 5)

Carol was also concerned that her daughter, very bright, but very quiet, might not be noticed or known in the classroom. Referring to her daughter and son, Carol commented, "I don't think that either type of kid should get lost in the class."

Through volunteer work in schools and community centres, Carol worked often with students, such as in a grade six babysitting course where she was "absolutely appalled" by their grammar, spelling, their inability to communicate in writing "so that it would make sense to me". Carol forthrightly questioned teachers, but was concerned about the

responses, that she should not "disrupt the creative process". She did not think the "big red pen" was the answer, but did think that some attention should be paid to spelling and grammar by grade six.

> *I've done some reading on whole language, and I think the concept, the way I understand it, has just been taken piecemeal. And no one's understanding the real underlying philosophies.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 6)

This reminded Carol of her similar concerns about the use of group work in schools, which can be "great", but also can be a "disaster", "not handled right" very often, as she had found out by watching her own son's experience. She acknowledged group work can work fairly, "but it takes a lot of planning".

Starting from concerns for her own family's education then, but also feeling empathy for all the students she encountered through tutoring experiences with varied levels of schooling, Carol decided to act.

> *I wanted to know 'what are they teaching the teachers?' and 'why are they doing it this way?', and the only real way to find out was to actually come out here (university).*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 7)

Thus, Carol's questioning stance and life experiences led her to enter the field of education, and throughout the certifying year, new questions and experiences would interact with this past in her developing educational philosophy and practice.

UNIVERSITY COURSE WORK: First Term

Carol felt "like a science student" until certification year because she took most of her education courses during intersession so they would not coincide as much with heavy course loads for science and required labs.

"Most of the courses I've enjoyed" was Carol's initial response as she acknowledged that some fellow students considered education courses "a waste of time". However, she felt that part of the problem could be the hypercritical approach some education students adopted.

> *You have to put a lot of work into the courses... see it from the perspective of how it's being taught... You have to really make a shift from the way we think and what we think we are going to do when we get out there, try the stuff and believe, try to believe it and step back later and analyse it.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 12)

Carol found this attitude really worked for her with the Reading in the Secondary Area course. At first sceptical, she later declared it to be one of the "most useful courses I've taken". She used many ideas and documented their success in her portfolio. She felt that education students needed to "commit" and "internalize" the different ideas; they seemed too ready to stand back and judge without trying ideas first to see if they would work.

> *I think group learning is like that. I think bits and pieces have been taken from it and I think I have a pretty good idea what the intent is. But I think that a lot of times, people do think that it's just working in groups.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 12)

Carol referred again to her own children's experience with group work when their teachers did not handle the group process and evaluation well.

> *I've never seen the bad products out here (university). And that might be something we need to see... don't just show us the stuff that worked.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 11)

Carol did show understanding of certain teachers and fellow education students who might be reluctant to change or accept new ideas. She acknowledged the tremendous amount of prior planning and work to be done to make parallel shifts in other areas, such as evaluation. She also felt that having "more confidence in my own ideas" as a mature student allowed her to be secure enough to move to new thinking, without feeling threatened, as some younger students might.

THE SCHOOL CONNECTION

In the first interview, before the four-week practicum had begun, Carol explained how she was already trying out some ideas with her students in the one day a week in the schools, and was "really excited" about what she was learning "out here" (at the university). This was noteworthy as she had already referred to her class in the practicum as a "special group" and "They're not your typical classroom". Carol had set herself the challenge of seeing if some of the advocated strategies would work with a group of Senior Ones with problems of focus, maturity, low motivation, and self-control. After a disastrous first lesson (described below) she began very slowly to introduce cooperative strategies, using designated pairs discussing worksheets. This worked well enough to start thinking ahead to a plan for research projects in genetics, using cooperative groups to plan, organize and present information during her four-week practicum.

Yet in handling the introduction to group work, Carol revealed how carefully she wanted to attend to the needs of the students. She wanted to keep track of each one individually; "what goes down on the paper is theirs." They were allowed to work

together, discuss, but "I want to see their individual perspectives too" and they should not always be "a compromise" to the group. She wanted accountability so their own ideas would not "get lost".

She also realized that the class needed time to adjust to a less individualistic approach than they were used to. One girl arriving late to a class refused to be paired with the only other student available, not fully understanding that no student had been given a choice of partner. There was a blow-up; Carol had to send her to the office because of strict guidelines for this classroom that the teacher understandably wanted to be followed no matter who was in charge. As Carol said, "It's not easy; you really need to plan", but she wanted to continue to use the cooperative strategies, gradually increasing responsibilities.

Carol's resolve had been severely tested by her first eighty minute class with this group when she wanted to give them variety, a change from the notes and worksheets she had been observing. Her hours of preparation of slides, rock samples, notes and anecdotes, were ignored as some students walked out when the lights went down for the slide show and others began throwing the rock samples around the room. It was "a disaster" in Carol's words, but she regained control, changed the lesson plan "drastically" and arranged to come back to teach this group again before the next regular day of student teaching in order to establish herself immediately with the group.

> *The new lesson plan was notes and worksheets. I worked them hard and I worked them in a very structured controlled class with little transition from one assignment to the next. The next Friday we talked about how I could teach them... They would have to*

> *convince me they could handle it before I would try activities or labs again. After a few more weeks of tight structure, we had an understanding that allowed me to slowly introduce labs and activities.*
>
> (Reflections, Term 1, 1995)

Carol had turned the disaster to something very positive. By trying the more interesting, varied approach, early with this group, Carol took a risk, but that risk allowed the students to catch a glimpse of what they were missing. If they wanted labs and activities, "they were responsible for earning the right to do those", and they began to "police" themselves to gain that right.

It did not happen immediately. Carol worked very hard to introduce interesting labs and activities, but if they "behaved improperly, it would shut down". Carol made it clear that it was their responsibility, their "choice".

> *It wasn't blackmail, or punishment. They had the power; it was in their hands. They had to prove themselves and make a commitment.*
>
> (June 3, 1996, p. 1)

Carol found out that these students did want to be more actively involved in their own learning and, with a great deal of planning and support from Carol at first, they were capable of controlling themselves, two powerful insights to help her set goals and practices for the remainder of this final year.

A REASON FOR LEARNING

> *All I want to do is create something that interests them, give them a reason for learning what I'm teaching, for wanting to know it.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 19)

Within the first two months of school, then, Carol's principle of creating an interest in learning science had become enmeshed with the need for rules of personal conduct and

social behaviour within the norms of the classroom and the school. The all-important context of learning was a factor, as well as the obvious needs of the students, as individuals and as a group. She realized they had been used to "tons" of structures, "so I have to respect that too". Because some of these students had been grouped together for a number of years, there was a significant pattern of resistance to adult authority already in place. Carol gradually began to build up a relationship of trust and respect, allowing a few interesting activities but stressing consequences of a return to structured routine if their "choices" led to too much disruption.

Threaded through Carol's account of this situation was the principle of caring for the students as individuals. She enjoyed their uniqueness, and communicated a genuine interest in what each one was thinking and doing.

> *They seem to realize that I care. And that doesn't mean caring that they like me, it means I care about them. And I respect them for the crazy time of life that they're going through where really, school is not a priority, and I darn well better make it interesting because they don't even want to be here.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 13)

> *I'm adding little questions to their tests and worksheets. I say there's no right or wrong answer, but it's worth a bonus mark. I tell them that I just want to see that their brain has been in gear. I get some of the greatest answers which are really questions aimed back at me, and those I love. Again, that's my personality coming out.*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 9)

For example, as part of a strategy to find out students' prior knowledge, Carol had asked them to tell her what they knew about acid rain. One student remembered a guest speaker on the subject spraying what he called acid rain from a bottle into his own eye, "So how could it be bad?" Carol thought, "This kid has had this question in his head since

grade three!" (p. 10). Carol was surprised that every student provided a response or a question, and she replied in writing, or validated their responses by using the information in future lessons.

Another area that surprised Carol with its effect and that revealed one of her principles of teaching was her use of ideas from the reading course, especially written response feedback from students. "I want students that I've taught science to be able to go out and read literature and find out things for themselves" (November 8, 1995, p. 16). Carol and her family had collected articles and journals about current issues in science, and Carol rewrote many materials to supplement woefully outdated textbooks by allowing students to practise "reading science" to construct personal meaning about science.

> *I use a variation of the KWL model, the what do I know, what do I want to know, and what have I learned, I really, really like that. I find out what they think and then I read through that before I teach...*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 16)

Carol also used predictions, "exit" slips, and definition "building" with the students, as well as concept maps as graphic organizers, especially for the patterns of relationship in science. All of these techniques shared the emphasis on finding out what the individual student thinks, knows, or is able to connect in his or her own words. In Carol's words, "I like kids to have their brains engaged" (p. 17).

Because Carol had started teaching during the once a week visits with this group, she was well established with them by the time of the four-week block and worked successfully with them throughout. Carol credited her grade nine cooperating teacher for providing this very "rewarding" experience, but unfortunately found the other experience

with grade ten extremely "frustrating". With a different teacher whose style was effective in his own way, but who could not "let go of his control", Carol had "little rapport", "no credibility", and felt "restricted". Leaving aside the absence of personal connections with the students (which were so important to Carol), the subject matter treatment also concerned her, as students were required to complete one hour in the lab on experiments they had "no idea" about. She was warned not to explain or "help" them too much, and not to spend "too much time" talking to the girls "because they don't need special help". The curriculum was very old, as Carol noted that two major changes had occurred since the one being followed, and that meant that the relevance factor, the "reason for learning" so important for Carol, was also very low for the students.

Perhaps because of these extenuating circumstances (in Carol's eyes, considering the shortened practicum time as well), Carol was concerned about the fairness of one mildly critical comment (on an otherwise very positive student teaching report) about her time management and classroom management during the first term.

THE UNIVERSITY - First Term

In general, Carol was very positive about her course work in first term, and explained her belief in the need for the much talked-about gap between the real world of teaching and the "ivory tower" where change can be "well thought out". She felt that student teachers and schools need to think critically about what is being done, to see if something is there to open up "a whole new way of thinking" (November 8, 1995, p. 15).

Carol was "incredibly" frustrated, however, by the university faculty strike that had begun on October 18, 1995.

> *We talked with a couple of profs and I said this is political... I don't think you realize the climate out there... you've voted for a strike mandate... Most of the profs that I talked to didn't really think they'd be going (on strike).*
>
> (November 8, 1995, p. 15)

Carol went on to say she realized the importance of academic integrity, but did not appreciate being a "pawn" between the university administration and the professors. She also knew about a few education students who had quit their year, and hoped those in negotiations realized that "students out there are suffering" (p. 15).

SECOND TERM SUFFERING

During the faculty strike in first term, Carol had spearheaded several meetings of her class group to continue work on their secondary science curriculum studies projects. After approximately thirty hours of work, the presentations were not used, and different expectations were asked for in term two because of a change of professors. I learned of this on February 19, 1996, when I met a despondent Carol for coffee. She and a partner had also just "lost" a major science assignment on the Internet.

The interim portfolio assessment had not gone well, either. She was asked for much more reflection but found that very difficult because she could not be completely honest, making her really aware of her lack of power in this situation.

The general political climate in relation to education was concerning Carol, since there were governmental proposals bringing into question Manitoba teachers' arbitration rights and salary agreements with school boards. We needed more time to talk. The accumulating pressures of this difficult year were clearly taking a toll on Carol. I had never seen her so distressed.

On February 21, 1996, Carol and I met again. I expressed concern that I was taking too much of her time, but she replied "No! This is therapeutic - catharsis!"

My first reading of the notes from this conversation saw two problem areas: Carol's caring relations with her students, and her concerns about subject matter. On second reading, I decided the concern was one main one, that of maintaining a caring relationship with students that would allow, encourage, and respond to their learning, as well as to their emotional needs.

Carol referred to her evaluation, written jointly by her two teachers and the faculty advisor, with its implication that she did not have strong classroom management skills. She explained that she wanted to build strong connections with the students, taking the first few minutes to talk "with" students, to let them "come down" to the point where they were ready to listen. Her one cooperating teacher was stern and distant at first and finally had the attention of the group but "In what kind of mood?" Carol questioned. I asked if she had talked to her advisor about the report.

> *No... he's so busy. I really realize that I can't be totally honest about what my concerns are.*
>
> (February 13, 1996)

Carol also asked if she were too "naive" about trying to connect students to the subject. She had brought marshmallows as part of an activity to depict chromosome pairing in a study of genetics and was afterwards referred to in the staff room as the lady who does "marshmallow science". (Carol had also told me this earlier in December, 1995.)

She felt she had done "a good job" of helping students to understand by explaining in different terms, giving current information in "simpler, jargon-free language" (such as information on genetically transmitted disorders), and by discussing, questioning and really listening to students.

After going through this whole process with Carol to negotiate meaning from a text, one student said in exasperation, "Ah! Well, why didn't they just say that!"

In the area of emotional needs of students, Carol asked, "Am I too 'mothering'?" One girl came crying to Carol for help before a major test. Other teachers witnessing the request thought she should let the student "face the music". Carol responded, "Everyone deserves one chance. I knew she (the student) was genuinely upset."

In another incident, Carol wished teachers would not discount the students' experiences. She was present when a comment was made very sarcastically to a young student, "I suppose you're just waiting for the big hockey contract!"

> *I feel like saying "Damn you" - don't discount their dreams. I've been close to someone who was part of that dream. Don't take away all their hopes and dreams!*
>
> (February 21, 1996)

Carol also stated that she was angry with herself. She could have chosen a "safe" placement, such as her last undergraduate one where the cooperating teacher fully collaborated with her about lessons and students, and allowed her the freedom to create lessons on her own. However, she deliberately chose to work with more difficult students in a large comprehensive high school. She wanted the challenge to grow, to learn how to deal with alienated students. Now she felt she might, in effect, be punished for this by

receiving a "mediocre" evaluation and by not being supported for caring about making connections with the students. She was told by other teachers about her caring: "You'll get over it!".

Finally, Carol had grave doubts about getting a job, finding in most cases, that area school boards were not even accepting applications.

> *I had a successful career, but I changed. I really wanted to help young people... now I doubt if I'll get the chance.*
>
> (February 21, 1996)

Carol said she had heard how hard certification year was, but she had discounted it for her own situation because she was "not afraid of work", she loved a challenge, and she had "always been able to handle things". Now, nearing the end, she was finding everything "really, really difficult". (February 21, 1996)

THEY DO CARE

Carol recovered from the low mid-term point and completed a very successful final practicum. I had not been able to observe her work in term one, as the practicum was so shortened, and Carol and the students were busy with their group presentations. Carol and I mutually decided that the inherent instability of that situation would not be helped by a stranger's presence. The students had had very little (or no) experience with the strategy of presenting, and Carol was surprised and empathetic about how nervous many of them were.

However, in term two, I was able to observe Carol with a different group of grade nines. She was very calm, organized, and set a warm, friendly tone in the classroom by talking with students before class started. She smoothly worked through a variety of

tasks, such as a discussion and review of a returned test, with praise for students' work throughout and checking for understanding of parts that showed problems. She presented new information with a concept map on the overhead transparency, with students placing new information (their own words) on the "blanked-out" version of the map in their notes.

Carol continued with new information on cells and reproduction, using a guiding worksheet and a visual of yeast cells created on the chalkboard.

Throughout, Carol's good rapport with the students was obvious. The students listened, responded, sometimes questioned. When she described a "bud" or "daughter" cell from the parent cell, one student called out, "Why not a "son" cell?" and Carol smiled, "I don't know". Her examples or analogies were all very people-oriented images, and students offered examples too; they were thinking "with" her. She paid attention to all of the students, the quiet-speaking ones (mainly girls), as well as to the more demanding, reactive ones (mainly boys). In the last part of the class, Carol presented a video on the topic of human reproduction and had prepared an accompanying worksheet. The degree of planning, organization and preparation that had gone into this lesson was tremendous, but the centre of the learning involved Carol's interactions with each member of the class in a positive, affirming manner.

In our final interview, Carol described again what had happened with the difficult group in first term.

> *Most of them had decided it was easier to fail and not try, than to try, and risk failing. I wanted all the kids to be learning.*
>
> (June 3, 1996, p. 1)

By the end of term, by giving consequences of tight structure or rewards of interesting activities, Carol was able to help them achieve responsibility and a sense of "choice" for their actions.

With that experience behind her, Carol decided to zero in on commitment to their own ideas in writing in journals, which ended up "meaning way more" to them than any verbal answer or show of hands.

> *I found out that kids really do care. They really do want to do what we want them to do, but they have to have some control... I made them write things down. You can hear a pin drop when these kids are writing. They want to learn, but they want it to be okay to learn. Once they realized that I had all these different ways I could do things, and I was quite willing to let them choose what they wanted, and then told them what they had to do to be able to do it, they were quite willing to fulfill that.*
>
> (June 3, 1996, p. 2)

Accountability, choice, and consequences were interrelated concepts Carol helped these students to develop over time. Carol honestly admitted to being sceptical about using journals in a science classroom, when there was already so much content to be covered. However, she found there was a lot of "power" in its potential for real communication with each student, from the beginning when she asked them to write about what they liked most or least about science education, through writing about what they would have to do to make sure they failed science (on a particularly bad day for everyone), to answering a question about genetics (to probe preconceptions).

Carol felt that some journals were "formal and polite, some were angry, some dripped with 'attitude', but all of them were honest". She provided a "safe" place to express themselves and to ask any question if they were not sure.

If they didn't understand I was willing to bend over backwards and they never abused that.

(June 3, 1996, p. 3)

She admitted that the journals did take more time than she originally had thought, but she found the students "really needed my response", and the whole process was "well worth it". Because Carol kept asking for their "advice" and ideas about choices for proceeding, and then used their ideas, thus validating them, it became "a democratic process that they respected" (June 8, 1996, p. 5).

I was really surprised at how much they wanted to communicate... and it (journal writing) filled that need. They were happier in class.

(June 8, 1996, p. 6)

From the beginning of the year, Carol set the goal of making a difference for students who were turned off school, of making them see that science could be relevant to their lives. She had worked through the classroom management issues of basic safety, cooperation, finishing work, and had found a "wonderful vehicle" in journal writing for "talk", venting of anger, exploration of new topics, and questions.

UNIVERSITY CONNECTIONS

Carol often used the word "frustrating" to characterize what had happened at the university since our first interview. As stated after mid term break in February, the work in science curriculum courses had not gone well.

We want to learn about the curriculum and instruction. We don't want to philosophize any more. It was really frustrating to be doing research that was not going to be applicable to the classroom. Our work from first term had been tossed out and changed. Because of university lettering (for the course number) a course called a lab section had nothing to do with science labs, so it wasn't clear.

(June 3, 1996, p. 6)

Carol was also concerned about the awkwardness of the time spent on portfolio preparation, a new aspect of the Secondary Pilot Program.

> *There was quite a bit of confusion about what it was, how they were going to grade it, and what an 'interim' portfolio was.*
>
> (June 3, 1996, p. 7)

This was worked out, but Carol and some other students had to do a lot of work when they were already in their teaching block, and were not informed far enough ahead of time to finish their university work earlier.

As noted before, Carol was not afraid of work, and was not one to leave things until too late and then complain. She did describe how she was preparing four different curriculums, "everything from scratch". (Carol was teaching science in the grade seven and eight flexible learning program, as well as grade nine science and grade 11 biology class.) The portfolio problem became an added frustration which stole time from the teaching aspects of the block time.

CHALLENGES AND CHOICES

Carol's portfolio summaries, or reflection statements about each topic, are insightful about her own philosophy and goals in teaching. She calls her style "eclectic" in that she seeks a wide range of resources to add to her repertoire of strategies. She believes in working with (not against) the energy of young people, and believes that each one needs to feel wanted or special, even ones most resistant to authority. She described fully her learnings this year about the importance of writing strategies and visual frameworks to help students make connections within and between the "content-laden" science topics (as well as to connect with the teacher). She is building from presentation-poster-visual

displays by students toward other forms of applications of learning, such as using role-playing within a scenario of genetic counselling situations.

Carol prepared almost "a portfolio within a portfolio" documenting her expertise with computer technology and how to use it effectively, from preparation of documents and visuals, to plan for "guided" Internet tours for her science classroom. She also had documented a number of videos, films and current journal articles on issues that have relevance for students and their future. She created curriculum topics integrating science and social studies in the Flexible Learning program at the school. Grade sevens would deal with microbes and the bubonic plague; grade eights with medieval medicine and cell and organ systems.

> *My challenge is to make the activities more structured than I would like, yet still free enough to allow learning and growth to occur in the students.*
>
> (Portfolio:6)

In describing her own classroom management philosophy, Carol succinctly calls it: "managing students by respecting them" (Portfolio:9) and there was ample evidence of that throughout her final year.

I liked Carol's final section in her Portfolio entitled "My Other Life", which includes references to the support of her husband and her "greatest assets" for teaching, her two children.

> *I have had many experiences in my life that will come into a classroom with me. My life has been full of challenges that I have faced head on. I have had many disappointments but few regrets. Life is about choices and that is something that I pass on to young people I deal with... If you want a good life... choose wisely!*

After further personal descriptions, Carol concludes:

> *All these experiences are part of who I am and what I have to offer young people. I understand them and I enjoy them, which is why I have chosen to spend the rest of my working years with them.*
>
> (Portfolio:10)

"UNLIKE MOST TEACHERS"

After the final interview and seeing Carol's portfolio and final journal entries from her students (she had asked to keep them), I thought back to her first comment "I have a very strong personality". Travelling through this difficult year with Carol had helped me to understand the vulnerability underlying and adding to that strength.

I remembered the little girl in the primary grades, afraid of unpredictable, sometimes nice, sometimes angry and hurtful adults, and yet full of empathy for other students who were also objects and victims of these tirades. I saw in front of me a teacher proud and touched by the written comments of her students about her time and teaching with them.

> *Unlike most teachers, I like the way you treat us, like we have a sense of what we are doing and have the potential to learn what we didn't already know.*
>
> *You never got really angry.*
>
> *You never got mad at anyone if they didn't understand or asked a question.*
>
> *I like your methods - what you said in class made sense.*
>
> (Conversation, June 3, 1996)

One of the above statements had been written by a troublesome student, in danger of failing (in the early weeks). Carol had a "little conversation", non-confrontational, asking questions to help him to look at the path ahead, and then back to now, what were his

options. "I let him know he could do it"; he settled down enough and worked enough, to pass. Obviously, Carol did not "get over it"; she continued to care.

LESLIE

BEGINNING AT THE END

Going to the Dean

> *Talking about this year, with everything that's happened... The strike was a huge wrench in the spokes and of course the Dean's resignation was, too, and I felt that in particular because I actually went to speak to her...*
>
> *It was just after one of our classes (after returning early from the practicum in first term) and I was feeling particularly frustrated, that this is such a waste of time. So I talked to her and she was very supportive; she gave me some ideas of how I can deal with the problem, which was great and I came away thinking, I can do something about this, and the next day she resigned.*
>
> *I didn't know who to go to to make any changes because I suddenly realized that there's all these divisions within the faculty, and I had no idea who was in and who was out... I just decided I'm not going to worry about it now; as soon as the new Dean comes in, I'm going to speak to him or her and tell them what I think...*
>
> (June 17, 1996, p. 19-20)

Going to the Professor

> *As a graduating student I really believe that this two year program is a waste of time. I felt I was jumping through hoops for these profs... and they just weren't helping us. We know what we need, most of us; find that out, communicate with the students a little bit more... The one prof that I did actually approach (said)... 'That sounds like a great idea'... and then nothing was done. He promised to go to the next class and say there would be a new direction or give his rationale for what we were doing... none of that was done.*

Going to the Administration

> *When I went to see the Dean, she recommended that I speak to the head of the Seniors (Years) Planning Committee and have a role in it... I was excited about that... but then I found out, eventually, that it wasn't about what was going to be taught and the philosophy behind what was going to happen in those years. It was about scheduling and numbers of students and hours of instruction, and course descriptions for the timetable. Everybody was overlooking... 'What are we contributing to the education of people who go and teach others?'... There was no discussion of that.*
>
> *I did point out to the head of the Senior Years Planning Committee one time that there seemed to be a lot of problems (among certification students) about what we were learning in the different courses and, what have you done about this for 1997. He said, 'We consulted students about two years ago and we had surveys, and we've made all the decisions about that.' You just had the feeling he didn't want to hear anything about... criticizing the way things were done... I got out of that committee.*
>
> (June 17, 1996, p. 25-26)

What kind of education student would be willing to confront separately her Dean, one of her professors, and the head of the Senior Year Planning Committee with deeply felt concerns about the handling of her certification year during an obviously tense year at the University of Manitoba? Whatever image might come to mind would not likely match what I saw: a calm, polite, soft-spoken young woman with presence, a ready smile, and a seemingly endless store of energy directed at searching out all the best possible strategies for helping children and adolescents to learn. Leslie's appearance and quiet attentive manner belied a strong sense of justice, a fierce thirst for learning, and deep feelings of empathy for struggling students, whether in the public schools or at university. What were the origins of these beliefs and deep feelings about student life and learning?

EARLY EDUCATION

The picture that emerges from Leslie's memories of school reveals a highly intelligent child, knowing, aware, able to write her own "chart story" without any help even in kindergarten, and ready to try new things (although admittedly, usually on her own terms). Leslie appreciated the teachers who "recognized what was inside me" that wanted to do these things and then provided the opportunity for her to be independent and creative.

Leslie, acknowledging her "concrete sequential" learning style, ordered her memories chronologically with main impressions by grade. She was "scared" of the loud, "boisterous" teacher in grade one, and was "very quiet" in a move to a French Immersion school in grade two. The main event recalled in grade three was going "on strike" to avoid competition for a short time during a classroom competition to learn the multiplication tables. Leslie remembered a "mean, hard" teacher in grade four who "crushed" her by singling her out for discipline for interrupting while the teacher was with another student. In grade five, Leslie learned the power of knowing more than the beginning teacher, often correcting her mistakes, but grade six returned to a dominating teacher, both psychologically and physically, as Leslie recalled sitting in her front row desk.

> *She would put both hands on my desk and lean over, almost on top of me, and talk to the class. I felt very small, like my own space was invaded. I was always very quiet, and she didn't really recognize that I was a person.*
>
> (November 1, 1995, p. 6)

Remembering this, Leslie recommended that all teachers should make sure they respect the really quiet students, even though they don't show their feelings. "I never showed anything, I was just quiet" (p. 6), and this significant memory later made Leslie more attuned to the quiet learners in her own classrooms. Despite some of the negative memories, and a flashback to "cat fights" and hurt feelings in the peer group in elementary school, Leslie had "an overall good feeling" about what she was allowed to do. She loved reading, "I'd just clear off shelves" when her mother took her to the library; her powers of concentration were being honed for the high school years ahead.

SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Leslie attended a private girls' school for secondary education, and had mixed feelings about her time there, especially when her creative, independent spirit came up against authority and tradition. Her social studies teacher was very abrasive, and did not connect history with reading widely and discussing relevant issues, as Leslie would have liked. The teacher required title pages (which Leslie loathed), once holding up her (Leslie's) finished product to urge others to be more careful. "Look, you don't need any artistic talent to have a neat page" (p. 10). This comment really "hurt" (even though Leslie probably did not show it).

Writing was hard for Leslie. It took her a long time, because "the words had to be perfect" and also because she had to have room to be different, to have her own perspective, or "I just hated doing it". She admired and respected the teachers who allowed some latitude to go "deeper" into the topic, but was frustrated by "closed-minded"

teachers who did not allow this, such as the one who gave her a zero for a poem that treated Easter metaphorically. The rating was "not acceptable - re-do". Her father wrote it for her, as Leslie refused to do it herself.

Fortunately, the negatives were more than offset by other great high school teachers who recognized and encouraged Leslie's gifts by providing challenging mathematics problems and introducing her to the complexities of chemistry and physics. She especially liked the very "organized" physics teacher.

> *The very first class he used the schematic of everything we were going to learn in the year. He always went back to it every time we started a new chapter... I really understood how it all fit together. I'm going to try and do (that) when I teach.*
>
> (November 1, 1995, p. 12)

Another science teacher, however, did not know her material. Leslie corrected her often, and could figure out enough to help others, tutoring her classmates outside the classroom because the teacher was "defensive". She felt useful, "empowered", thus beginning her active career as a tutor in many of the traditionally "difficult" areas, with wide ranges of students.

At the University of Manitoba, Leslie earned a science degree, majoring in microbiology, and found the teachers to be "exceptional". The classes were really interesting, with information split into "chunks", but related and connected for ease of understanding. "I really enjoyed it... every class I learned so much" (November 1, 1995, p. 14). Later, Leslie added that the only way to learn the "massive" amounts was to be organized, listen carefully, write quickly, and ask questions. "I could do this; I could do it my way; and my way worked for me" (December, 1996).

The background of expectations built up from Leslie's first degree was that she would get something very "concrete" out of each class, something she found to be quite different in most of the classes in the Education faculty.

FACULTY OF EDUCATION COURSE WORK

Leslie was frustrated that despite the current focus of child-centered learning in classrooms, these new perspectives were rarely practiced at the university level. Lessons were almost invariably lectures (November 1, 1995, p. 15). She suggested her own penchant for small group work, discussion, coming up with "our own lists" and sharing could be used to better effect (p. 15).

In the final interview at the end of the academic year, Leslie did credit Professor A's education course for providing real chances for collaborative learning, (aware of the limitation of her sweeping generalization that learning did not happen that year).

> *Professor A tried different things. He was kind of non-traditional... (using) things that seem to be praised to us as teachers to do... the journals, the exit slips, having all of this communication between teachers and students, having dialogue, small groups, projects, portfolios, interactions... all of the learning that seems to be so important theoretically is not happening at the University and Professor A's course was one course where it did actually happen.*
>
> (June 16, 1996, p. 23)

Another area of concern for Leslie was the way some professors maintained one perspective only in their teaching. She applied some thinking from discussion in a different class about types of teachers according to their approach: executive (authoritarian), counsellor (discovery) or historian (history, philosophical background). The problem with one of her curriculum and instruction courses, she felt, centered on the

"historian" approach used by the professor. The students did not mind that as a focus for one class, but were concerned when that was the focus for many classes, neglecting what the students really wanted (and Leslie asked directly for), that is, "very practical hands-on" things like: how to set up a lab; how to establish and teach safety procedures; and similar directly applicable information. Here Leslie brought up the episode of going directly to the professor to ask for change, (the episode she explained in the final interview after certification).

> *I'm not sure if he was actually listening. He said he would do a few things differently... I waited in the next class... he hadn't changed anything. I think some of the professors in this department are stuck in their ways... just not interested in what we need... so distant.*
>
> (November 1, 1995 p. 17)

Leslie worried then, that they were not really learning about "how to teach what we're going to be teaching". She would like to see more regular teachers come to the university to teach, because they would know more about the "kinds of problems" the education students would face with today's students.

SCHOOL EXPERIENCES - Undergraduate Years

The first experience was quite traumatic for Leslie, as she was placed with a very authoritarian male grade one teacher in an inner-city school. Because of the multicultural nature of the school, Leslie felt that parents perhaps did not feel empowered enough to complain or students did not realize fully what was happening (internalizing their own treatment as deserved, Leslie feared). There were control issues in the school and area, so structure was necessary, but Leslie was concerned about the cooperating teacher's demeaning nicknames, yelling, and sarcasm.

Leslie created a little island of acceptance for the children. In one of her portfolio reflections she later commented that she was the "closest" to these students of any she had taught, possibly, I believe, because they needed her the most.

> *They'd give me a hug. They would crowd around and be happy to see me... They needed some warmth...*
>
> (November 1, 1995, p. 21)

Leslie stated "I still feel guilty" for not doing something directly on behalf of the children and wondered what is considered appropriate action to be professional in such a situation.

> *I think to be professional is just to be quiet and that's really sad.*
>
> (November 1, 1995, p. 18)

In the second placement, Leslie was hoping to go to a junior high but was placed in grade five in a private school. It was a large class in a crowded room, with a quite traditional focus, but Leslie managed to set up a very successful experience.

> *I had planned a science activity about forces, in which students rotated through eight stations in the classroom, and recorded their observations and ideas at each station. The lessons took a lot of time, effort, and energy to prepare, but were a huge success... One of the least motivated students was actively involved and exclaiming how "cool" this was.*
>
> (Portfolio 3, 1996)

Leslie also thought carefully about helping the few exceptional students while with the group, giving them extra challenge and recognition since she felt they were being "squashed" by the excellent classroom control over the room. Her effort was rewarded as the students "really responded".

In term one of 1995, Leslie, as a member of the Secondary Pilot Project, had been in her school placement for the meetings and first week of school, then once a week until the

time of the first interview and just before the practicum. She was looking forward to teaching (just observing so far) in the areas of senior mathematics, chemistry, and biology, areas she knew well because she had tutored students so often in those subjects.

She had also set the goal for second term practicum of working in the flexible learning program, the grade seven and eight levels. She was really interested in the concepts of alternative schools, and was intrigued by the chance to have more latitude with the curriculum, to bring in the teacher's general interests to help make a difference with the students' learning.

At the end of the interview, Leslie credited the peer group in the pilot program and other friends in Education for really "bonding" and providing strong support for each other in this difficult year. She and Carol helped organize the curriculum group to continue meeting and finish their activity presentations to be ready as soon as the faculty strike was over.

RULES, PRINCIPLES AND IMAGES OF TEACHING

Teacher educators sometimes find education students are unduly preoccupied with the technical aspects of how to teach, ignoring some of the "what and why" aspects. Although Leslie was very focussed in first term on finding practical procedures and helpful strategies for such things as setting up the science classroom and teaching laboratory safety, her attention to the technical details of teaching did not mean that the principles and images of good teaching had been ignored, or not carefully thought through and integrated into a meaningful perspective on teaching.

On the contrary, I believe that some points made in a faculty advisor's reference letter and in portfolio statements by Leslie helped to show that Leslie's experiences and reflection up to the time of certification year had allowed her to develop a more complete internalization of what it means to be a teacher than most preservice teachers achieve by that time.

The reference letter referred to Leslie's academic depth and range, "meticulous planning", "mature sensitivity" to students' needs, but the conclusion resonated most strongly with my own experiences with Leslie.

> *It was hard for me to imagine that she had not already been a practising teacher for several years.*
>
> (Portfolio 3, 1996)

Although not "certified", she had in fact been a teacher for years. Examination of her impressive résumé and portfolio accomplishments revealed remarkable understanding and expertise. Though it was extremely difficult to separate out specific areas because of the value of most of her background, notable contributions (acknowledged by Leslie, too) came from the depth of her background knowledge and obvious love for the subject areas of science and mathematics, the sources of her ventures and success as a tutor.

> *I feel that my tutoring background helped me realize that I love teaching and that I am a capable teacher. I think that I became a teacher because I was a successful tutor.*
>
> (Portfolio 4, 1996)

Leslie's tutoring did not involve just a few fellow students, but had been consistent over the last ten years with students from her own high school (their resource department recommended her), as well as many other schools and university levels as well. It was not just individual work, either, which sometimes does not transfer well to the management of

a classroom group. She had worked for the last two years with a committee setting up review workshops for mathematics and science subjects, then initiated, organized and implemented a workshop process at several high schools "with great success". These workshops averaged eighteen students, close to a classroom's size.

Leslie's volunteer work in the last two years involved the opportunity to "share my knowledge and love of science" with students at any grade level through the "Innovators in the Schools" Program organized from the Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature in response to topics requested by classroom teachers. For example, she discussed and experimented with light, shadow, and astronomy (grade two) and "mystery" chemicals (middle years). A greater time commitment at one city school involved team teaching (with another university student) for three months of weekly meetings guiding upper elementary grades through science inquiry and science fair projects. The science aspects of this volunteer work were perfectly suited to Leslie's desires for students, to "get them involved, and excite them about science, maths and the natural world" (Portfolio 5, 1996).

However, in addition to the love of science, Leslie concentrated on the personal connections with the individual students, bringing out the principle of helping students learn by making the material "interesting and fun", "personally relevant", so that "their marks soar" and "self confidence and esteem rise over time" (Portfolio 4, 1996). As always, however, the subject matter knowledge was still vitally important in each student's case.

> *As a tutor, I had to know the curriculum and how it is taught at that school backwards and forwards.*
>
> (Portfolio 4, 1996)

If a teacher is said to need background subject area knowledge, familiarity with the curriculum areas and strategies for teaching them, as well as the ability to establish rapport with individual learners, Leslie had already demonstrated strengths in all of these upon entering her certification year.

LEADERSHIP, SPECIAL NEEDS, AND LEADERSHIP IN SPECIAL NEEDS

> *Shad Valley has had a major effect on who I am... As program assistant (I needed) strong interpersonal skills, teamwork, organizational ability, and the ability to relate to bright, high school aged children.*
>
> (Portfolio 8, 1996)

Within discussion of this related three summers employment in her portfolio, Leslie referred to her goal of wanting to be a good house leader who "encourages cooperation and teamwork, rather than competition", and a separate goal of forming bonds with "introverted members" of the group. She succeeded, with photographs and a postcard to show the positive effect her relationship and guidance had had on certain students. Here, her own past background as the "quiet" one, not "showing" what was going on underneath a supposedly calm, unaffected exterior, was a powerful influence to help guide these students, once they realized that she really understood and cared. She also was able to promote cooperation and fun, so that goals, success, and attention to high standards did not have to be inextricably linked to aggressive competition.

Leslie also worked at various times as a respite worker to care for deaf or autistic children, as a mathematics teacher for deaf adults, as a day care worker with deaf and hearing children, and channeled all of these interests and skills into raising the profile of the University of Manitoba's Student Council for Exceptional Children, of which she was

the President in 1995-1996. The membership (education students) was greatly increased under Leslie's leadership, and public awareness through school presentations was enhanced. As with her students in schools, Leslie emphasized active involvement in whatever she and her friends and colleagues set out to do.

As stated before, the areas described here still do not show all the experience and strengths Leslie has, but the themes of careful planning, organization, attention to students' personal needs, and caring, non-competitive relationships, help to give a picture of the strong, confident teacher that Leslie had become. The weight of emphasis on academic knowledge in mathematics and science should be balanced, however, by knowing that Leslie had many friends, a good sense of humour, a high level of piano skills, a lifeguard status in swimming, interest in photography, as well as a black belt in Tae Kwon Do; she was not a "mad scientist", which was why her students were so intrigued by her.

STUDENT TEACHING - Certification Year

Leslie's first term practicum was marred by illness, but she earned her cooperating teachers' respect for submitting plans and taking care of marking as much as possible until she returned, and of course she made up the time (and more) before and after the "official" times were to be completed. Teaching the senior years' biology and mathematics classes were generally successful. Early in the practicum, Leslie decided to stop imitating her cooperating teacher's lecture style, (even though the students were "quiet" and "obedient") and developed her own plans.

> *I did a KWL-like strategy to determine their knowledge and interest levels... (then) restructured to include more variety - an*

activity, note-taking, discussion, a video clip, and a summary, all in one class. The teacher had low expectations... I demanded more, and they responded very well.

(Portfolio 3, 1996)

Leslie also zeroed in on a particular student, again a "quiet" one, but also low-achieving, unlike Leslie had been. "The teacher never called on" her in class, Leslie noted. She decided to change that and made a personal connection with the student.

She scored a 97%, the highest mark by far, on a difficult test I gave, and 85% on a project about Parkinson's Disease that I assigned. I am proud of her!

(Portfolio 3, 1996)

As Leslie herself stated: "My relationships with students were always the best parts of my student teaching experiences."

The relationship with her faculty advisor was excellent during both teaching blocks, as Leslie commented that she called him at home and at work. "He was always really patient." He also provided ideas and techniques to try out and she appreciated his years of classroom experience as well as his listening skills.

In first term there was some difficulty with one cooperating teacher when Leslie requested a possible change of plans regarding one subject placement for second term. (This request was made in first term, well ahead of time.) The teacher replied, "No, you have no choice". According to Leslie, the tone of voice was disturbing to her. I will include part of her comment from her portfolio entry - a therapeutic "problem and resolution statement", it seemed.

I dislike being condescended to, patronized, and being made to feel inferior because of my age and sex. I don't like being powerless, and as a student teacher, I am that...

> *I feel compelled to be the good little student teacher, infinitely humble, flexible, and cheerful...*

An added comment later said:

> *I will be working with the teacher next term. I'm still not comfortable with the idea of working with him (but) it's the 'right' thing to do. And it will be okay. I can handle it.*

(Portfolio 3, 1996)

In the final practicum, Leslie taught calculus which was added pressure for her because the class was made up of the top students, there was no textbook, and some of the students were also ESL students. As usual, however, her excellent preparation and organizational skills meant that she was always fully prepared with worksheets and tests, as well as written explanations because of language concerns. I observed one of her classes in which she showed quiet confidence, careful attention to hearing the students' own explanations, and saw evidence of her usual signature of adding an extra connection - in this case the arrangement of a visit from an engineer with Manitoba Hydro who was able to explain some practical applications of mathematics. (In her last interview, Leslie felt that her calculus teaching had helped her to win a job, a term position for the following year. The extra work paid off.)

In Leslie's timetable, the rest of the day was spent with the grades seven and eight flexible learning programs. I observed a science class in which each student worked with a microscope, examining wonderful magnified human hairs, fingernails, money, dust balls and other significant items. Leslie carefully warned about safety procedures with equipment (and the glass slides and covers), and the students were very well-behaved.

They were excited and interested and quickly began to complete the task of drawing what they could see (their choice from the items).

The next day they were going to progress to seeing "live" cells. (Leslie had arranged to bring these from the University of Manitoba Science Department.)

Leslie really "enjoyed" the final practicum. She was feeling well; she was "on top of everything". She was able to connect with the grade seven and eight classes with some hands-on activities. Leslie strongly recommended the University of Manitoba Science Department's resources for teachers, such as the mosquito eggs that the students kept in a "bug box", and watched hatch and develop.

The mathematics curriculum and instruction course assignment, a unit plan in mathematics, had been very useful to her, providing some prior planning and questions for a course that had no textbook. However, other assignments were not noticeably helpful, benefitting the professors' work more than education students' growth, Leslie felt.

Leslie found the portfolio assessment work extremely valuable and strongly recommended its continuation, with a few provisos. Some students within the pilot project found there were major variations about the expectations, the interim report, the time line, and specific guidelines for inclusion of materials. She felt that the fairness factor should mean that some basic standards or guidelines be followed, counting herself very lucky that her advisor was flexible, willing to allow students' own ideas, something very important to Leslie. She realized in her final interview that her portfolio may have won her an edge in her successful job interview, as she could answer each of the interview questions briefly, and then say that there were more examples about her experience in this

in her portfolio. The interview committee asked to keep her portfolio to read through more carefully; Leslie was offered that position.

In keeping with Leslie's initiative, she would even recommend adding one more topic to research for the portfolio. Again, she would prefer that education students be able to choose to research what could be helpful to them, especially in the context of their particular school in the final year. For example, Leslie realized that she needed to know more about language acquisition and vocabulary use in science, especially relating to ESL issues.

Leslie also would like to see the pilot project secondary group meet after the practicum, even in January, which would enable them to share ideas and solve problems. The students in their curriculum courses were not necessarily at the same school for student teaching, and they could have shared ideas and solved problems. For example, Leslie could have helped others with some portfolio ideas, and she would have liked to know more about using journals in the science classroom; her school did not use them. She was concerned that some students could have been encouraged more to keep thinking about their teaching, their portfolio and ways to improve.

> *Closure is important, the reflections are important, getting together to work is important as well... Don't just drop it... after student teaching; keep going and see what else you can learn.*
>
> (June 17, 1996, p. 16)

Overall, in thinking of her own growth and development, Leslie emphasized that she was pleased with her work as a student teacher; she had done a really good job of predicting students' questions and concerns. For assignments, she made sure she had a

handout, with clear outline of due dates, what was expected, when class time could be used, marks and evaluation criteria. Tests she prepared well ahead of time so the cooperating teacher could check and modify, if necessary. As discussed above, Leslie had already internalized the goals and images of good teaching and what she wanted to achieve with her students, "I've felt really confident for a long time about teaching" (p. 19). Her success with her students shows that.

WISHING FOR 'VOICE'

To return to the beginning of this narrative account and the image of a student trying to find help for the "dissension" and "unhappiness" all around, at the university, I return to Leslie's own words.

> *It could have been so much better this year. I wish that I could have had a voice that somebody would have listened to... somebody who... could have done something so that things were better for education students (p. 22).*
>
> *I'm a pretty positive person and I do my best. I really like doing well but I don't like my time to be wasted (p. 26).*
>
> *Thank you for hearing my voice.*
>
> (June 17, 1996, p. 27)

Leslie was a perceptive, intelligent education student in a demanding subject matter field. Her well-developed personal learning strategies, her empathy for the easily-overlooked, quiet students in classrooms, her deep principles of caring and respect for both natural and social worlds all meant that her contributions, in words and actions, were worthy of much greater validation than she received, especially in the university setting.

CHAPTER SIX: Commentary

A MATTER OF BALANCE: Working Document (December, 1996)

To balance the criticisms that some of the case study participants voiced regarding the different programs at the Faculty of Education, I have included some information to show that Administration and members of the Faculty have continued to work on a program revision proposal that addresses many of their concerns. (This proposal was submitted to the Senate of the University of Manitoba in 1996.) Some of the features of the new education program would include:

- an expansion of "core" content, devoted to teaching strategies and to learning, development and evaluation;
- an expansion of time and sustained attention to curriculum studies in both years;
- enhanced preparation for diversity within the classroom, with a concern for special education and forms of differentiated instruction;
- a more concerted orchestration of teaching studies and practical experiences based on lengthened field placements, up to 50% of credit time requirements (formerly 35%).

These points and others in the document help to portray that the Faculty of Education was endeavouring to deal with the concerns about relevance, about connecting teaching strategies more closely to curriculum content, and about preparing student teachers for the real world of classroom diversity.

A MATTER OF BALANCE: On the Other Hand

The proposal was made in late 1996, based on the Task Force's Report from 1993, a Task Force which was set up in 1990.

Again, to be fair, some of the issues are being dealt with currently in the three separate streams or pilot programs, but in one year (instead of two as recommended by the program revision proposal), with resultant strains and pressures on everyone involved.

MORAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AND STUDENT TEACHERS

A number of individual words that seemed to occur naturally and often throughout the education students' stories were: "relationships", "caring", "listening", "choices", "voice". Since I had recently been reading the work of Nel Noddings, the repetition of these words seemed to resonate with the themes in her book *The Challenge to Care in Schools* (1992). For her, the most important thing children learn from us is how to interact with people and other living things, and therefore, moral education should be of utmost importance "for all carers".

> *Moral education from the perspective of an ethic of caring has four major components: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation.*
>
> (Noddings, 1984)

MODELING

The caring ethic should not be a one-way approach. Noddings feels that all participants in education need to model care, and not just in the most obvious way, with learners in classrooms. Administrators with teachers, and university educators with student teachers, all levels need to model care, so that teachers do not "turn attention

protectively to themselves rather than lovingly to their students". In the everyday handling of interactions with others, we simply respond as carers "when the need arises".

The two students in the Early Years Program were both involved with "needy" children in economically and socially disadvantaged city areas, and they both obviously cared for and about their students, provided school supplies (some "extras") and food, when necessary, to help students feel that sense of belonging. I can remember the tone of the young boys' voices who called out to Anna warmly, excitedly (not disruptively), when they wanted to begin their log cabins. They needed the large boxes brought down from the top shelves. Their voices seemed to say, "Here is someone who cares enough to see and value what I'm going to create!"

Both Kate and Anna had a strong sense of being "cared-for" in their relations with their education faculty and their peers. The students called their professors by their first names and obviously felt free to call them and discuss issues at any time. Their class (with faculty invited, too) planned an emotional farewell "potluck" lunch, complete with a "sharing circle" and tears. These relationships were instrumental in providing role-modeling for reflection and continued reading for Anna, and provided a strong support network for Kate when the drawbacks of her placement caused problems for her.

In the middle years, as noted above, the modeling aspect of caring took on broad implications. Perhaps one example of individuals turning "protectively to themselves" rather than to their students could be the attitudes of some striking faculty members within a particularly divisive year (as noted in the chapter on context). The modeling of mandated changes and decreased decision-making (not to mention threats of decreased

salaries) may not have encouraged caring towards others. The reciprocal modeling that is so important to teachers did not seem to happen with the middle years group, but responsibility for trying to effect change for the better still lay with the university instructors.

The secondary placements were more problematic in modeling the ethic of care. In Robb's case, the school division provided a modified approach and a caring teacher for struggling "at risk" students. In turn, this cooperating teacher modelled caring for her student teacher, Robb, in a full collaborative sharing of ideas and responsibility that helped him reinforce and modify his teaching beliefs and practice. The other half of Robb's practicum, however, with stricter controls of time and curriculum needs in regular or advanced placement classes, resulted in less supportive attention from his cooperating teachers, culminating in a few unexpected and unwelcome final evaluation comments.

Carol was caring with her "difficult" high school students, to the point of being cautioned about it by teachers and her faculty advisor for caring too much. Her repetition of the comments, and the story about the mocking of her marshmallow activity, showed she was sensitive in this area, even though she was a mature, capable former businesswoman. She was caring; was she "cared-for", in Noddings' terms? Humour can be a godsend during stressful times, but being attuned to how the person is receiving the humour should also be part of caring within school faculties.

Leslie was especially caring, by her own admission, with quiet, introverted students, remembering her own past and the misunderstandings (and mistreatment at times) that resulted from her passive-looking exterior. Her caring extended to special needs children

and special activities to help deaf students. Her heart ached for very young children (in her first school placement) who were controlled and singled out negatively by the teacher. Even her efforts to effect changes in the university courses and assignments were motivated as much by her empathy for fellow students as by her own dissatisfaction. And how was her effort met by the university? Not well, according to the narrative account Leslie provides. Perhaps part of the problem could be traced to a deficiency in faculty student teacher relations, in which another vital aspect of moral education, dialogue, was missing.

DIALOGUE

Noddings acknowledges her own use of "dialogue" is similar to Paulo Freire's use. It is not just talk, conversation, or the oral presentation of an argument. It is not adversarial, didactic, closed-minded. "Dialogue is a common search for understanding, empathy, appreciation" (p. 23). It permits opportunities to question "why"; it "provides us with the knowledge of each other that forms a foundation for the responses in caring" (p. 23).

To return to Leslie and her quest to seek help for dilemmas of today's science classrooms in secondary schools, her description of the situation seemed to indicate a lack of awareness on the part of the professor of the depth of Leslie's concern and the considerable authority she had already gained through her volunteer work and experiences with teaching. The "understanding", "empathy", and "knowledge of each other" seemed to be missing. Dialogue was an issue for Robb, too, when in the final practicum of the

year, his efforts to increase the pace and tighten expectations with new sets of students went unnoticed and unreported.

Fortunately, the supportive dialogue with the cooperating teacher and the principal in first term, (with the modified program students) helped him realize that his ideals of wanting to connect alienated students with authentic experiences in the real world could actually be accomplished. Even though the videotaping of students' interviews involving potentially litigious material had caused great consternation, it had not been held against Robb, and eventually worked to the advantage of all.

In fact, further dialogue (in the Noddings sense) was carried out between students and a community policeman, between parents and the teachers, and between teachers and the students, (especially one student with a serious medical condition), showing or "modeling" a caring approach that the students themselves definitely noticed and appreciated. With such vulnerable students, the effects of the caring relationships among their adult mentors had even greater potential for far-reaching positive (or negative) results on their own lives.

Dialogue in Noddings' sense was mostly absent from the middle years program, especially in the latter half of the year. Exchanges within curriculum courses were often adversarial, and caused concern for Joanne. The early promise of shared understandings among the student teachers in Joanne's school degenerated into "gossip", "competition" and finally alienation as she avoided the others altogether. Cal's group fared better at first, but even the positive potential of dialogue was not enhanced, as Cal felt (in first term) that

more opportunity for sharing within school groups, or the whole group, could have been structured more frequently. By our last interview, no indication of this desire was present.

With the students from the Early Years Program, the opportunities for dialogue were starkly contrasted. Anna, seeking to understand the "whole picture" with regard to early years' learning, sought out information and readings from her faculty and "devoured" books. She was a "voracious" reader, her professor commented in his introduction at the professional development presentation by Anna, as she read widely and reflected deeply on her role in the classroom. The dialogue with faculty was strengthened even more by her conversations with her exemplary cooperating teacher, so that theory and practice were mutually reinforcing and informing each other. By the time of her final practicum, Anna had a well-integrated, thoughtful and creative approach with her inner city students and was able to "let learning" happen in productive, intentional ways.

As explained within her case and recognized by Kate herself, her dialogue with her cooperating teacher was practically non-existent, and her main learning with others happened through interactions with her peers and faculty members. When questioned later about the two differing approaches she and her teacher had, Kate responded,

> *I realize I never really talked about educational issues with my cooperating teacher at all. We would talk more on a personal level (families) than professional.*
>
> (Letter, November 30, 1996)

While Kate herself may have contributed partly to this area of non-communication, a return to the notions of modeling and dialogue combined would mean the responsibility for dialogue should lie mainly with the role model of the experienced professional.

Carol's experience with attempted dialogue with her professors about the strike was not helpful to her, as she noted a reluctance to accept what she saw as a logical outcome of voting for a strike mandate in the current political climate. She did not directly say, but the problem of credit or acceptance for their curriculum and instruction group projects must not have been handled favourably for students. Even dialogue between students and the institution seemed to fail when a secondary science course labelled a "LAB" was not really one, and hopes for practical help with high school laboratory work were dashed.

PRACTICE AND CONFIRMATION

The third and fourth elements of Noddings' moral education, I have decided to treat together since the best examples for each seemed to be placed in the same episodes.

For instance, Robb's work with students from the modified program gave him opportunities to practice caring with difficult students who had either hair trigger inappropriate responses or else no responses at all. For example, there might be no work handed in and no participation. Robb was given great responsibility, such as seeking out, helping and supervising short work experiences for these students, and also planned, with his cooperating teacher, the highly successful winter camping trip. Another success was the opportunity for these older students to help students in early elementary grades with reading and writing, and the positive feedback for them in their new roles had demonstrable effects. Robb's confirmation of these students, encouraging the best in them, did not deny them the chances to practice caring for others. In turn, Robb was confirmed by his cooperating teacher (and by seeing the results of his students'

transformation). The confirmation came in the offer to help Robb become the new team teacher with the modified program if funding were continued into the following budget year. He realized they worked well together, but the definite offer did give his self-esteem a great boost.

Unfortunately, the next term for Robb with different teachers did not go as well, as already documented. Noddings has stated that the key is to "know the other well enough to see what he or she is trying to become". Robb had been disappointed that after the initial visits from cooperating teachers, he did not have opportunities for dialogue, and was rarely visited. Again, the fact that he had not had a chance to discuss his final evaluation at all before presentation to the faculty advisor was a telling point.

As might be expected with the middle years group, the presence of confirmation and opportunity to practice was mixed in each case with Cal and Joanne. (I felt that Sara's data was not complete enough to make a comment.) Joanne had a problem with her school placement in term one, and seemed to feel that she was used as an apprentice, not being allowed to practise decision-making and strategies where she was most comfortable. In second term, she blossomed, with younger students and with the opportunity to try advocated workshop methods in language arts. She was confirmed in this by the positive results with the students, "They are bringing in books. They really enjoy this". She was also buoyed by the amazement of her faculty advisor and other teachers at the school who knew how difficult the students could be, and applauded her success with them. She seemed also to enjoy the collaborative relationship with her principal, and was proud that

she was asked to make a presentation about the middle years to school staff. Her work and ideas were validated and confirmed, in Noddings' sense.

Cal also experienced this confirmation in his school experience where he felt he was treated as an "equal partner" in team teaching and school committees. He also received positive feedback from his students, cooperating teachers, and faculty advisor. The great contrast for him was at the university, where his reflective questions were turned aside, or where he did not feel that a sincere invitation to engage in dialogic communication had been extended. Even his work with Student Council seemed not as satisfying as he had hoped. Whether these were personal considerations, or part of the malaise affecting the middle years program, he did not feel "confirmed" in (Noddings' meaning) at the Faculty of Education.

Kate, with her inner city primary students, wanted to encourage their creative expressions in art and music and found positive outlets in bulletin boards, decorated walls, and the traditional Christmas concert. She practised caring by volunteering extra time before the concert, and as noted before, often brought her own materials for the students. Rather than confirmation, Kate often did not even receive credit for what she had mainly accomplished on her own. Because of her own self-confidence, she was able to confirm the students as best she could, the "better selves" that were trying under the weight of negative reinforcements in the classroom.

Anna was allowed to practise giving students the opportunity for self-directed learning when she found that had worked as a powerful learning tool for herself, but realized there was a problem if the learners did not have all the skills she as an adult

possessed. Her cooperating teacher was not overly directive, allowing Anna the chance ("seeing the better self"), and was ready with dialogue and specific readings when Anna came to her with her own doubts and needed confirmation.

Carol, with her difficult grade nine group, had the "disaster" when she tried to implement a multi-media hands-on lesson. She found that her cooperating teacher cared enough to let her fail, and to recover from the failure, without taking over and destroying Carol's credibility. When Carol questioned her, the cooperating teacher said she was prepared to take over, but did not see the need in this case.

> *Even when the students were out of control, she never had the sense that I was, and so she had not felt the need to get involved... I was surprised that she could trust me so much. I hope that if I ever have a student teacher that I will remember to stay invisible unless it is absolutely imperative that I do something.*
>
> (Reflections, December, 1995)

Leslie's great joy in life was spotting "better selves" in students almost failing in difficult school subjects, or in quiet, low-achieving students who needed practice in being cared-for as valuable contributors to classroom discussion or work. She was deserving of being cared-for at the university, but with the notable exception of being supported by the Dean, she did not seem able to penetrate the hierarchical approach in her curriculum department.

CARING REVISITED

For those readers who might feel that the concept of caring is too ideological, too dangerously emotional, it seems that recently more writing has begun to call for a return

to emphasis on the special relational quality and moral dimensions of teaching such as those described by Philip Jackson's 1968 classic. With emphasis on objectives and outcomes, and graphic organizers and outlines and computers, there can still be attention to what the learner needs in order to be able to understand the content, what Van Manen (1994) calls "personal thoughtfulness and tact" in teaching.

> *From the beginning, the task of teaching was a temporary responsibility of adults 'in loco parentis' to children. The teacher is just a supporter along the way; someone who can be relied upon, who believes in this child... sharing what he or she knows, showing what one can be, and creating the conditions and secure places for young people to play an active part in their own becoming.*
>
> (Van Manen, 1994, p. 162)

In all, I expected that the Early Years Program in general and perhaps inherently would have a strong emphasis on caring and confirmation throughout its program, and the small evidence of two cases seems to bear that out.

In the secondary programs, in general, I have noted from personal experience in the role of faculty advisor that there are wide variations in the caring relations between students and staff, and between staff and student teachers, and the role modeling for student teachers to follow is always more difficult when there may be a mis-match of expectations. Again, as might be expected, the flexible learning or modified programs have strong needs for caring relations and that expectation, too, is borne out by this small sample of students.

Surprising and gratifying to me were the senior years student teachers' very strong feelings about caring for students, caring that continued in the face of "advice" from some authoritative figures in the field, and caring that might have led to a few problems at first,

but that finally resulted in very positive results for both students and student teachers - real confirmation for both.

VOICE

In 1982, Carol Gilligan's *In A Different Voice* provided interesting feminist counterpoint to the abstraction of theory (especially Kohlberg's) about moral development. With Nel Noddings' *The Ethic of Caring* in 1984, more depth was added to the concept of caring as an important element of human relations. In 1986, M.F. Belenky and co-authors wrote *Women's Ways of Knowing* and described how women may be treated because of the way they talk and what they talk about.

> *'Women's talk', in both style (hesitant, qualified, question-posing) and content (concern for the everyday, the practical, and the interpersonal) is typically devalued by men and women alike.*
>
> (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 17)

I thought about the gender question when Leslie explained her wish that her "voice" could be heard. She spoke to the Dean, a woman, and felt she was heard. She spoke to her professor and the head of the Senior Years' Planning Committee (both men) and felt that they did not listen to her. It was as if she did not have a "voice". She does have a very quiet, soft voice, and also a quiet confidence about her that does demand respect if one really attends to her and listens. It may be that her gender, her physical voice, and the content of her concerns (practical, interpersonal) in effect, prevented her from being heard.

Andy Hargreaves (in Grimmett and Neufeld, 1994, p. 62) cautions researchers to beware of exclusive emphasis on voice. I agree with him that we need to listen to voices

to allow greater understanding of issues, but care must be taken not to go too far, to the level of endorsing or celebrating exclusive issues of one side only. He also refers to the work of Clandinin and Connelly, and agrees that educators and researchers need to understand and validate personal practical knowledge, but do not need to elevate self-understanding above all other forms.

The key should lie in collaboration, where "voice and vision" can work together for continuous improvement.

STORIES ON THE LANDSCAPE

D. Jean Clandinin described stories of an alternative teacher education program in *Learning to Teach: Teaching to Learn* (1993). Some of the cases in it described difficult problems at the university and school levels as student teachers and researchers collaborated and "lived their stories" together.

In 1995, Clandinin published another set of stories with F.M. Connelly, called *Professional Knowledge Landscapes.*

In this, they reiterate their faith in story, and the basic human desires reflected by them: the need to tell stories, the desire for relationship, and the desire to think again, to reflect. Most of these desires can be met within or close to the classroom. It is the "out-of-classroom" place on the landscape, structured by the "sacred theory-practice" story, that does not nurture these desires, creating tension with the landscape, leading to "cover" stories.

The "sacred" stories, such as the perceived superiority of university research over practitioners' knowledge, or the need for direct instruction in secondary schools in order

to cover the curriculum, are ways of thinking deeply embedded in some areas of the landscape.

There are also "secret" stories, stories of vulnerability and uncertainty that might affect one's evaluation. When tensions lead to basic contradictions between areas of one's teaching life, teachers (and student teachers) may have to turn to a "cover" story.

In dealing with contradictions, there are also important "safe" places on the landscape, where caring, community, and collaboration allow teachers to share some of the problems and dilemmas of teaching.

Each student teacher's story may also be placed on the landscape of teachers' professional knowledge. The reader is invited to do so.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Conclusions & Implications

> *We are not mere smudges on the mirror. Our life-histories are not liabilities to be exorcised but are the very precondition for knowing. It is our individual and collective stories in which present projects are situated, and it is awareness of these stories which is the lamp illuminating the dark spots, the rough edges... (and leads to) the reflexive grasp of problematic situations.*
>
> (Pinar, 1986, p. 33)

Pinar emphasizes the importance of life-histories and stories in research to acknowledge and examine the relationship between general and specific understandings, between self and situation, in the "messy" world of the "lived experience" of schools. Qualitative research attempts to "excavate layers of intention and experience" under external descriptions of individuals and practice. It is the researcher's 'eye', the "capacity to penetrate the surface of situations - the language of the participants, their public intentions and their observable behaviour... which makes possible understanding" (Pinar, 1986, p. 25).

I hope that some measure of understanding will be possible, even though the understandings may be, (or should be) very different after each reader goes through the narrative accounts and my interpretation of their collective meaning. I trust that the background information about lives and the contexts of schools and university, combined with specific details and the power of the participants' own words, will portray the problems and successes of selected students' lives during their certification year in education.

SO WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

> *What the microscope was to biology, personal documentary or storying techniques could be to teaching and teacher education.*
>
> (Diamond, 1991, p. 100)

Near the beginning of the actual collection of data phase in my research study, I attended a presentation by Dr. Sharon Hamilton, a former University of Manitoba graduate with research interests in special needs children, writing, and literacy (University of Manitoba, October 18, 1995). Before concluding, she referred to her advice to all writers before the final edit, to think "So what?" and "Who cares?"

What did I learn? I realized the power of the traditional style of research, how difficult and rewarding narrative inquiry would be personally and professionally, how divisive a strike can be in an institution, and how hard education students work in their final year. I relearned the power of language to generate ideas, transform thought, and just "be" aesthetically right, and finally, I relearned the great power of the participation of the learner in his or her own construction of meaning, whether the learner is in grade two, grade nine, or is about to graduate from the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba.

THE POWER OF TRADITION

I characterized all of the student participants as confident, capable teachers, yet they were wary of a research approach that did not spell out exactly what was wanted. It was a variation of what Jean Clandinin called the "What does the University want?" syndrome (Westcast Conference, March, 1994). At first there were scattered comments and questions. "Is this what you are looking for? I expected you would have specific

questions." Gradually, as the tensions of the year increased, the students became more outspoken, and also very ready to self-censor. "Should I talk about this? Am I allowed to say this, even? You can erase parts of this, right?"

Later, as I began the process of selecting details and shaping their stories, the impact of what they were saying affected my own confidence. I began to share their uncertainty. Should I reveal all of what the students were saying? Did the practice of assigning a pseudonym give enough protection to identities of the different actors in this scene? Was I being fair, providing enough balance with other possible meanings or interpretations?

DIFFICULTIES AND REWARDS

The main difficulty lay in the sheer volume of data collected, especially the transcription of audiotaped interviews. I realized that part of the reason for the length of interviews, however, was precisely because I did not ask specific questions, wanting students to bring out what was significant to them, what was uppermost on their mind; I did not want to lead them. I also encouraged them to bring me copies of whatever they felt represented their views and thinking. The database grew larger.

A related difficulty was the length of time for the study, since I wanted to portray movement or development through a set time period, the academic year, and most of the final interviews took place well after the end of term two because of time extensions.

Like experiencing childbirth, or being in the infantry (I am told), no training, talking about or reading about the subject, can ever fully prepare you for the actual personal involvement in such a "watershed event". I felt this way about being so closely connected, face-to-face with the deepest concerns of students risking great personal investments in

this stressful year. As their concerns grew stronger, and as I heard more criticism of their preparation at the Faculty, I also began to question my own work with undergraduate seminar groups. Was I providing enough practical information or was I allowing enough interactive discussion? A particularly argumentative seminar student had strongly questioned the purpose or need for reflective thinking, and had criticized portfolio work as a "useless fad" that "curriculum professors have thought up". I did not handle the group well; they seemed squashed by the one source of negativity. I relearned the lesson of vulnerability in teaching.

The rewards, on the other hand, were also centered on the database. Its very size also contributed rich detail and many interesting anecdotes that would cause me to "get lost" for hours. Its specific examples of subjects dear to my heart, such as the heuristic "pull" of journal writing, or the importance of caring and making personal connections with students, were a pleasure to read. The five students who remained in the study were all very committed, thinking through their answers very carefully as they elaborated their own perspectives on teaching.

I realized that I had selected these students personally for their likelihood of presenting interesting case studies and because I knew them well enough to establish early a general relationship of trust and respect. I thought I knew how demanding the final year was; the closer connections with these students made me realize how hard they worked, how vulnerable they were, and how deserving they were of support and confirmation.

I realize the weakness of my disembodied language as it describes a student teacher receiving a final critical evaluation (the last of the whole year).

Fortunately, words can also be very positive and "apt", such as the cooperating teacher who knows how to follow as well as lead children in play or activities and can "intervene without interrupting" in order to enhance their learning. Another student teacher refers to his modified program students affectionately when describing a winter camping trip, "Out in the woods with the Bad Kids". Journal work to elicit prior knowledge of a new topic asked a genetics question about height of parents and children and prompted an answer that if the girl was born first and was tall, then a boy born next would be short because she would have used up all the tall genes. The grade nine student received a bonus mark; his "brain was engaged".

PARTICIPATION OF THE LEARNER

The journal writing connections between one student teacher and her rather difficult grade nine group were very successful. Sharon Hamilton talked about students who were "out of the literacy club"; for them, writing and reading could be magic, giving control where they had none in any other areas of their lives. Often asked to respond in the demanding content area of science, the students wrote honestly for Carol. They wanted to be answered, and they also saw that their writing led to results and positive choices in the classroom.

The participation connection allowed by Robb was appreciated also by senior advanced placement students, who learned the power of writing, sharing and publishing their work, based as it was on personal responses, not solely on written notes or required

texts. The student teacher was especially proud, since the students were extremely reluctant at first, believing that that was not what they should be doing in advanced studies.

Primary school children with Kate also learned the joy of participation and sharing by preparing for their Christmas concert and by staging a Beaver Day celebration to bring their parents to see their learning.

The strongest negative example, however, revealed how education students were, in some cases, at the university and in the schools, not encouraged to participate in their own learning, and were actively discouraged when direct offers were made but not validated. The depressing effect on these preservice teachers was evident; their joys and small victories with students could not be savoured as much.

The positive example of the Early Years Program did show the power of the collegial, collaborative atmosphere between and among faculty and students. Suggestions had been made in the previous year that the group wanted time to come together before the end of term one, and the group this year saw that their ideas had been put into place. The tone had been set from the beginning of the year.

Overall, the participation of the learner, the active construction of knowledge, and the careful listening and attending to what is meaningful to the knower are central to all ages and in all areas of education.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

1. It is extremely important to establish and maintain an atmosphere of collaboration:

a) within "sections" or classes;

b) within faculty groupings;

c) within the whole Faculty of Education;

d) among the Faculty, administrators and teachers in field experiences.

2. In curriculum and instruction course work, study should include some student input, and should be seen by the students to be applicable to current curriculum study.

3. In university education courses, use of the narrative approach or autobiography has promise, after seeing the positive effect of the "Science in my Life" assignment.

4. Interdisciplinary approaches do work well, especially the incorporation of journal writing and more extended writing in secondary science and mathematics courses, and such interdisciplinary assignments as community exploration. The integrated approach in the early years provides a more encompassing approach than the sometimes fragmentary thematic teaching.

5. The number of cooperating teachers for some secondary students may be high. One student teacher worked with three teachers first term, and four different ones second term. Because she was an exceptional student, she handled everything well. Less able students might have had more difficulty.

6. Faculty advisors need to be attentive to the students. Kate did not mention her advisor once. When I asked about this, after the year was over, she said that she did not feel comfortable speaking to her advisor about her concerns, and did not see her very often. On the other hand, the advisor can be invaluable as a "safety valve". Leslie credited her faculty advisor for his infinite patience and accessibility, as well as

his practical advice. Joanne leaned heavily on her advisor's support, especially in her difficult first term.

7. Overall, then, when student teachers are asked to listen and attend to the needs of the learner, it is hoped that the needs of the learner as student teacher are also being met.

IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH WITH PARTNER SCHOOLS

The Faculty of Education's closer field experience ties (Partner Schools relationships) have resulted in positive collaboration for certification students, with relevant site-based workshops allowing deeper understandings of school issues. Such collaboration has even extended to graduate programs, with a promising pilot project, a site-based Master's program, being run with Seven Oaks School Division. The program supports teachers as researchers, and some of these graduate students have included preservice teachers in their pilot programs and resulting inquiry.

CHAPTER EIGHT: The Final Words

I concede that a story never tells the absolute truth. Since the onset of deconstructivism, who can believe that any text does?

(Barone, 1995, p. 64)

I agree with Thomas Barone, and I also agree with him that telling a story and "story sharing" can generate dialogue and reveal webs of meaning that are significant for educational research. The significance lies not in the "reality" of the text, but in the interaction between the writer (in the text) and the reader, a process of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction in a "whole communication event that occurs when the created narrative text is understood by different individuals" (Polkinghorne in Barone, 1995, p. 64).

Thus, undergraduate student teachers might empathize with the struggles, inner conflicts, and the triumphs of certifying students in a variety of university programs and school settings. These depictions might have value in shaping students' personal decisions about choices within educational programs, or might help prepare them for their own experience.

Cooperating teachers and faculty advisors could see and feel the points of view of their student teachers from a much different perspective, realizing the subtle and not-so-subtle effects of the inherent power relationships involved. The same could be said of administrative leaders, especially in a time of reform and restructuring, as students' lives are affected even by seemingly small things such as the mistaken or misleading "LAB" title on a course.

Professors and sessional instructors might be gratified (or dismayed) to learn about the effects of their advocated teaching strategies. For example, the use of language arts-based activities such as journal writing and the KWL approach for accessing prior knowledge showed promise for use even in senior years science areas. The revelations in the case studies of education students' own thinking and language might encourage university teachers to continue or to start to get to know their own students in more personal ways, to try to access their thinking through some of the same strategies that are being used in the schools, namely journals and opportunities for question-posing and personal responses to subject matter.

Of course, in all of these stories, the reader may resist and question each story, and rightly so, if the resistance leads to dialogue and increased interactions and communication among all members of the unfortunately, sometimes separate educational communities. Further study should arise out of such resistance and interrogation in continuous inquiry into classroom practice. Ann Lieberman describes her view of teacher development, which could apply equally to inservice and preservice teachers:

> *We are not seeking the final answer to successful classroom practice, but rather the development of habits of mind that make it legitimate to ask questions continuously about learning, about students, and about the content of the curriculum. Such engagement encourages new and more open relationships with one another, creating an acceptance and acknowledgment of teacher and student differences and a broader understanding of strategies that promote learning within continuously growing diverse student populations. It also legitimates teaching and learning as part science and part craft, with both parts continuously interacting and changing as a result of teachers' professional learning from their students and their colleagues.*
>
> (Grimmett and Neufeld, 1994, p. 23)

To return to the initial question: What enables or impedes the development of educational perspectives in preservice teachers in their final certification year? To the extent that the four components of moral education are present or not, to the extent that student teachers can find opportunities to give "voice" to their authentic concerns within relationships of authority and power, to the extent that their work and ideas are validated in "safe" places and collaborative relationships, I believe that their stories reveal positive change and development.

With tact, care and thoughtfulness on the part of schools and universities, student teachers are capable of using reflective thinking to embrace new ideas, to learn the "science and craft" of teaching, and to face the challenges of today's schools.

APPENDIX 'A'

INITIAL INTERVIEW
Open-Ended Responses

A. What do you remember about your own life as a student in school?

Prompts: *Recall anything related to school activities, teachers, your own learning, relationships with other students, subject matter.*

B. What is significant to you from university course work, school experience prior to this final year, and from interactions with other education students?

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