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AN EXPLORATION OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION THROUGH THE
OUT-OF-DOORS: POSSIBILITIES FOR PEDAGOGICAL GROWTH

by



NICHOLAS JOSEPH FORSBERG

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND
RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1995



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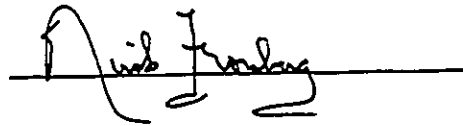
TITLE OF THESIS: An Exploration of Experiential Education Through the
Out-of-Doors: Possibilities for Pedagogical Growth

DEGREE: Doctor of Philosophy

YEAR THIS DEGREE WAS GRANTED: 1995

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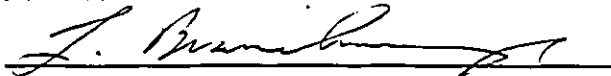
**We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we first started
And know the place for the first time.**

T.S. Eliot

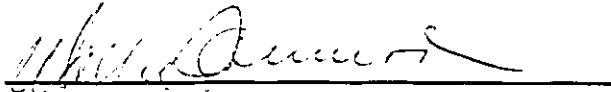
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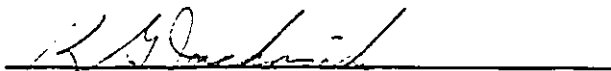
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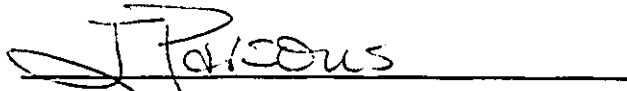
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Dr. Jim Parsons



Dr. Paul Darst

August 21, 1995

Dedicated to

Kelly, Nakia and Joshua

...amidst the voices within this work are the voices
of a family whose own story beckons to be heard.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study was an exploration of a three day off-campus residential experience (OCRE) for second and third year undergraduate students enrolled in an elementary teacher education program at the University of Regina. The focus for this study was the interpretation of the lived experience of student teachers learning/teaching through residential settings. Particular interest concentrated upon the possibilities this unique out-of-door experiential education opportunity holds for nurturing student teachers' pedagogical growth and the role such experiences can play in teacher education.

The interpretive study involved looking at the OCRE as an out-of-door experiential education opportunity which illustrated a curriculum-as-planned and a curriculum-as-lived. The curriculum-as-planned represented the foundational theory of OCRE and the role this theory assumed in the professional development of teachers. The curriculum-as-lived was the actual lived experience of student participants involved in the residential experience and this component of the study was represented by the voices of six participants. In addition, six teachers who are former graduates of the respective teacher education program and also at one time participated in OCRE were also a part of the study. Their collective voices of the experience are captured through a reflective re-turn to OCRE.

The study utilized a combination of methods for collecting data to unearth and interpret the meaning of OCRE. These methods ultimately provided the comprehensive portrayal of the student teachers' lived experience. The use of document analysis in association with open-ended pre and post questionnaires, observational field notes and conversational interviews all coalesced to provide a thorough interpretation of the curriculum-as-planned

and the curriculum-as-lived.

The aforementioned methods provided the case record for the study. Through an intensive analysis of the data emergent themes were established and these in essence represented the lived experience of OCRE. The three themes of: Self with Self; Self with Other; and Self with Environment provided the framework to story and re-story the interpretive synthesis of each student teachers' lived experience of OCRE.

The student teachers and teachers collective voices are a representation of the possibilities that OCRE plays in the development of prospective teachers. By listening to the possibilities espoused by the study's participants a third world, a 'Zone of Between' situated amidst the worlds of curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived came to be realized.

The study provided new insights to the valuable role these unique out-of-door experiential educational opportunities assume in nurturing the pedagogical growth of student teachers. Furthermore, the study has enlightened teacher education by challenging teacher educators to become attuned to student voices as they share a more encompassing story of the lived experience of becoming teachers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work associated with the completion of a thesis may accurately be described as a collective effort of a group of individuals. This thesis attests to that fact. It is fitting that an expression of appreciation and gratitude be extended to these individuals on my behalf.

I would like to acknowledge the members of my supervisory committee, Dr. Larry Beauchamp, Dr. Wallie Samiroden and Dr. David Sande. Their insights and suggestions proved invaluable. In particular I wish to say 'thank-you' to my supervisor Dr. Larry Beauchamp for his support and guidance. I would also like to thank Dr. Harvey Scott, Dr. Ken Jacknicke, Dr. Jim Parsons and Dr. Paul Darst for their thoughtful contributions.

Appreciation is extended to the participants of the study whose stories bring voice to teacher education in the out-of-doors and ultimately to their lives as 'be-coming' teachers. I would also like to extend appreciation to Dr. Larry Lang, Professor Emeritus and Dr. Garth Pickard true outdoor educators who instilled in me the virtue of learning/teaching through the out-of-doors.

To my brothers, Michael, Basil and Christopher your support has been appreciated but perhaps more importantly cherished. To my father Edward and the memory of my mother Anne, both who encouraged me to pursue my passion for learning, I wish to express my sincere gratitude. I 'thank-you' for the teaching.

And finally I wish to acknowledge my family who endured the struggle this work demanded. To my wife Kelly, I extend my deepest gratitude for her patience, support, generosity and commitment. I hope and pray we find our lost time. To my children Nakia and Joshua, I'm coming home. The woods and the rivers await, let's engage in this exploration together.

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CHAPTER ONE

SEEKING PEDAGOGY THROUGH EXPERIENCE OUT-OF-DOORS

The pedagogical relation is an intentional relationship between an adult and a child, in which the adult's dedication and intentions are the child's mature adulthood. It is a relation oriented toward the personal development of the child - this means that the pedagogue needs to be able to see the present situation and experiences of the child and value them for what they contain, and the pedagogue needs to be able to anticipate the moment when the child can participate in the culture with fuller self-responsibility. (van Manen, 1991, p. 75)

Coming to Experience Out-of-Doors

My father and mother both came from large families, reared during the 'Great Depression' and living the farm life of rural Saskatchewan. Their lives epitomized a generation of children, born to immigrant parents who settled in a new country Canada. Their parents dream was to work the land, worship without persecution, and raise a family in hopes of new found prosperity.

My parents would share stories about their childhood, both the good times as well as the hardships they endured. As I listened and thought about the stories and their tacit messages, I could sense a theme that weaved throughout their respective recollections. Regardless of the season: skating on the pond by the well during a frosty, moonlit winter evening; walking the beaten

prairie trail to school on a cool, drizzly spring morning; threshing the year's yield on a hot, August afternoon; or the tedious chore of gathering cowchips in the fall to use as a fuel source for the coming winter; the one common thread of their childhood experiences was an affinity for and with the outdoors.

Through their individual life experiences grew a relationship and a respect for the outdoors which my parents have both carried throughout their lives. My father and mother understood the valuable lessons that one could learn from interactions with the outdoors. For my parents there was a realization of a kinship with the outdoors and they witnessed the value of utilizing the outdoors in shaping their own children's lives.

There were numerous outdoor experiences embarked upon with my family throughout my own childhood. Most of these remain as cherished memories where explicit life lessons were taught and implicit life realities were learned.

I can recall the time that my father, mother, brother, and myself ventured to Diefenbaker Lake one summer evening to camp out. We had no tent for a shelter, instead we simply spread out a large sheet of plastic on the ground and placed some blankets on the plastic for cushioning. We had our own sleeping bags to wrap ourselves up in. They must have had faith in the weather forecast because we didn't get rain that evening! There was no fear as I remember my parents sleeping on either side and my brother and myself in the middle. As I think about this now, maybe this was their way of letting us know that we would be safe, that they themselves create and in essence are the 'shelter', the 'safe place' for their children. I can also remember, laying there and gazing up at the starlit sky and focussing my eyes on the constellation whose legend came alive

as my parents interwove a tale of the universe.

As I reflect on this experience, I'm drawn to the relationship that was nurtured by my parents between myself, my family, and the outdoors. This relationship was an interrelationship of the self, the other and the environment. It would be through this interrelationship that my own growth as an individual would be nourished and sustained. It would be through opportunities like these that I could begin to learn and grow. Perhaps this was part of a pedagogical relationship that was nurtured by my parents. van Manen (1991) explains,

pedagogy is the art of tactfully mediating the possible influences of the world so that the child is constantly encouraged to assume more self-responsibility for personal learning and growth. To teach is to influence the influences. The teacher uses the influence of the world pedagogically as a resource for tactfully influencing the child. (p. 80)

For my parents, the outdoors personified learning and growth. It represented an influence of the world. Through their own childhood experiences my parents came to interpret this influence as well as understand how it came to shape their own lives. By engaging their children in outdoor experiences and in a sense, "influencing the influence" (van Manen, 1991 p. 17), this affinity for the outdoors could be transferred to their children.

Experiences later in life with family and friends combined with various field trips throughout my schooling, provided the impetus for my continued affection for being and learning through the out-of-doors. The impact of these

experiences encouraged me to pursue a career in teaching where I saw an opportunity to share the value of learning in an environment that could complement and enrich the learning experiences children receive in the traditional classroom.

During my undergraduate teacher education at the University of Regina, I had the fortune of participating in learning/teaching experiences that went beyond the traditional theory into practice approaches so often reflected in teacher education programs.

The opportunity to participate experientially in courses of an Outdoor Education program, that consisted of developmental experiences designed to go beyond the realm of conventional teaching and learning in the traditional classroom, continued to shape my personal and professional philosophy and its relationship with the out-of-doors.

An additional out-of-door learning/teaching component in the teacher education program, which also influenced my personal and professional philosophy and its relationship with the out-of-doors, was an Off-Campus Residential Experience (OCRE). As the name suggests, 'Off-Campus' means that the experience occurs in surroundings that deviate from the traditional university classroom. The term 'Residential' denotes that the participants (education students and faculty) are housed in a dormitory setting. The 'Experience' may be interpreted as an atmosphere of learning/teaching in an environment contrary to the traditional university classroom.

The OCRE has been part of the teacher education program for over two decades and continues to contribute to the metamorphosis of preservice teachers. According to Lang and Forsberg (1988),

OCRE provides prospective teachers with an opportunity to participate experientially in many of the fundamental skills, concepts, attitudes and appreciations which characterize learning in the outdoors. (p. 1)

OCRE encourages both faculty and students to interact in an environment that reflects one of learning/teaching in a collaborative fashion. It exemplifies the concept of learning how to learn; experiencing a philosophy of life-long learning.

For myself as an aspiring educator, the OCRE component continued the transfiguration of my personal and professional philosophy and its relationship to the outdoors that began with my childhood experiences; as well, it was significant in the metamorphosis of my world of 'be-coming a teacher'.

My world as 'teacher' was located in both rural and urban centres throughout Saskatchewan. These opportunities afforded me the chance to put into practice and live the learnings/teachings gleaned from these previous outdoor experiences. Engaging in out-of-door experiences designed to provide what I interpreted as being a holistic approach to learning was the focus of my teaching for the students who came to reside in my classroom.

In a short time, my world as teacher continued its metamorphosis as there came a restlessness coupled with the wanting to continue to explore this passion of learning/teaching and being in the out-of-doors. This feeling of indigence prompted me to pursue a Masters degree in Outdoor Teacher Education at Northern Illinois University. The experiences of learning/teaching in the out-of-doors with children, student teachers, and prominent individuals in

the field of Outdoor Education answered the passion that had brought me to Illinois; as well, it too had a profound influence on my personal and professional development and its relationship to the outdoors.

Re-experiencing the Experience Out-of-Doors

My travels have taken me from the world of becoming a teacher, through the world of teacher, to my world of teacher educator. It has been a 'spiralling' route and the place I find myself currently residing is a place where this passion for learning/teaching in the out-of-doors had its chance to flourish; in the teacher education program at the University of Regina.

For the past five years my world as teacher educator has been privileged by having the opportunity to engage experientially in many of the program components that influenced my own development during my tenure as an undergraduate. Conducting courses in the field of Outdoor Education has proven to be enriching and rewarding for my personal and professional development. The fortune of coordinating and participating in the OCRE component within the teacher education program has also been an experience which has made positive contributions to my world as teacher educator.

My journey to date through my world of teacher educator, in essence, has been a re-turning and a re-experiencing of these experiences of learning/teaching in the out-of-doors. But this re-turn and re-experience has been from a different space in a new place. The kaleidoscopic lens with which I view these experiences yields the same multitude of colours associated with the experiences as I can remember, but these colours are now framed within

different shapes from those that comprised my view when I was an aspiring educator.

A Question Emerging from Experience Out-of-Doors

As my journey took me from the world of becoming a teacher to the world of teacher I often thought about my lived experience of OCRE and the influence this out-of-door experience had on my personal and professional development and its relationship to the outdoors.

I am confident that the orientation to learning and teaching that I portray in my own practice could be in part attributed to the OCRE. There was 'something' about this out-of-door experience that I felt ameliorated my understanding of what learning and teaching could be about. The OCRE seemed to open up the possibilities for learning and teaching.

Now, in the world of teacher educator, this chance to re-turn and re-experience the OCRE provides the opportunity to engage in a quest of the lived experience of OCRE for not only myself but also for the aspiring educators who currently reside in the world of becoming a teacher.

A. The Purpose of the Study

Learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through the OCRE component at the University of Regina is a unique aspect of the teacher education program. The OCRE exists in the teacher education program because it is believed to play an integral part in the development of a student teacher to teacher. The simple fact that OCRE has survived for over two decades, considering the

current fiscal restraints governing education, addresses the value, importance and the contribution it makes to the teacher education program.

When I have visited student teachers during their practicums I often encountered former graduates of the program who now reside in the world of teacher. In our discussions they have oftentimes shared memories of their experiences as aspiring educators. What I have found intriguing is how frequently these memories reflect times associated with their OCRE.

Their reflections about the OCRE are for the most part fond remembrances that speak to the 'fun while learning', 'learning about selves', 'learning about the outdoors', the 'friendships' that were developed, and the way the 'group got along and worked together'.

These comments are very similar to those echoed in the classrooms and hallways of the education building by the students who currently reside in the program and who have recently participated in their own OCRE.

For these students in the world of becoming a teacher and like those who are currently in the world of teacher there is 'something' to the OCRE that speaks to them about their transition from student teacher to teacher. It is this 'something' that beckons the call to be explored, not in an attempt to find the 'truth' to the experience and espouse that 'this is what it is all about'. But rather, it is an exploration into the voices of the participants of OCRE who can share in the possibilities that OCRE holds for them as interpreted by themselves at a time in their own development and transition from the world of becoming a teacher to the world of teacher.

As an aspiring educator who previously experienced the OCRE and now as a teacher educator who has coordinated and currently participates in the

OCRE, the study also provides an opportunity for me not only to re-turn and re-experience but also to re-learn about out-of-door experiences and their influence on my personal and professional development and its relationship to the outdoors.

B. The Question

What is the lived experience of student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings?

Following are complementary questions which provided a focus for the study:

1. What meaning do individuals construct from their lived experience?
2. How does this constructed meaning of lived experience influence an individual's understanding of pedagogy?
3. What meaning does this lived experience of student teachers hold for teacher education?
4. What meaning does this experience hold for my 'be-coming' a teacher educator?

C. The Significance of the Study

Initially this study has the potential to inform in both theory and practice. There are few studies that are concerned with learning/teaching in the out-of-

doors through residential settings in preservice teacher education. Those that are in existence are dated and have very much a statistical orientation.

There are other studies that focus on residential experiences linked to learning in the outdoors. These studies involve school aged children and the influence of these experiences on the students in a variety of areas concerned with their cognitive, affective and psychomotor development.

The majority of studies that are related to outdoor learning and have some link to teacher education concentrate on an adventure pursuits orientation. These studies tend to focus on the wilderness aspect where the participants are often in transit from site to site in an outdoor setting and seldom, if at all, learn/teach in a permanent residential facility.

By exploring the OCRE, this study hopes to interpret the lived experiences of student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings. An exploration into the possibilities that these experiences possess for the personal and professional development of those who dwell in the world of becoming a teacher has a valuable contribution to share with preservice teacher education. By listening to the voices of “becoming” teachers, preservice teacher education programs may come to understand that learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings has a role to play in the intricate metamorphosis of student teacher to teacher.

Secondly, the OCRE has existed in the teacher education program at the University of Regina because somewhere, somehow, somebody(ies) believes that this experience is of value in the development of teachers. If one examines the teacher education program and the components and experiences which comprise it, OCRE may be viewed as part of a ‘curriculum-as-planned’. Simple

course and program evaluations do not do justice in attempting to understand the nature of this unique experience and the lived experience of the individuals who participate in it. What is actually experienced by the participants reflects the 'curriculum-as-lived'. The interpretation to the curriculum-as-lived lies with the voices of the participants. This study can provide the forum for these voices not only to be heard but more importantly listened to as they assist by sharing insights to the curriculum-as-lived.

Finally, the study has the potential to enlighten the path of my becoming a teacher educator. Living the experience of this study, I have an opportunity to trace my footprints along a stretch of this path which is fraught with out-of-door learning/teaching experiences. In re-turning and re-experiencing the OCRE, my quest to unearth and understand the OCRE phenomenon and its possible influence on my personal and professional development will be realized.

CHAPTER TWO
A SEARCHING OF THE EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION LITERATURE:
ENLIGHTENING THE STUDY'S PATH

Experiential education releases energies of experiential learning which can in turn lead to experiential knowing of the world. Experiential knowing is not a fixed body of knowledge, but a continuously modifying stream of aware-knowing in relationships. (Drengson, 1982, p. 21)

In my quest to unearth and understand the lived experience of individuals learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings I begin by exploring the literature of experiential education. This exploration in experiential education serves initially as a foundation for the nature of this study. Secondly, this review of experiential education acts as a cornerstone to the framework for the additional component areas for the literature review. These additional component areas of the literature review address aspects related to the study and have a common reference and connection to experiential education.

The literature abounds when one looks into the field of experiential education. The challenge that has been established for this literature chapter is to provide a focus for the overview and interpretation of experiential education as found within the context of this study.

Experiential Education: A Search for Common Understanding

As one peruses the area of experiential education it is very common to find that its roots are that of experiential learning. However, a cautionary note to establish at this point is that the terms of experiential learning and experiential education should not be used interchangeably.

The work of Kolb (1984) in the area of experiential learning highlights experiential education through the use of a schematic and identifies it as one of five areas which illustrate the “contemporary applications of experiential learning theory” (p. 17). Within the concentrated area that addresses experiential education, Kolb identifies specific examples which have an education base and are interpreted as being experientially oriented. These examples include; “Co-op education, Internships, Simulations, Experiential exercises, and On-the-job training/learning” (p. 17). This grouping possess similar characteristics to the nature of experiential education as it is interpreted within the context of this study. Kolb’s work allows one to narrow the field from that of experiential learning theory to experiential education. Providing this focus allows one to look at experiential education and its understanding and application in the ‘lived experience’ of individuals learning/teaching through the out-of-doors in residential settings.

To define something is to begin to put limits upon it. As McPhee (1992) noted,

The risk of defining experiential education is that once done, the definition is available for those to regurgitate it at will - a written sentence

copied and lost between the yellowing pages of ones' notebook. (p. 19)

This is the difficulty associated with attempting to define experiential education. Chapman (1992) explains that there are those individuals who want a definition of experiential education and to have it presented in terms of content like that of disciplines such as science, history and math. He continues by advocating that experiential approaches are better understood in terms of style as opposed to content and that the true challenge in experiential education is that regardless of the content being studied, "the point is to place students into a different, more direct relationship with the material" (p. 17). For Chapman experiential education implies that learners are,

actively engaged in exploring questions they find relevant and meaningful, and has them trusting that feeling as well as thinking, can lead to knowledge. (p. 18)

Proudman (1992) reinforces Chapman's views of experiential education as 'engaging' the learner directly with the material under investigation. He also adds that the experiential approach is a, "challenging, active, student-centred process that impels students toward opportunities for taking initiative, responsibility and decision making" (p. 20). By providing learning experiences with this in mind, Proudman advocates that the opportunity for students to connect the head with the body, heart, spirit and soul will be enhanced and this he believes is critical for learning to be experiential. For Proudman, experiential education is not only actively engaged learning but also "emotionally-engaged

learning" (p. 20).

Experiential education as described by Proudman, should also be viewed as a, "unique teaching and learning process that is applicable in many learning environments" (p. 19). He argues that this process can best be described as a series of critical relationships which are two way and highly dynamic: "the learner to self, the learner to teacher, and the learner to the learning environment" (p. 20). The interweaving of these three relationships in conjunction with the principles of methodology associated with the experiential education process creates the opportunities for experiential education to be transformational. This transformation fosters and encourages the notion of lifelong learning. If one views experiential education to be transformational then it is quite easy to see why defining experiential education may be so problematic. For, to engage in education experientially while subscribing to the notion of lifelong learning, requires a continual renewal of what constitutes and defines experiential education.

Joplin (1981) advocates that all learning could be characterized as experiential but cautions that all learning is not necessarily educational. For education to be considered experiential, an individual must, "experience the subject - significantly identify with, seriously interact with, form a personal relationship with, etc." (p. 17). For Joplin, experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education. But rather, it is the process of "action - reflection" (p. 17) which is cyclical in nature, and builds from previous experience and bridges to future experience that helps to define experiential education.

Joplin's definition of experiential education is not contained within the parameters of one sentence. Contrary to a definition she clarifies experiential

education through the representation of a five stage, cyclical model.

Briefly stated, the five-stage model is organized around a central hurricane-like cycle, which is illustrated, as challenging action. It is preceded by a focus and followed by a debrief. Encompassing all is the environment of support and feedback. The five stages are one complete cycle, where completion of the fifth stage is concurrent with commencing the first stage of the following cycle. (p. 17)

In association with the model, Joplin identifies nine characteristics which serve to guide one's interpretation and possible definition of experiential education and its application in educational settings. She believes that the model in conjunction with the nine defining characteristics can provide the, "home base for a teacher's course design endeavours" (p. 21).

Druian, Owens and Owen (1986) examined three experiential education programs; Experience-Based Career Education, Foxfire and Outward Bound. These three were chosen for the study based on the fact that each has endured the test of time, is stable, was developed in response to a different set of needs, have separate and clear identities, possess well articulated principles and have been widely imitated and adapted (p. 50). The researchers purpose for examining these three programs was to look for similarities in the techniques associated with experiential education and identify their possible common roots. They felt that by identifying common attributes,

it could lead the way to standards for quality in experiential education; it

could help in the adaptation of programs by assuring that the site-specific conditions and needs are attended to; and it could facilitate the integration of new elements into an ongoing program, thereby offering an alternative to the establishment of new programs. (p. 50)

Through the examination of the three programs, the researchers identified what they concurred as thirty-three “essential elements of experiential education” (p. 53). Following the identification of the essential elements, the researchers prescribed nine program categories which these thirty-three characteristics addressed and thus could be categorized under. The researchers concluded that the nine program categories in conjunction with the thirty-three essential elements act as a bridge that serves to link various experiential education programs. Furthermore, they believe that the nine program categories with the thirty-three essential elements may need some refinement in the future. However, for the present, the framework can be used by individuals who are involved in the development of new programs or are simply involved in the task of improving existing experiential education programs.

The nine program categories with their accompanying thirty-three essential elements, do in fact address critical programmatic aspects associated with this study. Each program category in conjunction with some of the essential elements identified, serve as characteristics affiliated with the experiential education component of this study previously identified as OCRE. The focus of this study from a ‘curriculum-as-planned’ followed by a ‘curriculum-as-lived’ perspective illustrates that the OCRE program contains elements

which are foundational and parallel those discussed in the literature.

Experiential Education: Potential for Learning and Teaching

The role of experiential education in learning is not a new approach which has recently surfaced and entered the educational scene. On the contrary, according to Chickering (1977) and Houle (1976) theories about experiential education linked to learning theory have been proposed and debated since the emergence of higher education in the Middle Ages. According to Keeton and Tate (1978) and Hamilton (1980) experiential education in secondary schools, colleges and universities has been very popular and on the surge. For those directly involved in educating through experience this may not come as a surprise.

Jernstedt (1986) problematized student learning in contemporary higher education. He contended that student learning is tested on the acquisition of knowledge with the assumption that the use of this knowledge would then follow. What he proposed is that places of higher education should be testing the students on their ability to use their knowledge, "realizing that successful use of knowledge proves the previous acquisition of that knowledge" (p. 109). This he concurs would challenge places of higher education to concentrate on the, "dual nature of education" (p. 110). This duality in learning Jernstedt argues, would result in an educated mind possessing both a structure of knowledge as well as a set of processes for utilizing that knowledge. Jernstedt recommends the

introduction of experience into the academic environment, as a means of reconnecting the structure of knowledge with the process of using knowledge. (p. 110)

Jernstedt emphasizes the point that what he proposes should not be viewed as a simplistic way to improve education. But rather his proposal to reconnect the structure of knowledge with the process of using knowledge may be done by, “retaining the accumulated strengths of classroom instruction and adding the breadth, mnemonic effectiveness, and active expression of life experiences” (p. 111). The combination of experiential components with academic courses opens up the possibilities for the acquisition of knowledge with the ability to use it. However, Jernstedt cautions that this does not simply imply adding “extensive practical or applied problem-solving experience” (p. 111). More of something is not necessarily better. What Jernstedt insists upon is that education must

increase the number and quality of ways in which the developing mind can grapple with the worldly embodiment of its expanding knowledge. The classroom is the traditional locus of education because it can be very effective. Our task is to redouble its effectiveness with experience. (p. 111)

Experiential education is not restricted to one particular type of learning environment. There are experiential education opportunities which include

those associated with classroom experiences. These classroom experiences employ a variety of developmental experiential education methods some of which prove to be more effective than others. As well, there are those experiential education opportunities which tend to go beyond the traditional classroom setting to other unique environments. In the literature these are commonly referred to as field experiences or experiential laboratories.

The history of field experiences in teacher education dates back in time and is well documented. Cruickshank and Armaline (1986) identified, that as early as the mid-nineteenth century, "records reveal that prospective teachers for America's schools learned to teach largely by teaching" (p. 34). While these experiential education opportunities have emerged as a critical dimension to the teacher education process, much has been written recently about the effects of these experiences on the development of prospective teachers.

Using a case study method, Goodman (1985) examined field-based experiences to determine their impact on prospective teachers' perspectives towards teaching. The results of the study were illustrated through three analytical categories; teaching as the transmission of utilitarian skills, teaching as management, and teaching as a craft (p. 42). Through the study, the author concluded that university supervisors need to help student teachers find the connections between theory and practice. In experiential education, the key to bridging theory and practice is the role of reflection.

The importance of reflection in experiential education shared by Goodman has been reinforced by others conducting research into field-based and experiential laboratory forms of teacher preparation. As Cruickshank and Armaline (1986) explain

...it has been noted that the use of teaching experiences in preservice teacher education has a long history and support going back to the fledgling days of normal schools. Relatedly it has been noted that some forms of teaching experience such as peer teaching, simulation, and teaching in schools is not new. It has been noted that support for the use of teaching experience comes from everywhere - teacher educators, teachers, preservice teachers, and even anti-establishment critics. Over time it is becoming more apparent that the purpose of teaching is changing from an apprenticeship toward a more professional notion emphasizing the need to create students of teaching - persons disposed to become more reflective and thoughtful about teaching and schooling as opposed to merely practicing teaching to meet some local standard of skill performance. (p. 39)

Individuals who conduct research into field-based experience and experiential laboratories for practicing teaching draw a conclusion which tends to focus on the importance of critical reflection and its role in the process of practicing teaching through experiential education.

The history of field-based experiential education in teacher education and the important role that critical reflection plays in the development of prospective teachers can be traced back to the time of John Dewey. By the turn of the century, Dewey was warning against placing prospective teachers in public schools before they developed habits of critical reflection. He believed that placements made during the early phases of a teacher preparation

program reflected more of an apprenticeship approach to teacher preparation and that this practice would simply reinforce teaching habits currently occurring in schools. The end result as ascribed by Dewey, would be mindless imitation as opposed to reflective inquiry and experimental action.

As an alternative to simple apprenticeship practice teaching experiences in schools, Dewey advocated the design of "laboratory experiences" to, "foster reflective criticism within students towards the nature of instruction, curriculum, and the purposes of education" (Goodman, 1985, p. 47). Reinforcing Goodman's interpretation of Dewey's laboratory experiences, Nolan (1982) viewed these laboratory experiences advocated by Dewey as focussing on three very similar foundational elements; the need for instructional experimentation, creative curriculum development, and the evolution of an educational philosophy among individual student teachers as they worked with children in schools. The key factor and issue of prime importance associated with laboratory experiences was the process of critical reflection. Critical reflection for Dewey meant "reflective action" which he defined as

...active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads. (Dewey, 1933, p. 9)

The work of Dewey in education and particularly his interpretation of education through experience has had a profound influence on the field of experiential education and the role it assumes in learning about teaching. His insistence on purposeful experience and the importance of reflective action

within the boundaries of that experience serve as key cornerstones to experiential education. Furthermore, it reinforces the position advocated by experiential educators that experience is not simply 'learning by doing'. As Cruickshank and Armaline (1986) noted

Dewey was among the first to acknowledge that the most notable purpose of teaching experiences was to instill in the prospective teacher a disposition toward being a student of teaching. Rather than behaving as an apprentice according to technique, impulse, tradition, and authority, students of teaching would learn to deliberate their teaching with openmindedness, wholeheartedness, and intellectual responsibility. (p. 36)

Providing experiential education opportunities, regardless of the teaching/learning environment, that are purposeful and encourage reflective action possess tremendous opportunity for nurturing 'students of teaching'. Individuals who participate in field-based experiences interspersed and complemented with experiential education opportunities that focus on the use of the out-of-doors as a teaching/learning environment, experience an added dimension that has the possibility to augment this disposition of being a student of teaching.

Experiential Education: Possibilities Through the Outdoors

Learning and teaching experientially through the outdoors is not a modern phenomenon. In fact as Ewart (1988) explains

Both outdoor and experiential education are not “new inventions” conceived in the trauma of the 1970’s. They began in the early birthing pains of humanistic education. (p. 43)

Ewart identified characteristics synonymous with those of teaching and learning experientially outdoors as originating with individuals like Aristotle and Plato. Each of these early philosophers not only valued the use of the outdoors in the teaching and learning process but also emphasized the utilization of all the senses as learning tools. The early European educators such as Rousseau and Pestalozzi reinforced this position of teaching and learning in the outdoors and thus nourished “the idea that education using the outdoor experiential process was good education” (Ewart, 1988, p. 44). The value associated with teaching and learning experientially outdoors continued to flourish and garnished additional support from more recent educators such as Spencer, Dewey and Kirkpatrick. Following these individuals came various movements like the camping education movement (1861 - 1945). This movement not only continued the concept of teaching and learning experientially through the outdoors but also was instrumental in expanding the boundaries of this approach to include the more formal forms of education like schooling through outdoor residential experiences. From the camping movement evolved more

modern movements and programs such as; outdoor, environmental, and experiential education. Even though these newer initiatives were slightly different in meaning, intrinsically they were all rooted in the same philosophical base. This philosophical base described by Ewart advocated, “that education should be a lifelike, enticing methodology which avoided academic sterility” (p. 44). It has been the same philosophical base which has also influenced the residential outdoor experiential education programs.

For purposes associated with this study the literature which focuses on outdoor residential experiential education covers a spectrum of experiences. Some experiences may concentrate on one particular area while others may cross and connect a couple of areas. There are studies which explore outdoor experiential education from the earlier times with a camping orientation while more recent studies discuss understandings from an outdoor education or residential education component. The views of the literature also traverse between preservice and inservice teacher education. The approach taken now in this literature review chapter parallels the historical developments of outdoor experiential education as well as addresses in part the preservice and inservice components which are related to this study.

Pre-Service Teacher Education

Laying the foundation for the following studies which look at teacher preparation that have experiential outdoor residential education components may best be initiated by describing a study conducted by Rhead (1967). This study in part provides an overview of the scene as it existed with regards to

these unique components and their inclusion in teacher education. Rhead's focus of the study was on the eventual development of an interdisciplinary outdoor education approach in the professional teacher preparation curriculum at a small, state college. Due to the fact Rhead was looking to develop a program, the study required the researcher to survey established programs already in existence at western colleges and universities. Through the survey of fifty institutions, Rhead found that eighteen institutions had such programs. Within this number, seven had an outdoor education program and six required student teachers to have a residential experience in outdoor education. He also found that the interest was growing with regards to experiential outdoor residential components in teacher preparation programs. Rhead also identified that published material and research in the area was lacking.

Understanding this phenomenon provides the reader of this study with the realization that in the literature there are in existence programs with various emphases and that the following studies cited may be examples of such programs. Furthermore, it highlights the need identified at the time to continue the research and exploration into these components and the possibilities they possess for contributing to teacher preparation.

Hammerman (1958) conducted research into an area of study that determined the contribution of an outdoor education experience on a pre-service teacher's understanding of the learning process. The changes in the individual's understanding of how learning is facilitated were measured by an altering of the participant's feelings, opinions, attitudes and behaviour. Collectively, the comparisons between three groups of pre-service teachers; sophomores, juniors and seniors yielded no significant differences prior to and

following the outdoor education experience. However, Hammerman found that on an individual basis, the sophomores and juniors generally made greater gains than did seniors. He also found that those seniors without student teaching experience showed a significant change in their understanding of how children learn as compared to those seniors with student teaching experience.

In a study by Hauserman (1963) it was concluded that student teachers exposed to a prior outdoor experiential orientation revealed a statistically greater behavioural pattern in their teaching with regards to the learning processes used. Furthermore, the participants demonstrated warmer, personal climates and placed a greater emphasis on individual activities in their classroom performance than those student teachers who did not receive a prior outdoor experiential orientation. The study required an experimental group of student teachers to receive an introduction to outdoor education. This introduction included a theoretical approach of observing a film and engaging in a follow up discussion of a sixth grade camping experience. In conjunction with the theoretical approach, it also required the participants to gain the practical experience of being directly involved in a school camping program while taking part in a school outdoor education unit. On the other hand, the control group did not engage in any form of an outdoor experiential orientation.

Heppel (1964) was interested in identifying change in student teachers as a result of their participation in a school camping experience. Using a variety of data sources; questionnaires, daily logs and an attitude scale of teaching values, Heppel concluded that elementary education major students reacted more favourably to the experience than did their fellow colleagues in secondary education. Changes in the student teachers attitudes centred upon the

awareness of the outdoor environment, appreciation for informal group activities, realizing individual differences, insights into children's interest spans, cooperativeness, eagerness, and personality fluctuations. The results of the study prompted Heppel to identify the role that residential camping experiences play in teacher preparation. She highlighted that this informal educational approach facilitated the opportunity for student teachers to learn of the uniqueness of children. The student teachers also increased their perception of the role of the teacher and as well viewed this as an opportunity to practice teaching skills. In Heppel's estimation these type of teaching and learning experiences are of critical importance in the preparation of teachers.

A study carried out by Chrouser (1970) investigated and compared the effects of outdoor laboratory techniques and those of the more conventional indoor laboratory. The study was conducted in a biology course and consisted of prospective elementary teachers. Half of the class participants received the regular two hours of indoor laboratory experiences while the remaining half experienced outdoor laboratory experiences. The results of the study showed a significant difference in three areas specifically related to critical aspects and understandings of science as well as a significant difference in specific biological principles involved in laboratory activities and viewing science as a process. Chrouser's study led him to conclude and recommend that the outdoors should be utilized as a laboratory and as a classroom whenever suitable for reasons associated with the effect that the outdoors has on society, as well as the effect the outdoors has on both the affective and cognitive domains.

Kalla (1972) engaged in a study to measure the effects of an

experimental, interdisciplinary, outdoor education program on selected students enrolled in the second year of an elementary teacher preparation program. The focus of the study was to determine changes in student attitudes, interests, and values. Two groups were identified—a control group consisting of thirty-nine and an experimental group consisting of thirty-seven. Both groups had the same instructors and a common schedule of five teaching methods classes. The one factor which was different between the two groups was that the experimental group participated in a four-day off-campus outdoor education experience. Using the author's Educational Attitude Index one pre-test and two post-tests were administered to the participants. The Index dealt with four areas; the structure of the educational experience, the learning environment, the relationship between students, and the relationship between faculty and students. The study's results exhibited a significant, favourable change in the experimental student teachers' attitudes in each of the four areas cited previously except student-to-student relationships. The author concluded from the study and recommended that all second year preservice elementary teachers at this particular institution be involved and participate in the interdisciplinary program.

A study by Mirka (1973) concentrated upon determining the factors that influenced inservice teachers to use, or not to use, the outdoors as a way of teaching. This study examined inservice as opposed to preservice and is being discussed at this time in the literature simply because the researcher suggested in his findings points of information directly related to preservice teacher education. The study asked inservice teachers to rank, from most to least important, ten items from a preselected twenty-four item list. The sample was

categorized into two large groups, those who had used the outdoors, and those who had not. Mirka's study indicated a need for better preservice elementary education courses which emphasize outdoor education methods as well as a need for outdoor education specialists to conduct inservices for teachers currently in the field. According to the researcher, each program should focus on: subject matter that is relevant to teaching outdoors; analyzing the potential of school sites for use in teaching outdoors; how to plan and conduct outdoor activities; and the development of guides and selection of materials for teaching outdoors. Accomplishing these tasks in each program would promote a greater understanding and appreciation of utilizing the outdoors for educational purposes.

Galbo (1982) also studied the attitudes of college students and preservice teachers who acted in the capacity of resident outdoor school leaders. Of particular importance in her study was the effects that result from being a leader in residential programs coupled with the participants attitudes with respect to environmental quality. The results of her study showed that nearly all of those who reported found the leadership element in the outdoor school experience to be rewarding. The participants cited that the opportunities for learning about cooperation, learning effective communication skills and having the chance to teach and learn with elementary school students were the highlights and most rewarding for their professional development. In so far as their attitude about environmental quality, Galbo found that most of the participants were less optimistic about environmental quality following the experience than they were entering into the experience.

A research study conducted by Forsberg and Heffner (1987) was

designed to evaluate the residential outdoor education component of a teacher training program at a small university in the midwestern United States. Two groups of students were selected for the study. One group consisted of Junior elementary education major students and a second group consisted of Senior elementary education major students. A pre-test and post-test was administered to both groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the residential outdoor education experience in question. The data collected from a Likert scale was tabulated and statistically analyzed using the t-Test. The Semantic Differential data was tabulated and statistically analyzed using the Chi Square Test of Significance. The Level of Significance for all the data was tested at .05.

Findings from the study for the Juniors showed a significant attitude change towards outdoor education and the relationship of the learner, the school and the curriculum. There was a profound but insignificant shift in the Juniors attitude toward the environment. Findings from the study for the Seniors showed a significant positive change in attitude towards the environment and outdoor education. Their attitude on the relationship of the learner, the school and the curriculum showed a strong but insignificant shift in the positive direction. Both groups showed a significant positive attitude change towards their view of the residential experience and using the outdoors as a classroom.

Research associated with this study served to enlighten and also confirm for the faculty associated with the residential component of the teacher preparation program, as to the contributions this unique residential component program makes to the overall teacher preparation program.

In conclusion to this part of the literature review which has concentrated on outdoor residential experiential education in preservice teacher education, a

quote from Morrisey (1979), perhaps best captures and reflects the thoughts expressed thus far. In his study, Morrisey cites the work of Hammerman and Hammerman (1973) and says

the professional preparation of preservice teachers should be concerned primarily with these three areas: the use of outdoor education to make learning more effective and efficient; the connections between the outdoors and the school curriculum; and, the practical aspects of living and learning. A course in outdoor education for preservice teachers would give them more insight into the natural environment, the learning process, and the child as a learner. Such a course that included a practicum would prepare the student teacher to put into practice the outdoor education theory taught. (p. 5)

In-Service Teacher Education

Through the searching of the literature, supporting studies surfaced which were not necessarily foundational components directly related to those being studied within the context of this study. However, these studies contained elements which in part are similar and serve to support and reinforce the findings established within the boundaries of this study. The literature which is about to be discussed in the next few pages concentrates upon the teaching/learning process associated with outdoor experiential education as it relates to inservice teacher education.

Shelar (1949) over four decades ago was examining the use of the outdoors for teaching purposes in public schools as well as teacher training institutions. The researcher identified five categories of out-of-door programs which were being operated during the regular school hours. He had sent out over two thousand questionnaires and followed up using personal interviews and observation. His findings consisted of detailed descriptions of the various school programs. A major conclusion he made from his investigation was that little field work was occurring in connection with teaching.

Cyphers (1961) conducted a study which had as its aim, the identification of those outdoor experiences which were significant for elementary teachers who wished to extend their instruction beyond the schoolroom. Cyphers developed a Personal Experience Inquiry Form which he constructed from a periodical review of the literature published between 1925 and 1958. Those items which received a high rating were in turn used to construct an Experience Attitudinal Inventory Form. His results and conclusions focused on three points. Perhaps the point of most noteworthy and the link to this study is that a majority of the respondents of the study felt that they had not received adequate experience on the use of outdoor resources in either their undergraduate or graduate studies.

Hug (1964) engaged in a study to determine the factors which influence elementary teachers in the utilization of outdoor instructional activities. The researcher designed an instrument and interviewed teachers who did use the outdoor instructional activities as well as those who did not use outdoor instructional activities. His results showed that most factors were not statistically significant. However, he did find that those teachers who were active in outdoor

activities were younger, had more children, had 1.3 fewer years teaching experience, had more degrees, had attended more college outdoor related courses and had been enrolled in college more recently than the non-active teachers.

Chase (1969) conducted research into changes in attitude toward outdoor education by teachers and administrators following their participation in a cooperative outdoor education project over the course of a school year. The researcher identified eleven conclusions as a result of the study. Those conclusions of most importance and those related most directly to the nature of this study focus on the significant positive attitude changes that occurred from both groups identified in Chase's study. Furthermore, as a result of the experience the professional educators identified that they would use outdoor education experiences more often in their teaching. These educators, like the participants in Cyphers study, also identified that their undergraduate teaching training had not provided them with an experienced background in outdoor education.

Some of the studies found in the literature focusing on outdoor residential experiential education in inservice teacher education had elements which discussed the experience from the students perceptions. At times the literature also described experiences in inservice teacher education from a relationship perspective between students and teacher. These studies are shared as part of the literature as they also embrace principles reflected within the context of this study.

Kleindiest's (1957) study tried to determine the potential of camping experiences as a means for attaining objectives of the sixth grade curriculum.

Following the identification of these objectives, camping experiences that could contribute to the achievement of these objectives needed to be described and evaluated. Following the evaluation, a guideline for the operation of a school camping program could be developed. The procedure involved a review of the pertinent literature involving the objectives of education, descriptions of camp experiences as well as the principles of school camping. This information was submitted to a jury of experts for judgments. The results and conclusions of her study showed that camping programs provide significant opportunities in attaining school objectives. Objectives of particular importance were those in the area of social living, appreciation and communication. Two principles which were identified and established as being key elements for the school camping experience included: initially, the reality that more than just the 'three R's' could be offered and secondly; that by functionalizing the curriculum in this fashion, vital 'living-learning experiences' for children and teachers could be realized.

A study to evaluate the effects of a school camping experience on self concepts and the social relationships of pupils was conducted by Beker (1959). In the study, two groups of students, an experimental group and a control group responded to two instruments immediately prior to and immediately following a school camping experience and then again ten weeks later. Beker was able to conclude that the experimental groups attending the school camping experience showed more positive feelings toward themselves than they did prior to the experience. These changes were of greater magnitude than those participants in the control group who did not have the school camping experience. The study also illustrated that social relationships were influenced in a positive direction and furthermore, that these changes were even greater

ten weeks following the experience.

Stack (1960) in a similar study was evaluating the attitudinal outcomes of pupils following a school camping experience. The attitudes of interest in Stack's study focused on the students concepts of school, teachers, self, classmates, friends, and the school camping experience itself. The results and conclusions of the study showed that the one week school camp experience does provide unique opportunities for effecting social change, that student-teacher rapport was improved and finally that social relationships between students was of greater value.

In a study by Vogan (1970), changes affecting student-teacher relationships through residential experiences were examined. Through the study the researcher was attempting to identify programs which concentrated on positive change in student-teacher relationships as well as identify how this was being facilitated through the residential experience. Ultimately, the purpose of the study was to establish criteria which could be used as a framework for facilitating change in student-teacher relationships through residential experiences. The study involved an examination of programs in eighteen states and school systems which had established residential programs for a minimum period of three days for fifth or sixth grade students. As a result, Vogan concluded that there was in existence a wide range of procedures in the planning, organization, and implementation of programs and also that there was a lack of emphasis placed upon guidelines for the enhancement of student-teacher relationships. The researcher recommended that teachers involve students more in all phases of the residential experience including planning, conducting and evaluating the residential experience to facilitate a greater

openness. She also recommended that the teacher assume more of an active learner role in the total process.

Coons (1973) looked at attitude change in early adolescents following a two week residential camping experience. The focus for the study was on attitude adjustments in the areas of self concept and the development of positive attitudes toward school and the learning process. Through the employment and the analysis of the rating scales the researcher's results indicated that the experimental group exhibited more positive attitudes with respect to self concept, school and the learning process than did the control group. As a result, Coons concluded that a twelve day resident camp experience be developed and have as one of its primary objectives attitudinal change for its participants.

The move to utilizing the outdoors as an educational tool as well as to enrich curriculum was a focus for a study conducted by Peck (1975). Using a variety of learning environments; inside classroom, outside classroom, no school facilities, and also indoor and outdoor settings, Peck attempted to evaluate the effectiveness in teaching cognitive and affective objectives related to high school biology. All groups post-test scores improved on the cognitive tests but only the outdoor group's scores exhibited great improvement. Both the outdoor and indoor groups affective scores showed a more positive attitude with respect to the environment. For Peck, the results allowed him to conclude that it is possible to use the outdoors as an effective educational tool. A related issue from the study and an observation made by the researcher is that, taking students outdoors for teaching and learning experiences has tremendous support from students, parents and teachers.

The development of positive student-teacher relationships as a result of engaging in outdoor residential programs has long been professed and advocated. Some studies discussed earlier in this literature have at some length addressed this specific component. In a study conducted by Bateson (1981) an examination of changes in students' perceptions of teachers as well as the changes in teachers' perceptions of students was investigated. An established program was identified and evaluated to determine whether it met the criteria required for effecting positive change in student-teacher relationships. Upon meeting this requirement, the identification of two groups was then established. One group, an experimental group received the treatment which was the involvement in this particular residential outdoor experience. A second group, the control group did not. Using The Teacher Pupil Relationships Inventory in a pre-test and post-test fashion, Bateson reported that students who received the outdoor residential experience did change their perceptions of their teachers in a positive direction when compared to the control group students.

Teachers involved in the study were examined using Bales Interaction Process Analysis and also supplied additional information concerning their perceptions of individual students and the group interaction within their classes. Their results according to the researcher, indicated that teachers changed their perceptions of some of the students following the experience. The teachers also highlighted that interpersonal relationships within their classes appeared to be more unified following the outdoor residential experience.

From the study Bateson recommended that residential outdoor programs possess attributes that have the possibility for promoting and enhancing

positive student-teacher relationships as well as facilitating positive interpersonal relationships in the classroom.

Experiential Education: Making Meaning for Lived Experience

The format followed for this literature review chapter very much reflects one that appears very sequenced, linear and logical. This has purposely been created. The intent of the format is to initially provide one with an overview and understanding of experiential education. Building upon this overview and understanding is an attempt to establish the framework for experiential education and its interpretation as found within the context of this study.

The literature review to present has met both of these points. The overview and understanding of experiential education has been organized with supportive literature. The framework for experiential education and its interpretation within the context of this study has also had the opportunity to emerge. This emergence has been reinforced and bolstered with literature which provides for connections to be made between experiential education and outdoor residential experiential education.

Of particular interest to the researcher with regards to this last component, is the observation that a good percentage of the literature discussed reflects statistical research based on a quantitative paradigm. While this research is valuable and represents the understandings of such experiences it does so in the absence and emptiness of the voice of 'other' involved in the lived experience through outdoor residential experiential education.

This study attempts to create a space for the voice of 'other' involved in lived experience through outdoor residential experiential education. By creating this space it is the hope that making meaning of experiential education through outdoor residential experiential education will come to be understood and perhaps more importantly appreciated.

CHAPTER THREE
THE QUEST THROUGH RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:
SETTING BEARINGS FOR THE STUDY

No research paradigm has a monopoly on quality. None can deliver promising outcomes with certainty. None have the grounds for saying "this is it" about their designs, procedures, and anticipated outcomes. (Peshkin, 1993, p. 28)

Research Design

Merriam (1988) believes that the research design selected should be determined by the nature of the problem and how it is shaped, the questions it raises, and the end product that is desired. According to Merriam these three determinants ensure both a solid research foundation for the nature of the study as well as a flexible research framework which encourages and supports the development of the study as it unfolds. In perusing these three determinants as outlined by Merriam within the context of this exploratory study, "What is the lived experience of student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings," a research foundation is sought which addresses the nature of the study of lived experience; as well a flexible research framework must be developed to ensure a space has been created for the voices of the students. The lived experience as interpreted through the voices of the students will give credence to the study.

This study is an attempt to unearth, interpret and bring meaning to the

lived experience of individuals learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings. This unearthing, interpretation and meaning making requires the interaction of the researcher with the participants. Therefore, I feel the need to interact with these individuals prior, during and following this out-of-door learning/teaching experience. Only by living as closely as possible the experience that the individuals are living, can discernment, insight and meaning of the lived experience be appropriated. More importantly though, it is through this interaction that the possibility of learning may be experienced.

Patton (1990) talks about qualitative inquiry as the “capacity to learn from others” (p. 7). In his earlier works he described qualitative research as,

...an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting - what it means for participants to be in that setting, what their lives are like, what’s going on for them, what their meanings are, what the world looks like in that particular setting - and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting. (Patton, 1985, p. 1)

Unlike the traditional or scientific research paradigm which focuses on a single and objective reality of the world and one that, “we can observe, know, and measure,” a qualitative research paradigm views the world as having, “multiple realities-that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function

of personal interaction and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring" (Merriam, 1988, p. 17).

This exploratory study is an attempt to learn via the voices of others about their lived experience of learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings. The research is exploratory and inductive emphasizing process as opposed to ends and has no predetermined hypotheses. Thus, based upon the determinants identified by Merriam and the assertions shared by Patton the foundation and framework for this study will emerge from the qualitative paradigm.

Qualitative case study lends itself nicely to the nature of the study being undertaken for a variety of reasons. Case study research, particularly qualitative case study, as described by Merriam (1988) is, "an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena" (p. 2). This research method, because it is based on the "discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p. 3).

The case study method will provide the forum for the unearthing, interpreting and meaning making of the lived experience of individuals learning/teaching in the out-of-doors. Through this process the possibilities and contributions that this unique experience holds for the personal and professional development of individuals in preservice teacher education may come to be realized. The case study method undertaken in this study also has the capacity to enlighten the theory-practice gap when looking at the curriculum-as-planned and the curriculum-as-lived as it pertains to this unique

experience in the elementary teacher education program at the University of Regina. And finally, by utilizing the case study approach the potential to enlighten the path of my becoming a teacher educator and the role this particular unique experience played and continues to play in my personal and professional development may also be realized.

Patton (1990) states that a case study may involve a person, an event, a program, or a time period. Case studies as described by Stake (1988) focus, "on a bounded system, whether a single actor, a single classroom, a single institution, or a single enterprise - usually under natural conditions so - as to understand it in its own habitat" (p. 256). Stake continues by explaining,

What is being studied is the case. The case is something deemed worthy of close watch. It has character, it has totality, it has boundaries. It is not something we want to represent by a score. It is not something we want to represent by an array of scores. It is a complex, dynamic system. We want to understand its complexity. Lou Smith used a fancy name, bounded system, to indicate that we are going to try to figure out what complex things go on within that system. The case study tells a story about a bounded system. (p. 256)

In this research study, the 'bounded system' as defined by Smith, concentrates on the lived experience of student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings. Within this bounded system are individuals who in effect symbolize 'boundaries'. The notion of boundaries as

an analogy for individuals is an intriguing one. While on one hand, this analogy may look very controlled, concrete and mechanistic on the other hand it has the possibility to illuminate and enlighten the value of personal interpretation of the bounded system. It is the voices of the 'boundaries' that represent the case study and are the text for the story about a particular bounded system.

Cronbach (1975) differentiates case study from other research designs by explaining that case study methodology calls for an "interpretation in context" (p. 123). This notion of 'interpretation in context' as applied to the nature of this study, creates the space necessary for the 'boundaries' voices to be heard. Yin (1984) explains that case study methodology is most appropriate where it is next to impossible to separate the phenomenon's variables from the context. Thus, the voices of the student teachers, which describe the bounded system and address the uniqueness of the OCRE must be understood within the context of the 'experience' itself.

Several other writers also describe the case study methodology in such a fashion that reinforces its potential as being the most appropriate methodology to be employed considering the nature of this study. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1981) describe the purpose of case study methodology as being, "to reveal the properties of the class to which the instance being studied belongs" (p. 371). Becker (1968), who views case study methodology as having two purposes, reinforces Guba and Lincoln's statement by stating that initially the purpose of case study is "to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the groups under study". He continues by explaining that case study methodology should also, "develop general theoretical statements about regularities in social structure and process" (p. 233).

The purposes outlined previously by the various sources applied directly to the nature of the exploration undertaken in this study. Furthermore, these principles helped to provide a framework that gave parameters for the research process and yet facilitated some flexibility that was required during the course of the research process.

Merriam (1988) in her discussions agrees with the purposes of case study methodology and identifies four characteristics that are essential properties of a qualitative case study. She sees these characteristics as a way to further define case study methodology. The characteristics she outlines come from five separate sources; Guba and Lincoln (1981), Helmstadter (1970), Hoaglin and Others (1982), Stake (1981), and Wilson (1979). Merriam admits that even though the number of characteristics and the terminology may vary, based upon a review of these sources and in conjunction with other writings, essentially the four she outlines may be seen as representative and are, as she describes, "special features" (p. 11) which further define case study methodology.

The four characteristics which are essential properties for qualitative case study methodology as outlined by Merriam are: particularistic, descriptive, heuristic and inductive (p. 11). Each of these properties will be described and the description will then be applied within the context of the study being explored.

Particularistic means that the case study focuses on a specific situation, event, program or phenomenon. The case is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon being studied and what it might represent.

This study is particularistic in that the study has as its focus the lived

experience of student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through the OCRE.

The *descriptive* property refers to the end product of a case study and specifically that this product is reflected as a rich, “thick” description of the phenomenon under study. The term “thick description” comes from the field of anthropology and means “the complete literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (Merriam, 1988, p. 11). Case studies are commonly referred to as “ ‘holistic’, ‘lifelike’, ‘grounded’, and ‘exploratory’” (Merriam 1988, p. 13). The description of the case study is qualitative where the results or the findings are not in the form of numerical data but rather as Wilson (1979) describes, “use prose and literary techniques to describe, elicit images and analyze situations...They present documentation of events, quotes, samples and artifacts” (p. 448).

The results of this study subscribe nicely to this particular property. Chapters five, six and seven which essentially represent the ‘findings’, are shared through an interpretation of the meaning making of the lived experience of the student teachers and teachers. The voices of the student teachers in chapters five and six as well as the voices of teachers in chapter seven capture and give credence to the themes that are drawn forth from their lived experience. It is through the interpretation of the other voice that a ‘holistic’ as well as ‘lifelike’ portrait of the lived experience may come to be shared and realized within the context of this case study. This study conforms to this property in that the text does provide a “thick description” of the lived experience of individuals learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings.

Heuristic means that case studies have the potential to, “illuminate the

reader's understanding of the phenomenon under study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known" (Merriam, 1988 p. 13). Stake (1981) explains that often in case studies, unknown relationships and variables may emerge which lead to a rethinking of the phenomenon being studied.

The heuristic property, as seen through this study's lens, is fulfilled through the 'stories' told by the participants. It is their stories which enlighten the reader not only to the lived experience of the participants but also to the gap between the curriculum-as-planned and the curriculum-as-lived. The forever untold story of OCRE as now revealed and told through the stories of its participants is the key to the 'rethinking of the phenomenon' and the possibilities it holds for preservice teacher education.

The fourth and final property, *inductive* as described by Merriam (1988) means that case studies rely on inductive reasoning. The generalizations and hypotheses should emerge from the examination of the data-data that is grounded in the context of the study itself. Merriam continues by explaining that at the outset of the study one may have "tentative working hypotheses", but these should be adaptable to reformulation as the study proceeds. Furthermore, qualitative case studies should create a space for the "discovery of new relationships, concepts and understandings" (p. 13).

Because the nature of this study is one of exploration that focuses on the lived experience of individuals learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings, the interpretation of this lived experience requires no generalizations or hypotheses to be made. As explained in the section entitled, 'The Purpose Of The Study', this study does not espouse a dictum which

professes that the 'truth' to the OCRE will be revealed. But rather, generalizations and understandings in the form of themes identified by the participants have emerged through the examination of the data which have been grounded within the context of the study itself. It has been these themes which have provided the working hypotheses for understanding the lived experience of the participants.

To conclude this overview of case study and its appropriateness for the nature of the study being undertaken a final note regarding forms of case studies will be addressed. This overview will in turn aid in situating the specific nature of the case study being explored in this study.

Merriam (1988) identifies three case study orientations; descriptive, interpretive and evaluative. The distinction between the three orientations is in the nature of the final report.

Descriptive case study in education is a study that, "presents a detailed account of the phenomenon under study-a historical case study that chronicles a sequence of events" (Merriam 1988, p. 27). This particular case study orientation fits where there has been very little previous research conducted and as well, is not motivated by a desire to formulate general hypotheses. Such things as innovative programs and practices fall into this orientation where the focus is on the subject being studied and not on the hypothesizing and theory testing.

A second case study orientation as described by Merriam is interpretive. This orientation, like the descriptive also contain a "rich, thick description" (p. 27); however, this description is used to develop "conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data

gathering” (p. 28). As was the situation with the descriptive orientation the researcher gathers as much information about the case with the intention being to interpret the phenomenon. The analysis of the data is very much inductive where the level of abstraction and conceptualization of the data may vary from “suggesting variables among the variables to constructing theory” (p. 28).

The third orientation that Merriam discusses is evaluative. These case studies involve description, explanation and judgment. The nature of this case study report is one that in effect produces a judgment regarding the case situation. As Guba and Lincoln (1981) describe, this case study orientation has in its report, “information to produce judgment. Judging is the final and ultimate act of evaluation” (p. 375).

The nature of this exploratory study is one that perhaps may best be described as bridging components of these orientations identified by Merriam. Some of the aspects of this study are concerned with points that fall within the context of descriptive case studies while other points may be addressed through the interpretive case study. Merriam confirms that this may not be extraordinary and that, “some case studies are purely descriptive, many more are a combination of description and interpretation or description and evaluation” (p. 29) thus it is not uncommon to find a bridging of orientations.

This exploratory study into the lived experiences of student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings is one that crosses between and bridges the descriptive and interpretive case study orientations. The characterization of the OCRE through the ‘curriculum - as - planned’ and the ‘curriculum - as - lived’ perspectives provides the framework for the descriptive orientation. The possibility of going beyond the descriptive to

the interpretive orientation lies in the 'curriculum-as -lived' experiences of the participants. The voices of these individuals provide the framework for both understanding the 'curriculum - as - planned' as well as theorizing about the unique OCRE phenomenon and its role in the personal and professional development of student teachers involved in preservice teacher education.

Data Collection

... case study does not claim any particular methods for data collection or data analysis. Any and all methods of gathering data from testing to interviewing can be used in a case study, although certain techniques are used more than others.
(Merriam, 1988, p. 10)

For over two decades the OCRE has touched the lives of individuals who reside in the world of teacher. Sporadic attempts utilizing simple evaluation forms have been the common method to capturing an understanding of OCRE. Most often these structured attempts which often neuter the voice, have simply been collected, viewed for general feedback and ultimately shelved only to be left to collect dust. The possible meaning making attached to these attempts has been lost or at best is still seeking to be heard, though only now resonating as distant voices in a wilderness.

This exploratory study seeks to unearth and interpret the meaning making of OCRE as ascribed by its participants. The participants consist of selected individuals who presently reside in the world of becoming teacher as

well as individuals who currently reside in the world of teacher. My interest in exploring the lived experience of individuals learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings is propelled by my own lack of understanding in regards to the meaning OCRE holds for them coupled with the search for meaning that OCRE held for me. I sense that through others' own unique stories, themes will emerge which in turn will call forth my own personal recollections and collectively the narration will reverberate in unison the meaning making of OCRE.

This exploratory study utilized a combination of methods to collect the data to unearth and interpret the meaning making of OCRE. By utilizing these particular methods a more comprehensive perspective of the lived experience could be portrayed. Furthermore, this array of methods also lends greater validity and credibility to the study by virtue of what is known as triangulation. Stake (1988) reinforces this statement by explaining,

One of the primary ways of increasing validity is by triangulation. The technique is one of trying to arrive at the same meaning by at least three independent approaches. Naturally a finding that has been triangulated with several independent data-holdings is usually more credible than one that has not. (p. 263).

The role that I would assume through this study was that of researcher participant. This role like that of participant observer, is described by Gans (1982) as, "one who participates in a social situation but is personally only partially involved , so that he can function as a researcher" (p. 54). The role at

times proved difficult to assume due to the fact that in past OCRE's I was an individual who assumed the major responsibility and took the leadership of coordinating the OCRE. However in reflection, by being absent for the last two OCRE's (one university year) while pursuing my doctoral studies this re-entry into OCRE made it an easier transition to appropriate the researcher-participant role.

In both the fall and winter OCRE's my role would basically remain constant. I participated in each of the three phases associated with the OCRE program (Pre-Impact, Impact, and Post-Impact). Through each of these phases I interacted with both student participants and faculty involved in OCRE. This interaction in each of the phases afforded the opportunity for me as researcher-participant, to take on a role that didn't 'parachute' me in and 'air lift' me out of the experience. But rather, it presented me as an individual who was part of the landscape and surroundings and I believed this would not cause stress for the OCRE participants or myself. Furthermore, this interaction in each of the three phases provided an opportunity to utilize and employ the various data collection methods. These particular data collection methods also complemented the three phases previously highlighted.

A Pre-OCRE Questionnaire was dispensed to all OCRE participants during the Pre-Impact phase prior to the experience. The nature of the questionnaire consisted of six open ended questions. These questions focused upon the students' perceptions of the OCRE, their feelings toward the experience, possible preconceived values of OCRE, as well as the prospects that OCRE held for their personal and professional development.

A Post-OCRE Questionnaire was distributed to the students back on

campus following the experience. The nature of these questions followed a similar format as those in the Pre-OCRE questionnaire with a focus on the reflective component. This questionnaire included three additional questions which concentrated on the OCRE and its possibility for contributing to the students' awareness of personal and professional growth.

Observation was another form of data collection which was incorporated within the context of this study. During the Impact Phase of OCRE I participated as a faculty leader and assumed an active role in situations which required faculty involvement. Because the nature of the two OCRE's is developmental, my role as faculty leader in the students' first OCRE was more eminent in certain aspects of the three day experience and less prominent in the second OCRE. The reason for this is that the second OCRE "curriculum-as-planned" is designed for the students to assume more of the leadership for all phases of the experience. I also made a concentrated effort to ensure that I would not be preoccupied with having to do the 'little things' that are so often encountered during experiences such as these so that I could focus on the real task at hand, observing the OCRE as curriculum-as-lived. Merriam (1988) describes observation as, "the best technique to use when an activity, event, or situation can be observed firsthand, when a fresh perspective is desired, or when participants are not able or willing to discuss the topic under study" (p. 89).

According to Merriam (1988) there are several factors which help provide a framework of what to observe and the most important of these is, "one's purpose in conducting the study in the first place, that is the conceptual framework, the problem, or the questions of interest determine what is to be observed" (p. 89). Thus, during the three day OCRE experience my

observations which were recorded as field notes, focused on the lived experience of the students. The observations were gleaned from a variety of perspectives; as a leader conducting a learning experience, a participant who was part of a smaller group involved in a learning experience, as well as an invited guest who listened and interacted in evening section reflective sessions.

Other elements which framed my observations included things like; the setting, participants, activities and interactions, frequency and duration, and subtle factors. These observations have been described throughout this text in various chapters intentionally as to describe the lived experience of OCRE through a curriculum-as-planned and curriculum-as-lived orientation.

My observational field notes often consisted of notations framed in the form of questions which encouraged a reflective component in the process and prompted me as the observer, to look deeper into the lived experience. These notations along with additional questions served as part of a framework of queries that I was able to ask of the particular participants who shared their lived experience stories with me through conversational interviews.

A third form of data collection used in the study was that of semi-structured interviews. They may best be described as conversational with a purpose. The purpose was to explore what perhaps could not be directly observed; the feelings, thoughts and intentions of the individuals. The intent of these conversations was to enter into the individual's lived experience of OCRE.

Essentially this study identified three different groups to be interviewed. The first group were three students who live in the world of becoming teacher. These individuals were participating in their first of two OCRE's which occurred in the fourth semester of their teacher education program. The second group

were also three students who live in the world of becoming teacher. However, these particular individuals were participating in their second OCRE which occurred in the fifth semester of their teacher education program. In both groups, each participant had identified on their participant consent form a willingness to be interviewed. These volunteers were chosen based upon the responses shared in the two questionnaires as well as their EPS instructors' perception of the student's ability to engage in the reflective process and illuminate, with as much clarity and depth as possible, their lived experience of OCRE. The interviews with these volunteers were conducted on an individual basis. The context for the interviews was a free dialogue guided by the volunteer's questionnaires and my observations during OCRE. Their stories provide the foundation for the curriculum-as-lived in chapters five and six respectively.

The third group consisted of six individuals who currently reside in the world of teacher. Their time in the profession ranged from one to five years. Each of these individuals had experienced their own OCRE and had participated various times as student leaders at subsequent OCRE's. The range of their teaching years, their teaching locations in conjunction with the roles each played at OCRE's served as a method for choosing these particular individuals. The participation of this unique group of individuals was an attempt on my behalf to capture yet another interpretation of the lived experience of OCRE. These conversational interviews which encouraged and facilitated a reflective process created a space for individuals to share their lived experiences of OCRE from yet another perspective; one of being a participant, leader and now a teacher whose personal and professional development to this

point had possibly been influenced by the OCRE. As was the case with the previous two groups, these interviews were also a free dialogue which allowed the participants to reflect on their memories of OCRE. At opportune times I would initiate questions which often surfaced as a result of information shared during the interview. These interviews were conducted individually. However, there was one occasion where four of the six volunteers were able to meet as a large group and we had the opportunity to reflect on OCRE and share memories of the experience in which individual stories were very often taken to deeper levels of meaning as a result of thoughts being triggered by another individual's memories. The stories of these teachers shared in chapter seven, are interpreted as a collection of individual voices from the past and are portrayed as a kaleidoscope of OCRE memories which highlight their personal and professional lives as student teachers as well as provide possible insight as to the OCRE's influence in their personal and professional lives today.

A fourth method of data collection included within the context of the study was that of document analysis. Documentary data are, "good sources for qualitative case studies because they can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated" (Merriam, 1988, p. 109). Furthermore, the analysis of documentary data as described by Guba and Lincoln (1981), "lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer. This grounding in real-world issues and day-to-day concerns is ultimately what the naturalistic inquiry is working toward" (p. 234). Documentary data are also "objective" sources of data which are not altered by the researcher and in the case of this study served to supplement the information gleaned from interviews and the observations.

The documents which became part of this study were the OCRE Manuals that each participant, student leader and faculty member received as part of the material distributed during the pre-impact phase of OCRE. The manual's contents contain such items as: OCRE program expectations, overview of the experience, schedule, suggested lists of personal and group materials and equipment, group development information, processing questions, and an appendix which highlights various information for specific teaching/learning experiences.

The OCRE manual document serves as the philosophical framework for the OCRE and in a sense may be more aptly interpreted as the curriculum-as-planned. This curriculum-as-planned not only reflects the intentions of this unique experience in written form but more importantly reinforces a programmatic position in regards to the role OCRE assumes in the personal and professional development of preservice teachers.

The components of the OCRE manual and their intentions have been identified in chapters five and six. Each component is explained in greater detail and collectively the components illustrate the curriculum-as-planned.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is concerned with, "producing believable and trustworthy findings" (Merriam, 1988, p. 120) and is an interactive process that occurs simultaneously with data collection. By incorporating a research design which included the process of triangulation to collect the data, not only were validity and credibility of the study reinforced, but the opportunity to share in a deeper,

meaningful lived experience of the OCRE for each participant as well as myself was nurtured and ultimately emerged from the analysis of the data.

The collection and organization of the data, through the methods previously described, provided the study with what Patton (1980) calls the case record. The case record should include all the major information to be used in the case analysis and the case study. In establishing the case record,

Information is edited, redundancies are sorted out, parts are fitted together, and the case record is organized for ready access either chronologically (or) topically. (p. 313)

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1984) by establishing a case record the researcher should, "come up with reasonable conclusions and generalizations based on a preponderance of the data" (p. 134).

The interactive process of data collection and data analysis yielded an opportunity to begin to 'listen' to the interweaving voices of the recent participants as they reflected for OCRE, in OCRE and on OCRE. It was during this process that I was able to begin to record insights and interpretations that helped the analysis as I shifted from this interactive process to a more intensive process of data analysis. For the participants of the study who are in the world of teacher and looked back on OCRE through a lens tinted by time, their voices often resonated with the interwoven voices of participants who had just recently experienced their first or second OCRE's. During these conversational interviews I maintained a practice of continually recording insights and interpretations and used these to frame both additional questions at the time as

well as a possible categories to be explored.

Following this interactive process I engaged in what Merriam (1988) describes as the first step in the intensive analysis stage, this being a conversation with the data. The process required me to read through the data several times and during this time to jot down notes, comments, observations, and queries in the margins. These 'marginal notes' represented a list of major ideas within the data as well as constituted the beginning of the stages of, "organizing, abstracting, integrating, and synthesizing, which ultimately permit investigators to tell others what they have seen" (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 191). Through this conversation with the data, units of information emerged which served as a foundation for defining categories within the data. These units were represented by simple phrases, sentences or in some cases paragraphs which contained several thoughts.

The development of categories is both an intuitive process as well as being systematic and informed by the purpose of the study, the researcher's orientation and knowledge, and the explicit constructs told by the participants of the study (Merriam, 1988). Bearing in mind what Merriam describes in the process of developing of categories, I attempted to maintain a level of awareness and applied four guidelines that Guba and Lincoln (1981) suggested. In maintaining this awareness I looked for; the number of people that mentioned something or the frequency with which something arose in the data, the credibility of a category as determined by the participants, the uniqueness of the category and finally, what a particular category revealed about the nature of the inquiry that may not be otherwise recognized.

The development of these categories facilitated the organization of the

data through utilizing a coding process between the methods of data collection. This organization of data also aided in what Merriam (1988) describes as a fleshing out of the categories and making them, "more robust by searching through the data for more and better units of relevant information" (p. 135). The coding process also allowed the categories to undergo a cross-analysis thus providing the researcher with an opportunity to go beyond a simple categorical integration of the data.

Through the organization of the data and the development of the categories a foundation for the emergent themes was established. For the purpose of this study a thematic analysis was carried out on the OCRE participants' data, including their pre and post questionnaires, and conversational interviews. For the participants in the world of teacher a thematic analysis was carried out on the data obtained through their conversational interviews.

The interpretation of 'theme' as it is applied within the context of this study was adopted from the work of van Manen (1990). A theme is, "the form of capturing the phenomenon one tries to understand" and "theme describes an aspect of the structure of lived experience" (p. 87).

van Manen (1990) goes on to describe three approaches which one can take to uncovering thematic aspects. This study focused on what van Manen refers to as "the selective or highlighting approach", which suggests that the researcher listens or reads a text several times and ask, "What statement(s) or phrase(s) seem particularly essential or revealing about the phenomenon or experience being described" (p. 93). This was the approach that I adhered to when I was interpreting the experience as shared by the participants in their

questionnaires as well as their conversational interviews. The next step in this exhaustive analysis led me to begin grouping the ideas into emerging themes based on common thoughts found within the ideas. These emerging themes were then each clustered under three possible inclusive themes. With the creation of these inclusive themes the keystone to the data analysis was now in place. The framework for the lived experience of student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings was established.

Using the framework as the structure, I began to story and re-story an interpretive synthesis for each of the six participants who live in the 'world of becoming teacher'. Each interpretive synthesis resulted in a text known as a phenomenological description (van Manen, 1990). The intention of this description is to be an example or as van Manen states, "an icon that points at the "thing" which we attempt to describe" (p. 122).

For the seven participants who live in the 'world of teacher' I began to story and re-story their experience as a collection of voices in reflection on OCRE. This chapter was constructed using a similar thematic analysis but looked at the experience in a more holistic way where both their individual and group stories echo the same themes and therefore are shared in harmony.

In my attempt to unearth and interpret the lived experiences of these participants, I encourage you the reader to join the milieu. You may be someone who has had a similar experience and this study conjures fond memories or you may be someone who struggles to relate to the experience and at least is attempting to understand it from the perspective of the participants. If you find yourself in the first group I welcome you aboard and bid

you a bon voyage. If you find yourself in the second group I also welcome you and encourage you to come along with an open mind for it is through gathering other people's experiences that we become more experienced ourselves (van Manen, 1990, p. 62).

Aspects of Rigor

For naturalistic inquiry, as for scientific, meeting tests of rigor is a requisite of establishing trust in the outcomes of the inquiry. The question to be confronted is simple: 'What arguments might the naturalistic inquirer use to persuade a methodologically sophisticated peer of the trustworthiness of the information provided and the interpretations drawn from it?' (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 103)

If one examines the etymology of the word 'author', you would find that it comes from the Latin *augere* meaning "to increase". The meaning of the word author is "one who makes or creates something, a writer of books etc." (Webster, 1984, p. 41). The etymology of the word 'authentic' comes from the Greek *authentikos* meaning "genuine". The meaning of the word authentic is "reliable, credible, etc. as a report" (Webster, 1984, p. 41).

'I' as the re-researcher surface each of these terms because they speak to 'me' about the context of conducting the re-research associated with this study. 'I' research and 'I' write. The notion of 'I' signifies a separation between the deed and the doer. In both cases cited above there is an act that follows the 'I', which

denotes a separation between the deed and the doer but one that also reflects a relationship that exists between the deed and the doer. Aoki (1993) cautions us however, to view this relationship as one where perhaps there is no existence of a separation between deed and doer. But rather, it is a relationship that acknowledges and reinforces the importance of the 'eye' and the role it plays within the understanding of 'I'. This is the interpretation taken with regards to this study.

Taking this perspective with regards to the notion of 'author' of this research text creates the space wherein my opinions or biases as researcher can be shared. In other words the 'eye' in 'I' is acknowledged. In chapter one I described for you the reader, a chronological 'narrative' of my interest in the out-of-doors and how it was that I came to the question of this study. If one peruses this narrative, one may question, "how is it that this researcher can remain objective when he is so closely associated with the nature of the research being conducted?". My response to this is simply that I do not profess to be objective, but that I can only interpret the data as objectively as possible and that my personal biases based upon my personal and professional experiences cannot help but lend subjectivity to 'my' interpretations.

I remind the reader, that the nature of this study is an exploration into the lived experience of participants of a unique experience or phenomenon known as OCRE. The study does not profess to tell an 'abstract truth' about the phenomenon and decree that 'this' is what OCRE is all about. But rather it is an exploration into not only hearing, but more importantly listening to recent and distant voices who speak from their own position of experience.

The 'authenticity' of the research which provides the basis for the

research to be regarded as trustworthy, is founded in four criteria identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

The credibility of the study is obtained by using a variety of data collection methods, commonly referred to as triangulation, thus providing for different perspectives as well as the cross-checking of interpretation. This approach ensures a harmonization of the lived experience as described by the participants and the representation of that experience by the researcher.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define transferability as the “fittingness, the congruence between sending and receiving” (p. 124). The generalizations of findings in a study such as this to other situations is not possible nor should one try to equate these findings directly to another situation. However, the variety of participants which make up this study represent a purposive sample and this will supplement the rich, thick description and will facilitate the reader to determine the transferability to new situations.

Dependability refers to the extent that the findings in this study could be replicated by another researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that, “rather than demanding that outsiders get the same results, one wishes outsiders to concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense, they are consistent and dependable” (p. 288). According to Goetz and LeCompte (1984) dependability may be ensured by having the researcher: lay out the assumptions behind the study; discuss the selection and description of the participants; provide a description of the context of the study; use triangulation; and, describe the study in as much detail as possible. Each of these components have been addressed in a comprehensive fashion through various chapters within the boundaries of the study.

A final test of rigor identified by Guba and Lincoln is that of confirmability. The idea of confirmability is to shift the burden of proof from the researcher to the information shared within the study itself. Its intention is to ensure that the interpretations and the findings are in fact found within the data and, "that the data used to assemble the interpretations into structurally coherent and corroborating wholes is both explicit and implicit in the narrative of a case study" (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 243). Confirmability as it applies to this study is ensured through triangulation as well as the use of a critical friend who reviewed the work.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical standards established by the University of Alberta and the University of Regina regarding all aspects of the research were adhered to.

The participants who volunteered for the study were informed as to the purpose and the nature of the study. Any questions or concerns identified by the participants were addressed both individually and as a group depending upon the personal nature of the inquiry. Participation in the study was voluntary and participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Anonymity and confidentiality was maintained at all times throughout the course of the research. The participants' names are protected by using pseudonyms in any reports.

The written consent of all participants as well as the institution was obtained prior to the initiation of the study. Also, a completed research proposal was submitted to the Ethics Committee, Department of Secondary Education,

University of Alberta for permission and the approval for the study was obtained prior its commencement.

CHAPTER FOUR
ESTABLISHING A CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY:
A NARRATIVE OF OCRE PAST TO PRESENT

I struggle with the zipper on my winter parka as I clamber from my car on this frosty, February morning. The dark sky illuminated only by the distant stars and the few streetlights of the university parking lot makes me question the time of the morning. Can it really be 7:15 am? It seems so dark yet. My mind travels back to my high school days where I recall geography lessons discussing the tilt of the earth's axis and its rotation around the sun. In a reflective moment this refresher course regarding the sunlight hours during the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere reassures me that my watch must be correct. Yes, as dark as it is, it now comes as no total surprise, that it is 7:15 am.

The uncertainty and the excitement of this three day adventure known as OCRE has caused me to get very little sleep and I'm confident that my tussled hair as well as the dark circles that encompass my 'barely open' eyes would exhibit evidence of this.

I pull the toque down over my ears, push my hands into the soft warm liners of my winter mitts and sling the duffel bag over my shoulder and begin my journey from the car to the south entrance of the Education building. As I meander through the car exhaust that hangs in the cold winter air my eyes focus on other education students huddled around open car trunks gathering their belongings. Some make it a point to stop and check their own luggage to ensure they have the necessities required for the three day adventure. The sound of voices gets louder as I find my way to the building entrance where

groups of students begin to gather in their established section groups surrounded by their belongings. It interests me how these previously established section groups act as a home base for individuals to come to. The comfort in the familiarity of a friend's face and voice appears to help ward off the chills one senses not only from the early morning temperature, but also from the feeling of entering into an adventure that until this point has only existed in program templates, theory and past story. My thoughts are interrupted as a voice, from one of the students responsible for organizing the loading of luggage, echoes instructions for this to be done in an orderly fashion onto the big, yellow rental buses that await to take all 120 of the preservice teachers to our destination. I take my belongings to the rear of the cargo bus and observe how the loading of the luggage becomes so methodical. The individuals who assume positions in the assembly line format pass the luggage along with speed and care up into the bus where yet another line of individuals continue the process along the aisle to where the luggage is finally stacked and assumes its final resting place for the trip. As the luggage is being loaded one can hear shouts coming from individuals whose heads appear through bus windows, like birds poking through a birdhouse door, alerting friends who are still arriving to the bus that they should board.

Once the luggage has been loaded and the buses are boarded the departure from the parking lot and the journey out to OCRE in the Qu'Appelle Valley is underway. As I peruse the seats of the bus it appears that some of the groupings of students in their respective sections standing outside the Education building entrance seem to be similar to those groupings now observed sitting in the buses. It seems apparent that the information provided

by those individuals whose heads appeared through the bus windows earlier, has paid dividends as friends from sections have found their way to the appropriate bus and are now seated together.

I find myself shuffling about in my seat as I try to find a position of comfort which will suffice for the hour long journey to the Echo Valley Conference Centre. Once finding a position of comfort, my mind again is drawn back to a time when I used to ride a similar bus to and from high school. In fact, that old adage about, 'as much as things change they still stay the same', seems to apply to the seats on this bus. The bus seats this morning are as stiff and cold as they were sixteen years ago when I was an early morning traveller on a similar yellow bus to high school.

I am no sooner drawn back in time to these past early morning bus voyages during my high school years, when voices from neighbouring seats crescendo in song and return me to this present day bus voyage. Once I regain my awareness and become attuned to my surroundings, I listen to some of my peers engaging in recent pop songs as well as the old 'camp songs' we all grew up with. As I look about the seats of the bus I see some individuals laughing and joking, while others appear to be in simple conversation with one another, and then there are those who seem to be trying to capture an additional sixty minutes of valuable sleep prior to the arrival at Echo Valley Conference Centre and the start of OCRE. Those who seem to be attempting to seize the sixty minutes of valued sleep gain my undivided attention and convince me that this may be a very worthwhile endeavour for myself. Thus, once more I fidget about in the seat securing what I believe to be the most comfortable position and closing my eyes I trust the bus driver does not do the

same during the journey to the valley.

After becoming accustomed to the sound of the bus engine and the occupants voices and laughter, the comfortable position I had assumed provides an opportunity to join those in search of the sixty minutes of additional sleep. As I was experiencing this feeling of relaxation, I found myself becoming additionally curious regarding this adventure called OCRE to which I was finally now embarking upon. Up until this point most of what one has come to learn and know about OCRE has only really been consumed by listening to the stories passed down from previous participants who had already journeyed the path of student teacher. Their anecdotes shared in the hallways of the education building, or over coffee in ESS lounge were told with a feeling of excitement and vigor and radiated a message that served to whet the appetite and prompted the listener to solicit more information from the storyteller who had already experienced the OCRE adventure.

As I lay there beginning to doze off my curiosity peaked and question after question surfaced regarding the OCRE; when did this off campus residential experience come into existence? how did this experience originate? why did OCRE come to be part of teacher education? what has been the evolution of OCRE? who was involved in its inception? There were so many questions that kept creeping into my mind...so many questions that kept creeping...so many questions that...so many.....

What has come to be known as the Off Campus Residential Experience at the University of Regina dates back over two decades. The genesis of this residential experience grew from the roots of an outdoor education movement

in the province of Saskatchewan initiated by a handful of individuals consisting of Physical Education consultants from a local school board and some faculty members from the Faculty of Education, University of Regina. This partnership had as its common bond an interest of teaching and learning through the out-of-doors. Research into this newly emerging field of Outdoor Education was being conducted by examining the little literature that was currently being written at that time. This interested group discussed the possibilities that this new thrust in education could have for practitioners in the the field as well as those currently involved in teacher preparation programs.

Through a collaborative venture, this interested group of individuals conducted a workshop in 1965 for practicing teachers in the field. The intention of this workshop was twofold; initially the inservice was to identify the interest level of the practitioners to this newly emerging field of education, and secondly, it was to provide the practitioners, as well as the organizers, an opportunity to experiment with the new idea of teaching/learning through the out-of-doors. The workshop exceeded its objectives as there seemed to blossom from this experience a definite interest from the practitioners into this newly emerging educational field. The partnership of local board consultants and faculty members continued to grow and additional workshops were collaboratively conducted throughout the province for the next several years culminating in a 1968 workshop which attracted over 500 participants and resulted in the inception of the Saskatchewan Outdoor Education Association (SOEA). This organization consisted of interested teachers, local board consultants as well as faculty of education members and today is still in existence, although with a name change to the Saskatchewan Outdoor

Environmental Education Association (SOEEA).

It was following this conference and particularly the influence the keynote speaker , George Donaldson had on the participants, that faculty members who had attended the conference began to discuss the role that teaching/learning through the outdoors could play in the development of teachers involved in preservice teacher education. Concepts such as 'correlation' and 'interdisciplinary' within the context of the teacher education program were being surfaced and discussed. The opportunity to move beyond the traditional classroom to an out-of-door environment encouraging this interdisciplinary approach and ultimately enriching curriculum content, facilitated not only interrelationships in curriculum but also encouraged the development of social relationships between those individuals living and working together in the interdisciplinary approach. Thus, the social values and skills inherent within this approach also proved desirable. The faculty members who had this zeal for teaching/learning through the out-of-doors began to question; why would we do this; what are the benefits for teacher education; how would we do this?

Their questions in turn guided their program planning to a point where in 1969, four courses in education; Art, Music, Physical Education, and a newly developed course called Outdoor Education, were timetabled together during the summer session of the university calendar year. These four courses were initially taught on an experimental basis as off-campus classes at Echo Valley Provincial Park. The faculty coordinated the experience utilizing a team teaching approach which encouraged the integration of course content and facilitated a collaborative relationship between the faculty instructors as well as

those registered in the summer session courses. The immediate success of the summer session experience prompted faculty to initiate a similar process with the same courses taught on-campus in the normal semester program. Thus, in the following fall semester the on-campus courses of Art, Music, Physical Education, and Outdoor Education were integrated and a team teaching approach was utilized to deliver the program. The integrated summer sessions continued and were supported through the interest of practicing teachers in the field. The second summer session witnessed the inclusion of the disciplines of Social Studies and Science Education joining the original four courses. By the third summer session Mathematics Education came to join the fold. By 1971, in three short years all subject areas associated with the elementary teacher education program had become part of an off-campus integrated program which utilized teaching/learning through the out-of-doors to supplement and complement an interdisciplinary approach to teacher education. 1972 proved to be the last year that this integrated program was conducted as an off-campus summer experience. The collaborative venture had evolved through its four years to the point where all subject area courses were now involved and faculty envisioned this integrated approach to be the framework for the on-campus elementary teacher education program. An integrated program with all course components became a reality for the teacher education program the following fall semester and included the traditional experiences in the conventional classroom indoors as well as incorporating teaching/learning experiences through the out-of-doors. The first residential experience which involved the transportation of student teachers in the program to an off-campus location to utilize the out-of-doors for

teaching/learning followed during the ensuing winter semester. This three day off-campus experience was a component of the regular on-campus program and might be identified as the first official off-campus residential experience even though this first attempt at a residential experience did not include all of the sections of students in the elementary teacher education program. Like the original off-campus summer session, this first off-campus residential experience was conducted with students currently registered in an early childhood stream of the elementary teacher education program. And like the experimental summer session, this particular experience also received great reviews from both students and faculty and proved to be the foundation for what came to be known as the 'Off Campus Residential Experience' or as it is so fondly called , 'OCRE'.

The fall semester of 1973 saw the inauguration of OCRE being held at what today is called Echo Valley Conference Centre. All of the sections associated with the elementary teacher education program were involved. The faculty collaborated in teams assigned to the various sections to facilitate the two and one half day out-of-door teaching/learning experience. This collaborative venture is maintained for two semesters during the pre-internship year of the elementary teacher education program and students currently registered in this pre-internship year are involved in two OCRE's; one in the winter semester followed by a fall semester.

The OCRE component of the elementary teacher education program has evolved through its twenty plus years of existence. This evolution has been as a result of the changing philosophical perspectives inherent within the teacher education program which stems in a large part from the philosophical

perspectives of those individuals who dwell within the program. This evolution has created changes in the actual two and one half day experience, however the foundational principles which have guided the OCRE from its inception to present day and secure its place in the teacher education program still remain as the cornerstone to the experience.

So, this is the history to this experience called OCRE. If OCRE has been around for over two decades there certainly must be a large number of former graduates who are practitioners in the field today who have memories of their experiences at Echo Valley Conference Centre. I wonder what their OCRE was like and what their memories are of this unique experience in teacher education . I wonder what my upcoming OCRE is going to be like...I wonder what my upcoming...I wonder...

I feel the big, yellow bus begin its stutter-step approach and jerk back and forth as the bus driver begins to downshift and negotiate the large, forty-eight passenger vehicle around the corner and into the parking lot of Echo Valley Conference Centre. I emerge from my comfortable resting position as the bus comes to its final destination. In anticipation, I hurriedly scrape the frost from the window and peer through the transparent porthole to catch a glimpse of the home of OCRE. Towering coniferous and deciduous trees are sprinkled over what appears to be gentle sloping land which is covered in a carpet of white snow, and increases in elevation as it recedes in a northerly direction from the shores of Echo Lake to the hills that form part of the Qu'Appelle Valley. Through the maze of trees and with the valley as its backdrop, emerge an outline of buildings which at one time served as a tuberculosis treatment centre

from 1917 through until 1972. The facility has long since undergone renovations but one can sense that the buildings, as well as the grounds they reside upon, portray a history that beckons the aspiring educator in all of us, not only to want to come and understand, but more importantly want to come and appreciate.

Donning my parka again, I pull my toque down over my ears, slip my hands into the sweaty liners of my winter mitts and shuffle down the aisle of the bus to the front where I exit and inhale a breath of fresh air that reinforces the realization that I am in the countryside removed from the smog of the urban centre. Upon gathering my duffel bag from the organized assembly line used to unload the luggage from the cargo bus, I make my way to the boardwalk that winds its way from the parking lot through to the buildings that will serve as our residence for the next three days. The creaking of the boards under my feet as I make my way up the boardwalk, act not only as a reminder to the age and the history associated with the conference centre but also to the cold temperature outside. It is a feeling that I will certainly come to experience and learn more about during the next several days. The disappearance of the bus through the dense trees serves as evidence that the connection to what we've come to learn about teacher education is about to follow another path and take on another perspective as we depart from the world of the university and enter into, with a sincere, heartfelt welcome by faculty, the world of OCRE.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIRST OFF-CAMPUS RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

Prologue

This chapter focuses on the first OCRE and will be discussed in three sections. The first section will situate the OCRE within the context of the teacher education program. The second will explore the OCRE curriculum-as-planned. The final section will concentrate on the lived experience of three student participants involved in their first OCRE. This interpretive text symbolizes the curriculum-as-lived.

Situating OCRE within the Context of Program

The pre-internship year of the elementary teacher education program is divided into two consecutive semesters beginning in the winter semester, January to April (semester four) followed by the fall semester, September to December (semester five). During this pre-internship year student teachers are involved in a variety of learning experiences which have as their focus a theory into practice approach to teacher education. The weaving of theory and practice occurs through comprehensive program components consisting of: educational professional studies courses which concentrate on the basic skills and strategies of teaching, educational psychology courses which have as their focus the development of children and methodology courses which parallel those consistent with curriculum disciplines and provide both instructional

content and processes associated with teaching and learning. Also found within this program framework are early childhood and middle years seminars which are designed to provide a forum for the issues arising in courses and practicum experiences to be shared, deliberated upon and discussed by students and faculty. At various times throughout both semesters, students in the pre-internship program also partake in several modules which resemble inservices and focus on various aspects associated with the teaching profession. The pre-internship year also consists of three-one week practicum experiences in both winter and fall semesters, where pre-interns are placed as pairs in schools learning and teaching with the guidance and support of a cooperating teacher. Interspersed within these program components is the Off Campus Residential Experience which occurs as two developmental experiences, one in each of the two pre-internship semesters.

OCRE: Curriculum-As-Planned

The first OCRE in the pre-internship year occurs in the winter semester usually in the month of February. Similar to any well intended and organized residential experience, OCRE consists of three distinct, yet connected phases: pre-impact phase, impact phase, and the post-impact phase. While occurring with respect to timing, as three distinct phases, the learning gleaned by experiencing the three phases as a cumulative venture provides the prospective teachers with the understanding, skills and appreciation of what is involved in the coordination, implementation and evaluation of a truly rewarding, educational experience.

Data collection methods for this part of the study consisted primarily of; Observation, which were recorded as observational field notes and Document Data (e.g. OCRE Committee Meeting Planning Minutes, Faculty/Student OCRE Manuals and OCRE video). These sources were used to provide the foundation for the curriculum-as-planned.

The pre-impact phase addresses the initial planning of the OCRE and focuses on the preparatory issues concerned with the off campus residential experience. These preparatory issues deal with a variety of concerns and for the most part, parallel ones which would be similar to those most teachers would experience should they decide to venture forth from the traditional classroom into alternative learning environments. Some of the preparatory issues which are part of the pre-impact phase associated with OCRE include: the organization and involvement of the faculty who instruct courses to the pre-interns in that particular semester; providing an orientation for the students to OCRE through the use of a large group seminar (At this orientation the participants are introduced to the OCRE through the use of a student designed video as well as additional information shared from a program perspective. Together these provide the theoretical framework, establish expectations for OCRE, and attempt to capture the nature of this unique experience and its perceived role in teacher education). Also, logistical arrangements for transportation, accommodations, meals, equipment and the various responsibilities of students and faculty for the respective impact and post-impact phases of the OCRE round out the pre-impact phase.

The impact phase of OCRE is the actual two and one-half day experience embarked upon by the students. This phase begins with the transportation of the student participants from the university to Echo Valley Conference Centre, followed by the time the students spend engaged in the prescribed learning/teaching experiences associated with OCRE, and finally culminating in the return trip of the student participants back to the university from Echo Valley Conference Centre.

The impact phase of OCRE centres upon the two and one-half day experience and is the actual timetable of learning/teaching experiences which attempts to put into practice the expectations as outlined for the OCRE. The foundation underpinning the first OCRE is the realization that it is the first of two residential experiences for the pre-intern students. With this as a focus, the learning/teaching experiences associated with the first OCRE are designed in such a way to slowly immerse the participants into the unknown experience. Thus, the majority of the planning for the learning/teaching experiences is dominated by faculty and student leaders, who for the most part volunteer or have been participants in their own OCRE. The immersion principle for first time OCRE participants occurs gradually throughout the first OCRE. It is followed by total immersion into the second OCRE, where the student participants assume a more direct and responsible role in all three phases associated with the OCRE. This practice for the OCRE's is deliberate, intentionally designed and parallels the developmental nature associated with the teacher education program.

What now follows will be a 'guided tour' of the impact phase of OCRE focussing on the time of the student participants arrival at Echo Valley Conference Centre through to their return trip to the university. The intention

here is to provide an overview of the first OCRE as well as some background to the learning/teaching experiences associated with the OCRE.

OCRE: Day One

The students arrive at the university by 7:15 a.m. and load their personal gear aboard the the buses that await to transport them to the residential facility in the Qu'Appelle Valley. By 7:30 the buses depart the university for the one hour trip. Upon the arrival of the participants at Echo Valley Conference Centre, students coordinate the unloading of the luggage and store their personal gear in the dormitory styled rooms.

Orientation

The student participants meet in a designated area as a large group of 120 (approximate numbers) and are initiated to OCRE. This initiation serves two purposes; initially, it helps create an atmosphere and sends an invitation for 'all' involved to enter the experience in anticipation and engage in the provisional try with a willingness to risk and trust. Secondly, the orientation affords the opportunity to impart any last minute details to the participants regarding the schedule or other information that has been identified since the first orientation back on-campus. Through the use of song and story the orientation takes on a flavour that provides a warm welcome to the winter outdoors and bids all involved to have a fulfilled learning experience.

Acclimatization

The next two hours the students spend in their respective sections where they are then divided into three smaller groups, with each small group consisting of approximately ten students. Each small group working with the aid of a leader, is introduced to the 'new' environment through an experience known as "Acclimatization" (Van Matre, 1979). The intention of this experience is to stimulate awareness, increase appreciation, and motivate further involvement. Acclimatization is the process of coming to understand, and by so doing, to feel at home with the natural surroundings. Through the use of multisensory experiences which encourage the provisional try and a willingness to risk and trust, the Acclimatization experience attempts to break down the physical and attitudinal barriers which an individual may have artificially created. These barriers need to be dismantled to the point where one can feel not only completely surrounded by the environment, but totally involved with it as well. Once one begins to feel the unity with Nature, one is more hesitant to destroy it and realizes that to do so would be to destroy oneself. Through the process of Acclimatization, the individual will achieve a heightened awareness and greater sensitivity for all forms of life, their own, others, and the environment.

This particular learning experience helps to establish a comfort zone for individuals to the winter outdoors, as well as introduces the individuals to the potential for the utilization of the outdoors for teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the Acclimatization experience is an opportunity for all involved to begin to realize and experience the theme of OCRE - "Interdependence".

Site Development and Site Utilization

Following lunch and personal reflection time, students in their respective sections engage in a learning experience designed to reinforce the expectations of the OCRE program which focus on the development of group skills and processes.

The Site Development is an opportunity for the students to establish a 'home base' for their section of thirty students and leader(s). Site Development essentially is the creation of a 'place' for out-of-door living. The students work as a group in building a model campsite which involves the construction of a quinzhee (snow shelter), and snow tables, collecting firewood for use in the environmental stoves while keeping in mind the importance of low impact on the environment. Through the experience the students learn and practice skills associated with basic outdoor survival and the processes involved in effective group work. The Site provides a space for the group of students to call 'home' and for the next several days the group will utilize this place where a fire is built, hot chocolate is made and the group gathers to reflect and construct meaning of the days events. Students who want and come prepared with the appropriate sleeping bag and pad may choose to utilize the quinzhee as their shelter for the night's sleep as opposed to the dormitory. It is an experience such as this which provides another dimension to the experiential component associated with the OCRE.

The Site Utilization is a learning experience which occurs simultaneously with the Site Development. It is an opportunity for understanding the potential of our 'place' in the out-of-doors. The focus of Site Utilization is for the students to view their place as a teaching/learning environment. While the site is being

developed by some students, others engage in experiences which focus on the site's utilization and the possibilities for learning/teaching. Some of these experiences have been planned on-campus during the pre-impact phase with a focus on the interdisciplinary approach of subject areas, while others come to fruition during the actual impact phase. By engaging in the various experiences students come to learn more about the site from a physical perspective utilizing an interdisciplinary approach as well as employ the skills and processes of group work.

The Site Development and Site Utilization represent what may be regarded as a typical experience that any teacher who embarks on a one day or extended field trip to the out-of-doors would establish. The need to establish a 'home base' for the group while one learns about the immediate environment and engages in the intended learnings for the experience is paramount. Providing this type of practical experience for these prospective teachers can only serve to enhance their confidence so that, they themselves in the future will provide similar out-of-door learning/teaching experiences for the students who come into their classes.

EPS Section Meetings

This evening session which occurs both evenings and follows the supper hour is an opportunity for each section to meet as its own group and reflect on the day's events. The atmosphere for these gatherings, like that of the OCRE, is very relaxing and an attempt is made to create a space where student voices may be heard as they recount the shared memories of the day. Through the guidance of a leader a forum for encouraging all to become involved in the

discussion is facilitated. The element of risk and trust, which has pervaded the days leading to OCRE and this initial day is central to the discussion.

Throughout the reflections a conscious effort is made to connect the students' realizations and understandings to the process of teaching and learning. These gatherings not only provide the opportunity to re-live the experiences of the day but also provide for gazing into the immediate future and discussing the next day and the possibilities that exist for learning/teaching as an individual and as a group.

Winter Stomp

The Winter Stomp is an opportunity for each section to share their combined talents with the large group. With the aid of advanced planning during the pre-impact phase on campus, each section originates songs, skits and stories which depict their interpretation of OCRE. These are then shared in a very informal setting in an atmosphere which often invites those who are watching the performance to become involved. Through the organization of a student leader group refreshments of hot chocolate, ice tea, muffins and donuts are provided for the evening's event. The Winter Stomp is a gathering of all OCRE participants and creates an environment for not only the student teachers to share their talents, but invites faculty and student leaders to 'take to stage' and share in the revelry. It is often during these 'informal' gatherings such as the Winter Stomp and mealtimes that student perceptions of faculty and faculty perceptions of students change and the ensuing relationships that develop are based on realized understandings as opposed to perceived understandings.

The Winter Stomp is a medium that is often found in any residential

experience and serves to bring the participants together in a shared experience where they can risk and build trust as well as, come to know more about one another and establish relationships that have all the possibility of developing into friendships. The OCRE Winter Stomp meets this intention for about 130 individuals.

Following the Winter Stomp, which may take two to three hours, the first day of OCRE comes to a close. Students head back to their rooms to secure some much needed sleep from all the fresh air and exercise. Or for those who wish and are so inclined, the necessary gear is obtained and off they saunter to the awaiting quinzhees to have the experience of a lifetime and sleep in the shelters which were constructed earlier that day.

OCRE: Day Two

Students are awakened and ushered into the second day of OCRE by song. This experience brings with it a reminder that in the valley, where it is so calm and quiet, that we too should try to become as much as possible a part of the natural surroundings during our stay there. Also, the use of song in a very quiet yet prescriptive way, continues to nurture the atmosphere that envelopes the OCRE. Very often the words of the song accompany the students as they make their way to the cafeteria for the morning nourishment that will sustain them for the start of the day.

Faculty and Student Leader Learning Experiences

Following the morning breakfast, the second day of OCRE begins with

each section of students participating in learning experiences which have been designed by faculty and student leaders. Two sessions in the morning as well as the first session in the afternoon have been set aside for the respective sections to rotate through three of the four experiences.

These learning experiences focus on outdoor living skills associated with the winter environment and help provide an individual with the confidence to venture into the out-of-doors and feel comfortable enough to utilize the out-of-doors to enrich curriculum. The intention of these learning experiences is to encourage the experiential component with the understanding that one probably will not become an 'expert' in the skill itself but will begin to see the skill as a means rather than an end in itself. The opportunity to experience unique skills for use in the out-of-doors will hopefully assist the participants in creating effective learning experiences in their future lives as teachers. These particular learning experiences are designed to focus on OCRE's theme of 'Interdependence' as well as model an interdisciplinary approach to learning/teaching.

Student Led Learning Experiences

The Student Led learning Experiences bridge from the previous learning experiences conducted by faculty and student leaders. The intention for the inclusion of these learning experiences is to provide an opportunity for the students to assume more responsibility for their learning/teaching as it relates to OCRE. This also parallels the developmental aspect that is a key component within the teacher education program.

Working in a group of five or six from their larger section group, students

during the pre-impact phase designed a 15 minute learning experience to be instructed during this time period in OCRE. In the pre-impact phase each small group selected a sub theme related to the overall theme of OCRE, and through a 'webbing' exercise ultimately produced a concept map and designed a learning experience which focused on the utilization of the out-of-doo.s and incorporated an interdisciplinary teaching approach.

The task at OCRE was for each section to meet in their own designated areas and structure the afternoon session so that each small group within a section had the opportunity to involve the remaining small groups of their own section in the designed learning experience. Thus, one small group would be responsible for coordinating their designed learning experience for the fellow students in their section. Each small group was also responsible for leading a reflective session following the learning experience.

At the conclusion of a section's five or six student led learning experiences, each section met in their respective locations and engaged in a reflective session where the various sub-theme concept maps were then shared and the interrelationships between the learning experiences and the connection to the theme of 'Interdependence' could be explored and discussed. This helped to provide the students with the understanding that there was a requirement of bringing closure to the student led learning experiences and to reinforce not only the importance of identifying the interrelationships but also to experience the theme of interdependence.

As was the case in the preceding OCRE day following the supper meal, students met in their respective sections and participated in the EPS Section

Meetings. This reflective session provided the forum again for student voices to echo their reactions to the day's events and the learning and teaching that had ensued. This session unlike the first, has the opportunity to take on a different flavour as the students feel more comfortable with the surroundings and the increased responsibility they've assumed for the day. By experiencing the second day in this fashion the reflective session has the possibility for more voices to be heard, often those who perhaps were more distanced at the outset.

Downhill Skiing and Social

The second day of OCRE concludes with an opportunity for students to enjoy downhill skiing at a local resort in the Qu'Appelle Valley. Prior arrangements have been made as far as securing ski packages for those interested while those who do not wish to participate are welcome to enjoy the social aspect at the ski lodge. Still others who do not care to venture into the ski lodge remain at the conference centre often coordinating their own social events.

For the most part, the second day of OCRE ends with additional people venturing forth in the out-of-doors to participate in that experience of a lifetime and sleep in the quinzhees. Very often these additional people are the ones who listened to the stories and became attuned to the experience shared by the previous night quinzhee dwellers.

OCRE: Day Three

The third and final day of OCRE begins very much like the previous morning. Following breakfast however, students return to their dorms and pack their personal gear and store it in a designated location to accommodate the individuals who need to clean the dorms and prepare them for the weekend conferences. Following the packing, the students meet in their respective sections for the morning learning experience.

Synthesis Activities

This learning experience again becomes the responsibility of the students. Each section is introduced to the purpose of the learning experience with the help of a faculty member. The overall intentions of the learning experience is shared and discussed. The students then organize themselves into small groups of five or six students similar to those used for the student led experiences of the previous day.

The synthesis activities is an opportunity for the small group to plan and prepare a presentation which articulates their understanding of the OCRE and the theme of 'Interdependence', and the possibilities that this unique experience holds for learning/teaching. Through a brainstorming approach the small independent groups design their presentation using a variety of mediums of expression. At a prescribed time the small groups meet again as a large group and share their presentations with the total group. This sharing of presentations is symbolic of the theme of OCRE and also acts as the initial step to bringing closure to the winter OCRE.

Section Closures

Following the Synthesis Activities, each section convenes at its own Site. This return to the Site is symbolic of the reflective process associated with their development as teachers. Once they have returned to their 'home base' the students reflect upon the winter OCRE recounting the learning experiences and the growth which has occurred both, from an individual perspective as well as from a section perspective.

A key component to the Section Closure is the physical dismantling of the Site itself. Utilizing a low impact approach the quinzhee and snow tables are broken down and the environmental stove is taken apart and stored back in its stuff sack and all garbage is taken out from the Site. The Site is considered clean when there is very little or no evidence remaining that would indicate that someone had occupied that location. This learning experience, besides practicing appropriate care and concern for the environment, also symbolizes closure of a group project that required group initiative, and encouraged and fostered cooperation that helped to create an atmosphere of interdependence.

Large Group Closure

The Large Group Closure is a gathering of all who were involved in the OCRE; student participants, student leaders as well as faculty. Just like the Orientation which brought a warm welcome to the OCRE, this learning experience brings a fond farewell to all involved in the OCRE. Through the use of song and story the students are encouraged to 'take something back' with them to their student teacher lives at the university. The challenge is issued to all involved not to let this experience become an end in itself but rather a means

to exploring all the possibilities for engaging children and teacher in the process of learning and teaching.

Through the bidding of a fond farewell, the students are alerted to the fact that in approximately seven months we will all once again return to Echo Valley Conference Centre to engage in the second OCRE, this time in a season which may not prove to be so harsh.

The Large Group Closure comes to an end once the buses arrive. Students then retrieve their personal luggage and begin the task of loading the buses and depart for the return trip to the university. The return trip and ultimate arrival of the students back to the university brings the impact phase of OCRE to a close.

The post-impact phase of OCRE essentially begins once the students arrive back at the university. Some basic jobs such as the unloading of the equipment utilized by the students and leaders for the OCRE helps illustrate one component associated with this phase. This physical aspect also represents what would be part of the responsibility of any teacher who ventures forth from the conventional classroom on an extended field trip.

This post-impact phase is also concerned with the conscious effort at continuing to transfer and bridge the learnings gleaned from the OCRE into the courses as well as the three week school practicums that are part of the students' teacher education program. This requires some indepth planning by faculty, cooperating teachers and the students which has often been initiated during the pre-impact phase of OCRE. The post-impact phase serves as an

opportunity for the students to extend their understanding of learning/teaching by putting into practice what OCRE has provided for them and then once again reflecting on this practice and constructing meaning for their own personal and professional development.

OCRE: Curriculum-As-Lived

The world of curriculum-as-lived is the actual world of OCRE as experienced by the student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings. This world is framed within the context of the three phases of the OCRE previously discussed but one that is 'lived' by the student teachers in what may best be described as a continuum which highlights experiential education. The curriculum-as-lived as it is exemplified in this chapter, is an interpretive text shared by three participants. The interpretive text represents a space where my descriptions and interpretations of the voices of each participant may be shared.

The Pre and Post OCRE Questionnaires in conjunction with the conversational interviews provided the data for describing their experiences. All the data for each individual were analyzed and organized into categories. Through the development of categories, a basis for emergent themes was established. The common thoughts found within the emergent themes led to the clustering of themes. Ultimately, three inclusive themes were identified. The three themes of; **Self with Self**; **Self with Other**; and **Self with Environment** provided the foundation for an interpretive synthesis of the lived experience of OCRE.

Each theme with corresponding verbatim gives credence to the individual voice that speaks. The sharing of each individual's voice through the themes collectively, give meaning and construct the individual's story of the lived experience of OCRE.

Questionnaire Information

Both the Pre-OCRE and Post-OCRE Questionnaires were designed as open-ended inquiries. However, the final question of the Post-OCRE Questionnaire asked respondents;

“Was OCRE a valuable experience for you? Why? Why not?”

The intention for including this question was to obtain, by a simple numerical expression, a sense of OCRE as being a positive or negative experience for the participants. The following table provides the results of the tally and illustrates by percentage how the numbers compare for the first OCRE experience.

<u>PARTICIPANTS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>	<u>NO RESPONSE</u>
81	78	0	1	2
	96%	0%	1%	3%

Wanda's Experience

Like for so many other students embarking upon the OCRE, for Wanda it was like taking a journey into the unknown. This unknown contained elements of excitement as well as intrepidation. Initially, this unknown provided her the opportunity as she described for, "reliving the childhood 'camp' feelings" (Pre #3). Her camp memories would be the lens with which she would view the new upcoming experience. Wanda described it in this fashion,

[OCRE] sounds like a lot of fun and [I'm] looking forward to it, [I] look forward to getting better acquainted with everyone. (Pre #2)

Wanda's excitement regarding the upcoming experience was also viewed for its possible contribution to her development as an aspiring teacher. She saw the experience as an opportunity for, "renewing excitement about becoming teacher" (Pre #5). The chance to expand her knowledge of teaching by combining an understanding about the outdoor environment as a "classroom" (Pre #3) and developing teaching strategies for utilizing the outdoors to enrich learning were two perceived values that Wanda placed on the residential experience.

But as much as there was excitement, there was also some degree of uncertainty associated with the OCRE. When I asked her to respond to a question dealing with the first thing that comes to mind when she thinks about OCRE she explained, "being cold - are the dorms heated?" (Pre #1). Wanda was concerned about the weather and this led her to question the facility. It also

led her to question and wonder about having the appropriate clothing for the weather and the activities she would be engaging in. Being able to control the weather and the actual facility were beyond her but securing the proper attire to be worn was something that she knew she could do. However, this required some background knowledge and proper preparation.

Another area of concern for Wanda was her own physical conditioning. She questioned her ability to participate to the same extent as others. The stories she had heard regarding OCRE had as their focus active participation which at times could test one physically and this was an issue that caused her some “worry” (Pre #1).

A fourth concern was her uncertainty about achieving “success at the peer activities” and a “worry about presentations to peers” (Pre #4). The curriculum-as-planned required groups of students to design a learning experience which focused on the theme of OCRE and then to utilize an interdisciplinary approach through the outdoors to teach this to their peers. This was to be done during the second day, following the students own participation in designed experiences conducted by faculty and student leaders.

Wanda’s uncertainties may best be described as concerns that are hierarchical in nature. Initial concerns were those dealing with comfort in a physical sense and they focused on her individually. Subsequent concerns shifted to her comfort in a psychological sense as they tended to focus on her success in activities and with others.

Looking at Wanda’s excitement and intrepidation regarding the upcoming OCRE it is easy to see how venturing into an unknown causes one to do so ever so gently. The term OCRE itself conjures up many interpretations for

individuals and this heightens one's excitement and intrepidation. But even with these two elements being present she did enter the experience with optimism.

In these first few statements Wanda has provided an initial interpretation of what the residential experience could hold for her. Let us follow along and listen as she begins to unravel and reveal her lived interpretation of OCRE.

Self with Self

The residential experience for Wanda provided her with personal insights about herself . It's not as if this experience was a revelation in itself but rather it was an opportunity to realize her own personal growth. She describes this understanding in a developmental manner,

When going into it [OCRE] you don't know whether you're at par with everybody...I was surprised...well, not surprised but even just during this last semester that I am as good, or maybe sometimes even a little better than some. I always thought that I was...because I was older and because I didn't really work hard at high school and stuff, that I'm just learning now that I have...that I know things. i don't know how to really explain it, that I'm intelligent? (p. 1)

Wanda made reference to how the OCRE helped facilitate this understanding; it allowed as she says, "...to reach within yourself and find out more about yourself..." (p. 1). When asked if this could have occurred back on campus Wanda replied, "that it probably would have but it would have taken a longer

period of time” (p. 1).

She saw her development and realization of this development being connected to the group. Having the opportunity to engage in a group setting early in the semester through OCRE allowed her the insights about herself. This relational characteristic and being accepted as a person had a direct bearing on her personally. When asked about the contribution of OCRE to her personally, Wanda responded, “I am a little more outgoing and sure of myself. [I have] a bit better self-concept I guess [and] a little higher level of self-esteem” (Post #7). Wanda described this growth through having the chance to assume a leadership role,

I guess I was filling in a leadership role. I haven't been a leader for years and years. But while exploring at 2 a.m. in the morning, six other people were willing to go anywhere and possibly do anything I may have asked. It's been a long, long time. Maybe I'll do it more often now. (Post #5)

The experience for Wanda was one that provided her with the chance to identify with herself and to do so in a non-threatening environment. It is not that this experience creates these things to happen but rather it simply encourages the dismantling of barriers that are so often artificial. For Wanda, it wasn't a complete understanding and revelation of herself personally, but simply a valuable experience that as she describes, “brought me a bit further out of my shell” (Post #9).

Wanda's meaning making of OCRE for her personally led her to begin to look at OCRE for its possibilities for contributing to her in a professional sense

as well. She was entering the world of OCRE with the idea that this experience would rejuvenate her desire for becoming a teacher. In her discussions prior to OCRE, she viewed her development very much in a technical way. This upcoming experience as she described it would provide her initially with an opportunity to “use the environment for a classroom” as well as for, “learning great strategies for teaching out-of-doors” (Pre #3) and also for, “giving great teaching ideas” (Pre #5).

Through the experience Wanda began to find her own space as an aspiring teacher. This space was no longer one where she felt she had to be the expert and that her expert knowledge would be obtained in isolated fragments and be put in place prior to her entering the world of teacher. She used an analogy of teacher as a walking encyclopedia. Rather the experience began to create a teacher space where Wanda viewed her understanding of her professional self in a holistic fashion.

For her now, teachers began to have this ‘humanness’ quality and being a teacher did not mean you had to know everything about everything. In response to a question regarding how the OCRE experience has facilitated the transition from student to teacher, Wanda responded by explaining,

I guess I figured out that teachers don’t have to be this incredible person way up on a pedestal. Teachers are wonderful people but they continue to learn new things day by day. (Post #8)

Wanda’s practical experiences at OCRE now challenged her to view teaching more as an opportunity of learning with the students. Engaging in the

experiential aspect of learning at OCRE created an opportunity within her teacher space during her following pre-internship practicum to be more “interactive” with the students, as well as to feel comfortable to “get down with them [students] and muck around a bit” (p. 2).

The ‘where’ and ‘what’ of teaching had also undergone some change in Wanda’s space as teacher. What to this point had been education in a traditional classroom setting of four walls, rows of desks, and a blackboard was now education which could occur ‘beyond’ the classroom in the outdoors. What to this point had been education primarily from a specific discipline with its own textbook was now education about a discipline using the outdoors as a textbook.

Wanda’s enlightenment regarding her self professionally was not one where her previous understandings of learning and teaching were being displaced with the ‘brand and grand’ new approach. No, for Wanda it was an opening or a passage within her space as teacher where she saw the potential for making her teaching a learning that came alive and existed not only in books but also ‘out there’ and a learning that both students and teacher would experience together. She explains,

I just think everything can be broadened, like, instead of the Math book in front of you, you can take the concepts and the book and take it out without even using your Math book and you can take it outside and to the outdoors and learn out there as well as in the school. It would be great if we could teach everything outside of the classroom, I think, but there are some things that...it’s kind of a meeting point, coming back to, kind of

thing. (p. 5)

For Wanda the OCRE had a profound influence on her understanding of self in a professional sense. It “opened windows” (p. 6) and nurtured her confidence as an aspiring teacher to venture forth beyond the traditional classroom and say, “...this can be done outdoors; you can move your classroom outside and there’s nothing wrong with it” (p. 6).

Self with Other

Wanda saw that engaging in the OCRE had possibilities for as she says, “getting better acquainted with everyone” (Pre #2) as well as, being able to “open up” (Pre #6). The on-campus classes which are designed in a section format seemed to be a steppingstone for developing a group identity. However, this identity seems to be artificial in nature as students are in their respective sections and physically with each other for a set period of time theorizing about teaching. Their time together is spent in a conventional classroom setting with desks and blackboards. They interact with the subject matter and with each other but through more formal channels by employing methods and strategies for group work.

At breaks in their classes their interaction becomes a little more personal through discussions one-on-one or in groups of three or four. This carries forth into small group projects or presentations for their various classes.

Each of these opportunities helps to establish a foundation for the development of the group. But there appears to be a sort of artificiality to this development.

For Wanda, she was looking to the OCRE as an opportunity to reach beyond the artificiality and to learn about the self in relation to the other. In some respects it may be that OCRE would act as a measuring stick for Wanda to provide her with an understanding of her place among her peers as well as faculty.

The experience for Wanda encouraged her to take some risks but these occurred in an environment where trust was established first. She saw the need for risk taking as something of value to the whole experience and that it was through the possibility of taking risks that there would be some realization of her place. Following the experience she used the word “adventurous” (Post #4) to describe herself in relation with others. She knew that if she was going to get something from others it would only happen if she was willing to give up something. This meant that she would risk having to be open. The experience through the two and half days provided an opportunity for this. She describes it as follows:

it's (OCRE) just a whole different atmosphere. You're seeing people with their hair all yucky, or no makeup or whatever and you can be more at par with them. You're not intimidated as much. (p. 3)

Wanda continued by talking about how this atmosphere facilitated the opportunity for students to also view faculty as “real people” (p. 3) and get to know them in a more personal way simply because “you see them as they are and you have a lot more time to sit and talk” (p. 3). This relationship is one that is reciprocal in nature, as the experience also provides the faculty with an

opportunity to see and understand students as something more than an identification number or percentage that is found on a class list. It is as Wanda describes a chance for faculty to see students for “who we are, not by our average marks” (Post #3).

Having the opportunity as a person to come “further out of my shell” (Post #9) enabled Wanda to get to know others better and for others to get to know her better. For example, having the chance as a group to engage in experiences that involve group dynamics and promote group interaction fostered the opportunity for interdependence. Also, having the time individually to ponder during reflective sessions accompanied by ‘talking circles’, encouraged an individual to, “open up a little bit more and to take risks” (p. 3). These experiences inspired one to risk and nurtured the trust in the group. Furthermore, these experiences provided an opportunity for the quieter students to open up and feel comfortable about sharing. Because Wanda viewed herself as a ‘quieter student’, this was critical as it helped her understand more about herself and her place in the group. Wanda describes this relationship of self in relation to other like this,

The way our section worked together was like one big staff. We all dug in and got the jobs done. We all got along super! The closeness felt was kind of nice. I am more assured of my role, more of an equal I guess.
(Post #5)

For Wanda OCRE became a means for locating her place with and among others. Having the opportunity to engage in the experiences associated

with OCRE, which at first may appear threatening but upon reflection prove to be otherwise, in a sense put everyone on common ground. This common ground provides the initial foothold of security. Having this established foothold allows one to begin to risk and trust the other from which resultant learnings occur. This atmosphere created through learning and teaching in the out-of-doors, provided Wanda with an opportunity not only to find this place but perhaps more importantly to feel comfortable in this place.

Self with Environment

The relationship of self with the environment for Wanda was not one of a coming to understand oneself as being connected to the environment in a spiritual sense. But rather, Wanda saw her relationship with the environment more from a technical perspective. The opportunity to engage experientially in both faculty and student led activities allowed Wanda to view her relationship with the environment as an extension of the classroom. For Wanda, having the chance to participate and reflect upon the activities and discuss the possible application in teaching situations created an awareness about the outdoors. It also initiated within Wanda an understanding of a relationship between the outdoors and learning and the indoors and learning. She describes it like this,

I figured out that there is always something to be learned from whatever activity we participated in. Such as 'Snoopin at the Scape'. I never thought of just thinking and pondering. I learned a lot from our hilltop discussion. Learning can be facilitated everywhere, not just in a classroom. (Post #6)

Because Wanda's interest is in teaching middle years she sees herself as a teacher who plans to utilize the outdoors a great deal in her future teaching career. She recollects only once in grade eight during her middle years (grades 7,8 and 9) where her class went on a 'field trip' and that was to the Legislative Buildings.

As a result of her initiation to the outdoors Wanda believes she wants to "get away from just that direct kind of [indoor teaching] approach, and do the discovery learning, experiential and things like that" (p. 4). She sees herself in the future embarking on more field trips as well as incorporating residential experiences at Saskairie (Outdoor Education Centre) into her overall plan of teaching middle years students.

Wanda's own experience through the OCRE planted the seed of a relationship between self and environment. This relationship being technical in nature, is the start to something which through time has all the possibilities of growing and eventually blossoming into something much greater than technical. Evidence of this planted seed is seen in Wanda's expression of OCRE's contribution to her development in becoming a teacher,

Well, it showed me that teaching beyond the classroom...I'd never really thought of it before; going outdoors and teaching Math or teaching all the other subjects that we did...that you can do whatever...you can teach whatever you think of, it can almost all be done outdoors. (p. 5)

Wanda's lived experience of OCRE is one that certainly has enlightened her understanding of becoming a teacher. The experience has also had an

influence on what she perceived the world of teaching to be all about. Her realization of the world of teaching is now one that goes beyond the physical structure of rows of desks in a four-walled classroom. She understands the possibilities that exist for both students and teachers when learning/teaching is extended beyond the conventional classroom and it becomes learning/teaching about and for life in an environment that is most conducive for this. The challenge is one that all educators face and for Wanda she can 'see' the challenge perhaps best being met by providing experiences that involve a variety of factors, of which the most important is the learning/teaching environment.

Marsha's Experience

For Marsha, the world of OCRE is a world of 'outdoors' that would provide her with endless opportunities and challenges. As well, it has all the possibilities for contributing to her life personally and professionally. The context in which she places the OCRE has its roots embedded in previous life experiences. She described how throughout her life she has experienced some hardships but that it has been in finding ways to deal with these hardships that she has also come to understand the various ways that situations may at times be viewed. She believes that these experiences have as she says, "opened my eyes to different perspectives" (Pre #4). Marsha now sees herself as a very flexible and tolerant individual who makes it a point to enjoy the many facets of life. The qualities she speaks of allow her to portray this 'openness' and a willingness to give the provisional try at new experiences. Being "open-minded" (Pre #4) was the word she used to describe herself prior to the OCRE. Marsha was confident that if she entered the experience open-minded, accompanied with her characteristics as being a "fun-loving" and "people-loving" (Pre#4) person, that OCRE would be a very rewarding experience for her.

The interpretation she had of OCRE was of an outdoor experience that would open up a new world of opportunity for her. This new world essentially consisted of three places which were in a sense understandings about (1) herself as an individual, (2) herself in relation to others and (3) herself in relation to the outdoors.

Understanding more about herself by having the chance to engage in

experiences associated with learning in the outdoors was something that Marsha welcomed. This opportunity of the OCRE exuded "fun" (Pre #1) which was also a characteristic that Marsha radiated. Her notion of fun was not in isolation of learning, but rather was part of the learning that she believed would result by working with others in a different environment - the outdoors. She believed that she would become a "more well-rounded individual" (Pre #3) by taking on the responsibility associated with participating and contributing in the activities led by faculty and the students. Ultimately the OCRE for Marsha held the possibility for gaining insight and coming to understand the "lifeskills" (Pre #3) she possesses.

She looked to OCRE as a chance to learn more about herself in relation to others. Part of the lifeskills that she referred to earlier is the ability to work together with others in a cooperative way and to learn to rely on one another in the group. She saw the OCRE as an opportunity to engage in this endeavour and in turn learn more about herself and how she works in conjunction with others in group situations. She described her feelings about the OCRE prior to the experience like this, "I am very excited about experiencing the outdoors with my peers and professors" (Pre #2). Marsha had no inhibition in regards to her abilities of functioning with others but saw it as a great opportunity and an invitation that held possibilities for her development.

Marsha holds a high regard for learning about herself in relation to the environment. However she mentioned that through her life as an avid and enthusiastic camper she has "never really appreciated nature" (Pre #5) until she had a chance last summer to spend some time in the mountains. This experience has created a yearning for her to return once again to the mountains

where she was able to find tranquillity. For Marsha, OCRE holds the possibility of filling this void and finding a tranquillity not associated with her previous mountain excursion but rather in the cold, winter Saskatchewan weather. This does not deter her though for she adds that an individual must take time away from what one is used to or the norm for oneself in order to “really gain an understanding in what is most important in life” (Pre #5).

What is interesting is that Marsha saw these three places in the new world as being intertwined and that it would be through coming to understand these three places in an interrelated way that she would experience growth personally and professionally. Marsha was already viewing the OCRE in an interrelated way and through this interrelationship even her personal and professional growth could not remain as separate entities.

In asking Marsha to respond to the prospects that she holds for OCRE contributing to her understanding of teaching and learning she replied,

I believe that OCRE will enhance my appreciation and understanding of outdoor activities. Hence the above [appreciation and understanding] will give me insight to lifeskills, my own personality [and] nature, all of which will be reflected in my teaching style. (Pre #5)

She concluded by saying that “the more well-rounded and open-minded we are the better educators we will be.”

Marsha's enthusiasm and anticipation of OCRE were things that seemed to make the time for the arrival of the experience take forever. Here was an individual who was the epitome of optimism. She said it perfectly and without

hesitation when she said that she expected to, “grow positively from this experience” (Pre #6).

Entering into the experience with such confidence and assurance made one wonder if this encounter could only set Marsha up to where her optimistic attitude and world of possibilities would be shattered and in its place, disappointment and pessimism would be the authors of the experience in regards to OCRE and its role in teacher education.

Having journeyed this far and after receiving insights as to her initial ‘crystal ball’ interpretations for OCRE, let us continue the adventure by opening the door and walking with Marsha into the world of OCRE. Let’s watch and listen to her as she weaves the three thematic threads that portray her story of the lived experience of her OCRE.

Self with Self

Like Wanda, OCRE for Marsha was a time zone where she was able to go back and reminisce about her high school days. She recounted various excursions to the outdoors on field trips associated with classes that attempted to enrich curriculum subject matter. She had fond memories of her classmates and being with friends constantly for a period of time. Yet the OCRE, in its comparison to the high school memories for Marsha, heightened and went beyond a superficiality so much more and created an awareness of “an appreciation of learning, the people around and finally [the] interdependence of all aspects of life” (Post #9).

Marsha described herself as “down-to-earth” (Post #4) as a result of the OCRE. She found herself not being concerned with her outer appearance.

Worrying about her hair, make-up and designer outdoor clothes were not important but rather, focussing her attention on being warm, safe and having fun were the priorities of the day.

Another key aspect that Marsha identified in regards to her understanding of self had to deal with the stressors in her life, particularly those associated with university. She found that through the OCRE stressors such as marks and assignment due dates that occupy one's life don't seem as important anymore. It's not that the stressors vanish but rather that the retreat from the physical facility of the university to a residential setting that has a different aura or atmosphere allows one to "really look at yourself as a person" (p. 3). She continues by explaining that it is through this opportunity that "you can learn a lot about yourself" (p. 3) and are able to put things in perspective.

The values Marsha associated with the OCRE also spoke to her about her understanding of self. She identified such things as an ethic of caring, sensitivity and understanding in relation to others and the environment as being things that she was confident she possessed but that this experience had reinforced within her.

On a more practical perspective, Marsha felt that the opportunity to experientially engage in outdoor activities such as cross-country skiing, ice-fishing and essentially "enjoying the snow" (Post #7) helped her realize her skill potential and develop an interest and positive attitude towards activities that she would not normally engage in. These kinds of opportunities also provided her with the courage to experiment with the unknown, to give the provisional try and learn from the experience. Marsha made concerted efforts to begin to transfer these learnings of herself personally to herself professionally. She says,

When you go out to Fort San and you're exposed to the hills and the lake and you do the activities that maybe you've never done before, it makes you think, 'Wow', you really can relate this, like ice-fishing and math and social studies and English all together, because you're doing it personally. If you don't do it personally you can't recognize it. You can be told but that doesn't mean you can put it into your teaching style. Your teaching style is your own personality [and by] being exposed to those things, you grow from that and therefore it comes out in your personality when you're teaching students. (p. 1)

The OCRE had quite an impact on Marsha in regards to her professional development. This impact was realized through experiences which involved an interrelationship of Marsha with her peers and the outdoors. When I asked her to respond to a question about OCRE and its contribution to her understanding of teaching and learning she replied, that she senses the need for the, "involvement of the community and nature in the students' learning process" (Post #6). For Marsha teaching and learning are now no longer confined to a four-walled classroom within a defined time period. Instead teaching and learning have taken on new dimensions as she so aptly describes,

It's definitely made me excited about integrating different subjects and taking students outdoors. It's really opened my eyes that school does not have to be solely in a school setting. (p. 4)

She goes on to explain that this experience has instilled within her a desire for her teaching to be motivational and such that it encourages her students to continue learning “not only when they are at school or on a school project on a field trip” (p. 4). Marsha hopes that the desire and motivation in her own teaching will be part of the learning received by the students and ultimately that her students may possess the will to want to learn.

Marsha continues by commenting on how this experience has also influenced her teaching philosophy. She now sees herself as a teacher who identifies more with a student-centred teaching approach which allows the students to explore. She explains it like this,

I want them [the students] to feel it out. I'll be there for them to ask me questions and I'll encourage them to ask questions so they can learn through their own thinking and they're in control of their learning. (p. 2)

She takes this approach based on her own experience as a result of OCRE. Marsha alluded to the responsibility that they as students assumed for the experience and that they were allowed to guide their own learning. She saw OCRE as being very student-centred where the students had a great deal of influence in deciding what activities they would participate in and the effort that would be put forth into the activities as a facilitator and as a participant. She believes that this freedom or personal control by the individual provides him/her with the opportunity to become self-responsible and begin to make decisions associated with teaching. As a result, Marsha saw the learning that was gleaned to be more valuable than just doing what you were told to do. She

describes the understanding like this,

If the Profs had told us what to do, it's just like going through a regular exercise. You don't really have to think a lot and if the Profs give you ideas, well, you know, you're not being creative on your own. I think this really encourages us to be creative and come up with more ideas and also I feel that we're treated more as professionals, as teachers.
(p. 2)

This insight to her professional development allowed Marsha to begin to make the transfer to herself in a teaching situation. The organization and planning of the OCRE was something that did not escape the eye of Marsha. She realizes that as a future teacher the organization that goes into the planning and implementation of any type of outdoor educational experience requires time and a great deal of cooperation from a group of individuals. But nevertheless, this does not discourage her for she believes in its value for the learning of both the students and the teacher.

Self with Other

Being the type of individual that Marsha is, it is not surprising that she held the relationship of self with other in such high regard. One of the goals of the OCRE is to develop group cohesiveness initially within the individual sections in the first experience and then across sections in the second experience.

Marsha understood this to be one of the goals entering into her first

OCRE. She saw the opportunity of “bonding time with my peers” (Pre #1) to be something that was important in her own development. When I asked Marsha prior to the experience as to the prospects she holds for OCRE contributing to her personally she replied,

I assume I will learn more about my peers through experiencing fun and perhaps challenges, [and] it is likely [that] we will develop stronger bonds and maybe even rely on each other more. (Pre #6)

Marsha believed that engaging in the trust building experiences at the outset of the OCRE allowed an individual to begin to risk more through the following days of OCRE. These experiences combined with team teaching opportunities required group efforts and for individuals to take on various responsibilities within the group which required fellow group members to develop the trust in one another. The risking and trusting circle allowed people to “really open up” (p. 1) and through this opening up ultimately learn.

She described how personality differences that perhaps existed in the classrooms back on-campus seemed to be nonexistent out at OCRE. Marsha attributed this to the atmosphere of a residential setting and ‘being together’ for 24 hours which helped create a comfort level between and among individuals. For Marsha, the notion of being together went beyond the physical, it also meant providing the space for individuals when you sensed it was necessary. She says,

I think people were able to see people in maybe some of their moments

that they're not themselves, maybe they're a little moody or there's something that is there so you have to be sensitive to people's moods and you have to make them feel comfortable ... I think people were really tolerant of one another and were there for each other. (p. 3)

Marsha found this caring and concern for each other quite ironic for as she says, "you don't always see that in university students" (p. 3). She goes on to explain this observation,

They're [university students] usually against each other and sometimes the competition can be so fierce it's almost cut-throat, and now it's when it's mark time in this semester I see that coming out in my peers, and that's why I was pleased that I saw the caring, the understanding, the tolerance and the patience come out in us, which we need as a teacher. (p. 3)

Marsha's insight into this dichotomy raises a concern for the elementary program in general. The common ground that is being established at OCRE is certainly not the common ground back at the campus. And maybe it shouldn't be? But in Marsha's words, one gets the sense that there is a gap that exists between what OCRE attempts to do in so far as its goal of fostering group cohesiveness, building collaborative relationships and how students experience some other components within the elementary teacher education program. Marsha's voice is addressing those of us in the teacher education program and it speaks a valid message that sets before us a challenge.

Self with Environment

Marsha's relationship of herself with the environment has grown from her own personal experiences of hiking and camping as a youngster. She openly admits that these excursions, however, did not create an awareness of the natural environment as anything more than a place, although one may assume that perhaps the interest to be outdoors stemmed from these early life experiences.

For Marsha it has recently been opportunities such as the mountain 'hide-away' last summer that provided the serenity and reflective time, which has befriended her with the environment. This relationship has cultivated what she calls an "appreciation of nature" (Post #3). In listening to Marsha talk and describe this appreciation, one does not get the impression that it is a superficial recognition of nature as a simple place any longer.

Marsha speaks about a "harmony" (p. 1) with nature. She sees individuals as having to be very reliant on nature and that this reliance is best understood if we view ourselves as being part of nature and that all life is interrelated and interdependent.

She spoke of the opportunity that OCRE provided for her to regain this feeling of interrelatedness of self with the environment as she recounted the impact of OCRE on her personally,

I felt as though I was in harmony with nature. This is because I was away from the quick pace of the city. I was exposed to the free spirits of my peers while admiring the rolling hills and the sunrise disguised as a

fireball. (Post #5)

The role that nature can play in a student's learning is paramount and is a very important component in all of our lives as Marsha views it. She believes that if a teacher sees learning as lifelong and beyond the four walled classroom then a teacher's philosophy of teaching and learning would have in its foundation a principle of the interrelatedness of all life.

For Marsha the OCRE has been a chance to re-visit this harmony with nature from a personal orientation and bridge the understanding to her professional life. She has adopted this principle not only in life personally but also professionally in her teaching philosophy,

My OCRE experience has allowed me to develop an even greater appreciation of nature and therefore has motivated me to take "school" to the out of doors where my students can learn while exercising, having fun and gaining an appreciation of nature and how it is interrelated with life. (Post 2)

In coming to know Marsha through the OCRE I'm confident that the students who come under her guidance during her years of teaching will certainly come to experience learning in a holistic way. Earlier Marsha talked about the notion of experiencing and how this becomes the personality of oneself as teacher. Based on her experience through OCRE and the story she has shared with us about its influence, it appears quite likely that Marsha may well epitomize a teacher who holds a unique perspective on teaching and

learning.

Perhaps it's fitting to close the chapter on Marsha's story by letting her share with us what OCRE has meant to her to this point in her teacher education program. She concludes by saying,

OCRE [for me] was one of the most important things...it was almost a little paradise; it was all [of] these university students...we weren't there just for fun...we had a lot of fun...but we learned a great deal and I reflected on my own feelings, how I felt about myself...I tried picking out all the different attributes that I saw in people and I can tell that there was a group of teachers there. I don't know if I can explain that to you. I saw a lot of common attributes in the people -- creative, fun-loving, generally easy going [and] many of them receptive to the out-of-doors. (p. 4)

I asked Marsha if these attributes are or should be characteristics of what teaching is all about. She replied, "at least that's what I would like to think teaching is all about" (p. 5).

Having journeyed with Marsha as she shared her lived experience of OCRE, one gets the impression that the optimistic attitude and confidence for OCRE's world of possibilities that she portrayed prior to embarking on the experience, were certainly fulfilled. The influence of the experience through an intricate weaving of relationships of self with self, self with other, and self with environment provided Marsha with an opportunity that allowed her to grow personally and this in turn influenced her growth professionally. For Marsha,

she could 'see' the personal side of the professional; she saw creative, fun-loving, caring, outdoor people who already are teachers.

Kerri's Experience

The images that OCRE invoked within Kerri as she thought about the upcoming experience paralleled those fond memories of the band workshops she attended during high school. Fort San or what today is called Echo Valley Conference Centre was the home of the School of the Performing Arts. Each summer students would gather at this site in the Qu'Appelle Valley and work diligently to hone their skills and through concerts, share these skills with parents and patrons alike.

For Kerri, Echo Valley Conference Centre was a tiny nook situated in a large valley that weaved its way through the southern part of the province. It was this secluded spot she recollected that held all the promise for a very exciting and worthwhile upcoming experience. Her memories of the historical buildings, beautiful grounds of well-kept lawn, towering spruce and maple trees with hills to the north and the lake to the south confirmed in her mind all the possibility for a successful OCRE.

"Nostalgic" (Pre #4) was the word she used to describe herself entering the residential experience. Many of the emotions she was feeling about the OCRE were similar to those felt ten years ago but were now at what she calls a "more mature level" (Pre #4). The whole atmosphere about the place, the beauty and isolation it provided was inviting for Kerri and she saw it as a "great opportunity to escape Regina for a while and get to know the people in the program" (Pre #1).

There was some skepticism on her part though. She saw this experience as having so much "build up" (Pre #2) and hype that it may end up being a real

“let down” (Pre #3). Could it be that someone whose previous positive experiences through band school and whose excitement for the possibilities this OCRE holds, could perhaps experience a serious let down and ultimately feel cheated through the whole experience?

Kerri also shared her concern about being away from her spouse and the responsibilities associated with family for three days. Despite the fact that OCRE for her would be like a trip back in time and a retreat from the normal university routine, it was also a time that caused those individuals' who had obligations to loved ones, some discomfort because they had to ensure that measures were put in place to accommodate those who were staying home while that particular individual was away for a period of three days. It seemed like this was as every bit as stressful on those who had to go to OCRE for the three days than for those who remained at home.

Kerri also was a little unsure what others thought about the OCRE. She highlighted briefly an incident in the Education cafeteria where a group of students who would be attending OCRE were singing songs led by some past OCRE participants to establish an atmosphere of fun and camaraderie within faculty leading into the experience. She questioned what an 'outsider's' perspective might be of all of this. Would the outsider view education students as “elitist” or maybe just plain “foolish” (Pre #3)? It was a concern she had but not one that caused her a great deal of grief for she went on to say, “I don't care myself though because I had a blast” (Pre #3).

In trying to capture what prospects the OCRE had for her own personal development, Kerri thought that even though there was discomfort in being away, she believed that this would do her a great deal of good. She went on to

discuss how being involved in a teacher education program can be very intensive and it does not afford a great deal of time to get away. Thus, the OCRE would help provide the release time that she felt she needed so much. She also believed that her own confidence of working in large groups would increase and that she would become more tolerant.

In terms of the OCRE and its possible contribution to Kerri's understanding of teaching and learning, she felt that based on the physical environment that they would be in and the atmosphere that was surrounding the OCRE, that it would be an opportunity for an individual who is more introverted to "come out a bit" (Pre #5). Kerri believed that this type of person has a great deal to offer as a teacher and that opportunities which allow the person to be more outgoing can only improve his/her potential as a prospective teacher in front of a class.

Kerri leaves us with a longing to return with her to a physical place that has not changed much over the past ten years since her high school days. The return to this place has all the possibility for meeting her expectations of beauty and isolation but does it have the same possibility for contributing to her development now as an aspiring educator as it did for her as a young aspiring artist? For as Kerri so succinctly stated, the build up is so great that it leaves one with fear that it could easily turn to the opposite and end in a let down. Let us follow the thematic footprints as they lead us along Kerri's lived experience of the OCRE path.

Self with Self

Following the experience, the first thing that came to Kerri's mind when I

asked her about OCRE was a song by the Eagles entitled, "Take it Easy" (Post #1). She believes that whenever she hears this song in the future she will have flashbacks of all the good memories of OCRE. The song encapsulated for her what OCRE was all about. In particular, she talked about the continual stress level she finds herself under since she has been in the teacher education program,

Well, being a university student I'm stressed out all the time. All the time. I never really get the chance to sit back and think about where I was this time last year, where I will be this time next year. (p. 4)

The two and one-half days gave her a well needed break from her hectic schedule and allowed her to forget about her "personal demands and focus on [her] friends and the goals of [OCRE]" (Post 7).

Kerri went on to describe how being involved in one particular activity and doing what was expected of her, gave her the time to begin to reflect on her journey along the path of becoming a teacher. She explains it like this,

we were playing a game where we were hiding and there was probably a minute where I was laying there totally still so that the person wouldn't see me behind the bushes, and I was looking up at the sky and it was a really neat feeling; I was dressed for it, it was cold, but it felt so good and I just stared up and thought about where I was this time last year and said, "hey, I'm almost finished". It really was exciting for me; I don't think I normally would have that experience because I'm always running

around trying to do this and that. When I was out there that was my responsibility. My responsibility was to be lying there in the snow, right then and there just thinking. It felt really good being able to just relax.
(p. 4)

The OCRE provided Kerri with opportunities to relax as well as the time to find how far she has come on her teacher journey and how close she is to the initial goal she set . She described OCRE more as a "retreat" (p. 5) where one experienced no stress learning and a nice time doing what was expected.

For Kerri personally, it was a very positive experience from which she takes away good memories. OCRE will be something she will always remember. It was a chance to "let our hair down" (Post #3), be yourself and be away from the superficiality that exists at the university.

OCRE's contribution to Kerri in regards to her professional development was very important. For her, the experience of taking on responsibility and assuming ownership through the OCRE helped her understand a little bit more about what it means to be a teacher. The OCRE in a sense has brought to the forefront this notion of becoming self-responsible and upon reflection has helped Kerri see her own development. She describes it like this,

It is unbelievable and I really never thought of it until now but this transition [student to teacher] is happening! I don't feel like a student anymore. I feel that I'm prepared to comment at anytime or begin to lead an activity at any time. It really is neat! (Post #8)

Kerri continues by explaining how the experiences in the semester topped by the OCRE to date have been so vital in her development. She says,

This semester has taken me through such a gradual process of actually “BECOMING” a teacher. OCRE was really crucial to this process because it was a 2 1/2 day-nonstop responsibility to the group and to myself. (Post #9)

It was the opportunity to engage in experiences that demanded creative talents of a group that were the highlights for Kerri in describing what she meant by being self-responsible. For example, putting a group of individuals together and setting before them the task of coming up with a way to represent the meaning of OCRE for themselves as a group was overwhelming and somewhat of a pressure spot. But it was something that made her feel good. She describes the feeling like this,

we went into the cafeteria and we kind of sat there and thought, “Well, what are we going to do, and what are we going to do that’s different?” The lights started going off and we started writing things down and came up with this wonderful song...at the end it was really a [good] feeling to work together that way, and to have fun doing it. It was the on-the-spot creativity that really felt good. (p. 3)

Another experience that promoted this self-responsibility for Kerri was the debriefing sessions that occurred following the outdoor learning experiences as

well as in the evenings during the EPS section times. Kerri described how often these particular reflective sessions are so frequently led by the professor where, "there would be a nice agenda of things we had to cover" (p. 3) and that the students just take it for granted that someone else will assume the responsibility. This was not the case with the OCRE reflection meetings and she explains how she found herself contributing her ideas as well as leading the discussion at times and encouraging others to share as well. Engaging in these kinds of "talking circles" (p. 3) where no one was really in charge invited all to play an active part. Taking the initiative during these times promoted the transition from student to teacher for Kerri.

Being in a group that responded the way it did to the tasks that were set before it, in so far as being creative and taking the initiative to lead its own reflective sessions, made Kerri very "proud" (Post #4). Beyond the feeling of pride she had in herself as well as the group, Kerri identified that the confidence in herself as a professional has been heightened and that, "I now look even more forward to becoming a teacher" (Post #4).

The OCRE experience for Kerri has proved to be very positive for her professional development. Already she is beginning to make the connections between her experience and what she sees in her future teaching career in the middle years school. The atmosphere that surrounded OCRE and allowed a person to be his or herself is one that Kerri views to be very important for middle years students. The superficiality Kerri described that exists at the university also exists in a similar fashion with middle years students for she views them as being very concerned with what other people think of them. She believes that a teacher needs to create a "comfort level" (p. 2) where students can come and

participate in individual and cooperative activities and not worry about who's watching them, or be concerned whether they should be wearing make-up or have the best clothes. The atmosphere that surrounded OCRE cannot realistically be duplicated in her classroom in the future but at least she believes that her experience through OCRE has instilled within her the dynamics to foster a similar feeling between and among herself and her students.

Professionally for Kerri, she found OCRE to be a very rewarding experience. It opened many doors into the world of a teacher but perhaps none as pronounced as the thin line that separates the world of teacher and the world of the student. Kerri explains it like this,

I really became aware of the fine line between teaching and learning.

We can do both at the same time and I guess we usually are. (Post #6)

OCRE was an experience that allowed her to see that through her role as student she was also learning what it would be like as a teacher and through her role of a teacher she was also learning what it is like to be a student.

Self with Other

The OCRE did not disappoint Kerri with regards to getting to know other students within the program. The expectations that the OCRE placed on the students with respect to assuming responsibility for their part in designing and teaching a learning experience, contributing to the debriefing sessions and also for sharing their talents during the "Winter Stomp" allowed Kerri the opportunity to come to know others and for others to come to know her. It was through these

kinds of experiences that Kerri's confidence in her own abilities were confirmed and assured her that she possessed qualities that were characteristic of a teacher who could work collaboratively on a school staff. She remembers her own school experiences where school tended to be very competitive and she was not involved in a great deal of cooperative learning. But now she is learning how to work cooperatively and she believes that this new found knowledge can be shared when she's a teacher. Her teaching philosophy for middle years students is one that is founded on a principle of community, as she describes here,

they [middle years students] need to learn to work together and to share their knowledge and expertise with each other...I can't see it being any other way now that I've been through this [OCRE]. (p. 1)

Even her lesson planning for her practicum experiences contain a more conscientious effort towards teaching the skills associated with cooperative learning and utilizing group work which allow the students to be very interactive.

Kerri felt a sense of community that went beyond the OCRE and permeated the whole program. She believes that there is "more of a closeness here [UofR]" (p. 1). She describes the closeness developed through OCRE like this,

[OCRE] really gave us a chance to come together and from that experience we've been able to realize that we're not competing against each other; that we're really working together, and now that we're in the

field more we're doing things like swapping lessons and we're really working as [a] team still. (p. 1)

She compares this feeling of community to the lack of community and the competition that exists at other institutions where her friends attend. She explains that one friend described how she went through four years of university and didn't really get to know any of her classmates at all. Another of her friends recalls how amazed she was to learn that Kerri was involved in a program that provided this sense of community because her own recollection of her university program was one that was "very competitive and you were very sheltered from the other people" (p. 1).

For Kerri the on-campus superficiality that she alluded to earlier had slowly been eroded through her experience to date in the program. The OCRE proved to be a force that helped expose the superficiality and find the common ground for a community to develop. Even though it is only a short time in contrast to a four year program the OCRE's place in the program and the nature of the experience are key elements that gave the force its power to break down the superficiality while at the same time provide the foundation for the common ground. Kerri explains,

It's only three days, if that, two and half...but you're still out there with the same group of people; you're eating in the same cafeteria; you're sleeping in the same dorms; all of your activities are planned together as a group; there's no getting away from that group so... your make-up runs, your hair goes bad, it doesn't matter and that's the superficiality

I'm talking about. (p. 2)

It was through this break down of “physical superficiality” (p. 2) that Kerri believed people were seen as people, where a common ground was found and a group of student teachers who are becoming teachers truly experienced an opportunity to develop a community.

Self with Environment

The OCRE did not really influence her perception of self in relation to the environment. Through the earlier description about the natural environment she provided in her school band memories, one gets the impression that the out-of-doors perhaps played a vital role in the positive experiences and the fond memories associated with those high school days.

This experience however, was not scrutinized by Kerri for its contribution to her understanding of the environment for the purposes of teaching. But rather, Kerri's understanding of self in relation to the environment came through the opportunity for her to retreat from the city and take a break she felt she needed. Because this break was going to be at a place that was considered of 'beauty and isolation' her understanding of self to the environment may be seen as one that views the out-of-doors for its ability to restore and rejuvenate the mind and body of the individual.

She often spoke about her hectic schedule and being “stressed out all the time” (p. 4) and not having time for herself. But OCRE provided her with that chance to retreat from that stress. It gave her a chance to be responsible for getting things done, but done in such a way where there was a group effort all

within an atmosphere that invited a work ethic. She spoke of this work ethic though as something that was not a burden that promoted pressure and stress. Instead, it was a work ethic that encouraged all to become involved and where ultimately from the work emerged the fun.

Kerri experienced that special time alone in nature even though it was a brief time, during the hiding game where she was allowed to have her own space and reflect on a relationship with the environment. She says,

I haven't had the chance to lie that still in a long time. Looking up at the sky, hoping not to be found, really made me feel "nature". It was very peaceful...very nice. (Post #5)

This experience though short in time, was very important for Kerri as she openly admits that taking the time to do this is something that seldom happens in her life. Even this quick, fleeting moment of time seemed like an eternity for someone who does not take the opportunity to involve oneself with nature. For Kerri this transitory but yet enduring immersion into a relationship with nature has ignited a flame within her as to the importance of finding a connection and understanding the interrelationships of all life.

Her own experience has encouraged her to begin to transfer this belief to her own teaching and with the students that come under her guidance. The opportunity for students at a younger age with less responsibilities to take the time then, "to get in touch with nature...would probably be better" (p. 5). When asked if these retreats to nature such as OCRE, would constitute learning Kerri replied,

There was a lot of learning going on, it was just done in such a fun [way] that you didn't realize that you were actually learning. It would be really excellent for middle years. (p. 5)

Through the OCRE Kerri came to realize a connection for herself to the environment. This was not something that she entered into the experience anticipating would occur. It was through recognizing the need for a break and engaging in the experience with a free spirit that she was able to step back and relax and in turn find a beginning to a relationship with the environment that appears to have all the possibility of becoming part of her teaching philosophy.

The OCRE for Kerri was a very worthwhile and "valuable experience" (Post #2). She sees the OCRE as a component in a teacher education program that makes the the University of Regina's program unique from other universities as well as from other faculties within the university itself. She concludes her thoughts on the residential experience by explaining that,

It [OCRE] didn't change my life but it definitely gave me a chance to explore other areas of education that I wouldn't have had the chance to do otherwise and it made me realize that I need the group I'm working with and I will get through this. [It's also] made me realize the possibilities I have as a teacher [and] to provide the same opportunity to the students that I work with. (p. 5)

The lived experience of OCRE for Kerri was one that upon reflection was certainly not the possible let down she feared at the outset, but rather it was an

experience that was enlightening in every sense of the word. Through her interpretive story we come to learn of OCRE as the place that offers her the chance to turn back the hands of time and revisit memories of her earlier years as an aspiring artist, but we also witness her realization of the personal and professional growth for herself as an aspiring educator. For Kerri, experiencing the chance to have her space within the atmosphere that permeates OCRE, provided the opportunity for her to 'see' how far she has come in her journey of becoming a teacher. This opportunity of seeing has not only been a reflecting back but perhaps more importantly it has been a looking forward. This seeing of becoming a teacher for Kerri resonates with the words from the Eagles song, a song she described as the meaning of OCRE for her,

"Don't let the sound of your own wheels make you crazy
Lighten up while you still can, don't even try to understand
Just find a place and make your stand and 'take it easy'."

Epilogue

The focus for this chapter was to provide an introduction to the two components associated with the study. The first component concentrated on the theoretical framework of a residential experiential education endeavour that has been part of an elementary teacher education program for over two decades. This theoretical framework initially, discussed the role of this unique experience within the confines of the teacher education program. Following this overview, a description of OCRE as 'curriculum-as-planned' was detailed which provided the insight and established the theory that is foundational to the experience from a programmatic perspective.

The second component to the chapter was the attempt to provide the space for three participants to share individual stories of their first OCRE. This interpretive synthesis portrayed the 'curriculum-as-lived'. The curriculum-as-lived establishes through practise, how these individuals come to experience the curriculum-as-planned. The voices resonating from this lived experience share the insights as to the learnings about oneself and the impact and influence these learnings have on the lives of these individuals as becoming teachers. Pre-service teacher education needs to 'listen' to these voices.

CHAPTER SIX

THE SECOND OFF-CAMPUS RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

Prologue

This chapter coexists with the previous chapter in that it also will focus on the two components associated with the study. However, the first component that is represented by a descriptive text which is shared and symbolizes the curriculum-as-planned, refers to the second OCRE that the pre-interns engage in during the fifth semester of the elementary teacher education program. The philosophy for the second OCRE parallels the program philosophy, this being that the interrelated components of the program be developmental in nature. Thus, the foundation which underpins the second OCRE is one that builds on what was initiated in the first OCRE.

Following the curriculum-as-planned is the interpretive text referred to in chapter five as the curriculum-as-lived. This interpretive text is shared through the experience of three participants who entered into their second OCRE. The lived experience of OCRE is echoed through the voices of these individuals and speaks to the curriculum-as-planned.

OCRE: Curriculum-As-Planned

The second OCRE in the pre-internship year takes place in the fall semester usually in the month of October. Similar to the first residential experience, the second OCRE also occurs through three phases: pre-impact

phase, impact phase, and the post-impact phase. Perhaps the most notable difference with respect to these three phases and the same three phases as experienced by the students in the first OCRE is the responsibility that the students assume for each phase of the second OCRE. There is a conscious effort in the second OCRE for faculty to provide the framework for the OCRE and allow the students to take the initiative, become more involved and experience all three phases to a greater degree. By reflecting on the first OCRE and the three phases the students experienced, their ability to assume additional responsibility for various aspects of the phases seems developmentally appropriate.

The data collection methods for this part of the study were basically the same methods as those described in the curriculum-as-planned in Chapter Five. These methods included; Observation, which were recorded as observational field notes and Document Data (e.g. OCRE Committee Meeting Planning Minutes and Faculty/Student OCRE Manuals). These sources provided the foundation for the curriculum-as-planned.

The pre-impact phase for the second OCRE concentrates on those preparatory issues identified previously in Chapter Five. However, the most notable difference with regards to these preparatory issues is the role the students assume for taking on the responsibility for these issues. Having had the experience through the first OCRE, the focus of the pre-impact phase is to provide the opportunity for the students to appropriate an active leadership and decision making role.

The students direct involvement is facilitated by identifying two

representatives from each section following the first OCRE, to confer with faculty early in the fall, fifth semester when the initial planning of OCRE begins. These representatives become part of the planning process and in a sense become the conduit for sharing information to and from the students in their respective sections. This involvement and open channel of communication allows the framework for the OCRE to be constructed in a collaborative fashion.

In a large group forum an overview from a programmatic perspective is shared with the students. During this gathering an overview for the sequencing of OCRE is explained and the timetable for the experience is highlighted. Some of the more logistical information is detailed in regards to dates, transportation, accommodation, meals and equipment. Following this initial orientation students meet in their respective sections to begin the planning that needs to be done to carry out the impact phase of the OCRE. The planning in the EPS section focuses on learning experiences at OCRE where the students will function as a large group in their respective sections. The planning includes ideas that are generated for the various learning experiences during the impact phase as well as the various roles that the students will assume to ensure that the necessary materials and equipment are obtained and loaded on the buses. These discussions and deliberations ensue during the pre-impact planning periods and the faculty member responsible for each particular section takes on more of a participant observer role and facilitates when it is deemed necessary.

A second set of group planning sessions also occurs during the pre-impact phase and this involves what the program discloses as 'Colour Group Learning Experiences'. This shift from the philosophy of the first OCRE helps illustrate the developmental component and part of the philosophy of the

second OCRE. The second OCRE contains learning experiences in which the students participate in their own respective section; however, there is also a conscious effort at providing the students with an opportunity to experience the second OCRE with the chance to learn/teach in learning experiences through groups which are made up of members from each of the four sections. Thus, class lists are obtained and from these, new lists are drawn up which post the names of seven or eight students from the four various sections. These mixed 'colour groups' are established prior to OCRE so that the students in each group may have the opportunity to become better acquainted. In addition to these large colour group experiences, the large colour group is subdivided into five smaller subgroups of six students that will function as a 'staff' and experience the coordination and organization of a learning experience at the OCRE. Each of the four large colour groups identifies a subtheme related to the overall theme of Interdependence. Once a large colour group identifies its subtheme, each subgroup then engages in a concept mapping exercise and determines a concept that relates to the colour group's subtheme. Once a concept has been identified the subgroup begins to design a thirty minute learning experience which will be instructed in the outdoors utilizing an interdisciplinary approach to the fellow subgroups in their larger colour group. This pre-impact phase group meeting time also provides these colour groups with the chance to engage in the necessary planning that is required for the colour group learning experiences. In the colour group planning sessions, a faculty member(s) acts as a facilitator by providing an overview for the colour group experiences and aids in any of the planning where the group requires additional information.

During all of this student planning (section planning, colour group planning) faculty and leaders meet periodically to update each other on the progress being made in the respective groups. These meetings also ensure that faculty can share with each other in the planning of their own designed learning activities for those experiences which are conducted during the afternoon on the first day and part of the morning on the second day. This sharing of information is required to ensure that there is a conscious effort that the three learning experiences connect to each other while focussing on the theme of OCRE. Also during these meetings there is an opportunity to update those who are directly involved about any logistical items that require attention prior to OCRE.

The impact phase of OCRE is the actual two and one-half day experience embarked upon by the students. It begins with the transportation of the students from the university in the early morning hours to the Echo Valley Conference Centre. Once the students arrive they engage in the various learning experiences which have been planned by the students in their sections and colour groups as well as the learning experiences designed by faculty and leaders. The impact phase culminates with the transportation of the students back to the university following their two and one-half day experience at the residential centre.

Following is the schedule for the impact phase of OCRE. The purpose of the 'guided tour' through the second OCRE is to provide an understanding of the various learning activities associated with the experience. It should be noted and emphasized that the student involvement and responsibility in these

learning experiences has shifted from one that seemed to be more of a follower in the first OCRE to a role that provides the students with the opportunity to become more of a leader. This 'guided tour' through the second OCRE also shares more detail into the curriculum-as-planned.

OCRE: Day One

The students depart the university by 7:30 a.m. following the coordinated loading of the luggage. Upon their arrival at the conference centre, the personal gear is unloaded and the students return to the dormitory styled rooms they occupied during the first OCRE.

Orientation

Following the students 'settling in', they meet as a large group in a designated outdoor area where the orientation to the second OCRE begins. Similar to the first OCRE, the orientation provides an initial welcome to the students, faculty and leaders. It also continues to help re-establish the atmosphere that permeated the first OCRE, an atmosphere that has been bridged to the various aspects of the planning in the pre-impact phase to allow the students and faculty to become attuned to the second OCRE. The orientation also allows a time for any logistical information to be imparted to the participants regarding changes to the original schedule. As was done in the first OCRE, the orientation takes on a flavour that invites all to participate in the singing and different activities which attempt to create a feeling of comfort for individuals to be with others and the environment.

Site Development and Site Utilization

Following the orientation the students in their respective sections return to the same locations where they established their sites in the first OCRE. The purpose for this is that it represents a returning to a physical space which served as a medium for fostering the development of the group. As was stated in the previous chapter, part of the rationale for having the students engage in the Site Development and Site Utilization is to create an environment where the students can learn and practice group processes.

The fall OCRE Site Development provides the 'home base' for the EPS section of students and their leader(s). The organization of this space centres on the erection of a large bell tent which serves as a shelter from the elements as well as a meeting place for the section during the reflective sessions. The site is also the place where, those who wish, may 'camp out' for their night's sleep . The other physical jobs that are involved in the building of the model campsite parallel those which occurred in the first OCRE. In the second OCRE the jobs of gathering firewood, constructing tables and benches, setting up the environmental stove and preparing the hot drink are for the most part identified and delegated through the consensus of the section group during the planning associated with the pre-impact phase. Based on their first OCRE the students automatically begin to take ownership and responsibility for the Site Development as well as the Site Utilization, with the faculty leader acting in more of a facilitator/supporter role. This returning home to the original Site helps to bridge the first OCRE to the second OCRE and allows the students the opportunity to engage in reflective moments that recapture the first experience.

The Site Utilization occurs simultaneously with the Site Development.

The learning experiences which the section undertakes helps those participating come to understand the potential of their 'place' in the outdoors. The opportunity of furthering an understanding of a relationship between ourselves and the outdoors creates the possibility for the realization of the promise the out-of-doors has in the learning/teaching process. The Site Utilization facilitates this by providing practical experiences which have as their focus a concentrated effort at engaging experientially in activities. These activities help students learn more about their Site from a different seasonal perspective (autumn) and challenge the students to illustrate their understanding through representative disciplines associated with school curricula while utilizing an interdisciplinary approach. These activities or learning experiences are also planned during the pre-impact phase and there is a deliberate attempt to design them as partial extensions of the methods courses which are a large part of the students' current program. Similar to the Site Development, the Site Utilization also facilitates the opportunity for students to further enhance the skills and processes associated with group work. The group work and interdisciplinary approach used for these kinds of learning experiences is intended to parallel the opportunities that may exist in schools where teachers collaborate and share resources and expertise to provide a more interrelated and holistic learning experience for children.

The Site Development and Site Utilization in the fall OCRE serves to reestablish the comfort level for individuals and the group to the outdoors. The physical and social reacquaintance with the Site, where only a short time ago the group broke down their quinzhee and attempted to return the site to its natural surroundings, allows the group to return and begin the process all over

again except that this time the students are at a different place in their development. Thus, the rebuilding of the Site takes on a flavour that is representative more of the group because it is initiated, coordinated and completed by the group. The Site is the illustration of the group's development.

Personal Time

Within the framework of the OCRE are times set aside for individuals to take time for their own needs. These periods of Personal Time occur following morning and afternoon learning experiences and prior to mealtimes. The purpose for these periods is that while there are prescribed endeavours to engage in reflective sessions following the learning experiences as well as EPS Section Meetings, students may also benefit from having the chance to find their own physical space to relax and cogitate and begin to make meaning of their own experiences. The physical outdoor environment surrounding the conference centre is very conducive for these individual reflective engagements.

Faculty and Student Leader Learning Experiences

Following the first day's lunch, students participate in the faculty and student leader designed learning experiences. While the intention of these learning experiences are similar to those which occurred in the first OCRE, the students' participation in the learning experiences is somewhat different. Rather than experiencing these activities in their normal section groups, the students rotate through the learning experiences in their prescribed colour groups. This approach facilitates the opportunity (which was initiated during the

pre-impact phase when the students first got together in the colour groups to meet one another and begin planning their colour group learning experiences) for the students to continue to foster group development across sections. It also allows the reflective sessions following the learning experiences to take on a different tone. For example, even though the Faculty and Student Leader Learning Experiences are designed with a particular grade or division level in mind, through the reflective sessions following the learning experiences the colour group can begin to brainstorm the possible changes that could occur to make the learning experience appropriate for students at a different grade or division level. This sharing of ideas helps to support the group skills and processes and serves to reinforce the developmental aspect to teaching and learning with children.

These learning experiences, like those in the first OCRE, have as their foundation an outdoor living skills orientation. The purpose is to provide the opportunity for the students to develop a basic comfort level and experience some basic skills associated with the wise use of the outdoors in the autumn environment for curriculum enrichment. It is implicit in this philosophical approach that the participant will not likely become an 'expert' in the skill but rather will begin to see the skill as a means rather than an end in itself.

All the learning experiences are designed based on this foundational principle and utilize an interdisciplinary approach while focussing on the theme of 'Interdependence'. Creating an awareness to some basic skills associated with out-of-door learning which incorporate an interdisciplinary approach provides the participants with the understanding and hopefully the confidence to expose their future students to similar learning/teaching experiences.

EPS Section Meetings

The evening reflective sessions which follow the supper hour both evenings is a time devoted to the section to reassemble following the day's events. The gatherings which occur usually at each section's Site with the aid of a fire and possibly hot chocolate, provide the opportunity for individuals to share the teachings and learnings gleaned through the various experiences that one was involved in for that day. The atmosphere that permeates these reflective sessions parallels the atmosphere of what OCRE is all about; a sharing of ideas and insights all done within an environment that encourages one to risk and trust.

The sessions are very informal where the students create the format and facilitate the interaction of the participants in a non-threatening environment. The faculty/leader assumes a more participant observer role and through appropriate questioning encourages the discussion to make connections to the lives of the participants as aspiring educators. The re-living of the day's experiences through storying very often helps put into perspective the day's events as well as set the stage for the possibilities that exist for tomorrow.

Camp Fire

History abounds with stories of gatherings of people around a focal point such as a fire, be it the native Indian prior to the buffalo hunt or the early settlers barn raising bees during the settlement of the west. Whatever the purpose, the fire acted as a centre where the opportunity to share in dance, song or story could unfold.

The Camp Fire as part of the second OCRE, has its roots embedded in

this understanding. It is an opportunity for a social gathering where all may come and share their talents through creative mediums. With the aid of advanced planning during the pre-impact phase the various sections take the ownership and responsibility for organizing and coordinating their contributions to the social gathering. Through such mediums of song accompanied by instrument, story and skit the experience of OCRE is shared by the students as well as faculty and student leaders. The sequence of the campfire program very often parallels the nature of the fire itself. Initial songs, stories and skits which have a more boisterous element to them are shared first as the fire itself is high and full of life. As the evening continues and the fire diminishes the songs, stories and skits take on a more tranquil tone providing for a more quiet and reserved departure back to the dorms for the much needed sleep.

The campfire also serves the purpose for the students to share in snacks which require the fire as a heat source. Bush pies, hotdogs, marshmallows with a hot drink often may be found on the menu for those wishing to partake in order to satisfy their hunger or their simple curiosity of taste.

Once the embers of the fire burn down the first day of OCRE comes to a close. While some students depart for their rooms, others may scurry about gathering their necessary gear and head to the bell tents to experience the outdoor overnight sleeping accommodations. Still others remain at the fire cleaning up or simply engaged in conversation.

OCRE: Day Two

As was the case in the first OCRE, the students are awakened by the echo of song through the dormitory hallways. This gentle ushering in of morning serves as a reminder of the calm that pervades the valley at 7:00 a.m.

Following breakfast students participate as a colour group in their third and final Faculty and Student Leader Learning Experience. This learning experience, like those on the first day of OCRE run for approximately one and a half hours and include a reflective component.

Colour Group Experiences - Preparation

For the next one and a half hours until lunch time the students remain in their respective colour groups but in their subgroups of five or six students. During this time each subgroup of a colour group begins the preparation necessary for the sharing of their learning experience with their fellow subgroups. This preparation includes finding a location where the learning experience may best be carried out, securing the necessary materials for the participants who will be involved, and taking care of any other details that require attention prior to the start of the learning experience. This preparation period encourages the cooperation of the group members and it reinforces the importance and necessity of advance planning for the learning/teaching of outdoor experiences.

Colour Group Experiences

For approximately three hours following lunch on the second day the students continue operating in their respective colour groups. During this time frame the colour group working in their subgroups as a staff of teachers, take the responsibility for conducting their 30 minute learning experiences to the fellow subgroups within their own large colour group.

The focus of the learning exercise is to provide the students with a practical experience at planning, teaching and debriefing an out-of-door learning activity. The learning experience which was planned during the pre-impact phase is designed around a concept that emerged from the subtheme the large colour group decided to focus upon following its concept mapping exercise of the theme of 'Interdependence'. The learning experience designed by each subgroup centres on the concept they've selected and utilizes an interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of the concept. Following the thirty minute learning experience each subgroup leads a reflective session which attempts to allow the participants a voice in the experience and the learning that has resulted. The reflective session also allows the subgroup to bring some closure to the learning experience.

Colour Group Debriefing Session

The intention for providing this reflective session is to allow each colour group once they have completed all of their subgroups learning experiences, to meet in a designated area and take some time to discuss the various subgroup learning experiences in regards to the colour group's subtheme. During this period of time each subgroup can share the concept they developed from the

subtheme and explain how the concept became the focus for their learning experience. With the sharing of each subgroup's concept map, a new and large concept map is created which depicts each small group's map and also illustrates the connections between the concepts, the connections to the subtheme and their ultimate connection to the theme of 'Interdependence'. Through each subgroup's conceptual learning experience and its connection to the large group subtheme the theme of Interdependence can ultimately be explored from both a concrete perspective as well as from an abstract perspective through the process that has occurred within each small group and the large group itself.

Through the discussion the students can begin to look at the interdisciplinary approach in each of the learning experiences and the relationship to the subtheme. The discussion allows the students to focus on the possibilities that exist for learning/teaching utilizing an interdisciplinary approach and the opportunities this poses for teachers on a staff.

The reflective session also creates a space for student voices to discuss their own learning that has resulted from the technical aspects associated with teaching in the outdoors. Through the discussion, possibly with the aid of a facilitator, students are encouraged to look to their upcoming practicum experiences or into their future lives as teachers and begin to explore the implications that these kinds of learning experiences present for the students that they are currently or someday will be responsible for.

Following the evening meal and as was the case on the first day, the students meet in their original section groups usually at their established Sites.

This gathering provides the opportunity for the students to share what has resulted from the day's experiences. Because the day has been spent in their colour groups this reflective session is one that builds on what was originally established in the previous day's EPS Section Meeting. Again the opportunity for more student voices to be heard is enhanced due to the variety of experiences that occurred during the day. The responsibility and ownership that each small group had assumed during the pre-impact and impact phases for their learning experiences encourages a more interactive reflective session.

The sharing of these large colour group and subgroup experiences in the EPS Section Meetings makes for a wealth of sharing. This wealth of sharing occurs through a 'reflecting back' at the experiences of the day and the meaning that has been derived. But as is the case with most of the reflective sessions the student discussion also focuses on a 'reflecting ahead' and the challenge to transfer this meaning to their present and future lives as teachers.

OCRE "Shindig"

The OCRE Shindig similar to the Winter Stomp in the first OCRE, is an opportunity for students, student leaders and faculty to share their talents in an atmosphere that invites participation. The informal gathering parallels the social gatherings that are customary to most educational residential experiences.

The shindig continues to build on a philosophy that encourages one to risk and trust. It also promotes an opportunity for fostering and enhancing the social relationships between students themselves and the students and faculty. The intention is for these relationships to be preserved and ultimately extended

back to the on-campus program.

The end of the OCRE Shindig signals the end of the second day of OCRE. Students make their way back to the dorms or again return to their outdoor overnight accommodations. Very often the numbers increase for those opting to sleep in the bell tents, as throughout this day the stories from the first overnight tent dwellers were shared with positive outcomes.

OCRE: Day Three

The last day of the OCRE for all involved begins with the packing and storage of personal gear following the morning breakfast. Once the dorms have been vacated and the personal gear is stored the students meet in their EPS section groups at their respective Sites.

EPS Section Closures

This time is allocated for each section to return to their Site and prior to the physical taking down of the Site, engage in an experience which helps bring closure for the section to the second OCRE. The format for the two hour time frame is decided upon by the group and the focus is to prepare and present their section's interpretation of OCRE and the role it has played and will continue to play in their development as aspiring educators.

The intention for this section closure is for the group collectively to reflect on its experiences to date through two OCRE's and to illustrate to others from the different sections its understanding and meaning of OCRE and its role in

their lives as professionals. The understanding and meaning derived by the group will then be shared through a large group closure experience which occurs following lunch prior to the departure. Thus, the section group brainstorms all possibilities and once a focus is obtained, they put into practice their group skills and processes to develop a presentation that is a collective representation of their understanding and meaning.

Before the section leaves the Site all members become involved in taking down the model campsite which has symbolically represented their section through two OCRE's. The equipment is returned and loaded into the cargo van for transportation back to the campus.

Large Group Closure

The gathering of all of the sections with faculty and student leaders occurs immediately following the lunch. Just as the Orientation brought a warm welcome to the OCRE this gathering provides the opportunity through song and story to say good-bye.

Each section is invited to share with the large group their presentation which speaks to what the OCRE(s) has meant to them as individuals and as a group. It is one last time for the group to share with peers the learning/teaching that has permeated OCRE and to help each other share the meaning of OCRE. And finally the implicit message is imparted to 'take something back' with them to their on-campus student teacher lives.

The large group closure comes to an end when the buses arrive. The students collect their personal belongings and the systematic loading of the

buses begins in the reverse fashion that occurred three days before. The impact phase of the OCRE comes to a completion with the transportation of the students back to the university.

The post-impact phase of OCRE begins with the arrival of the students back at the university. The students participate in the unloading of the buses as well as the unloading and storage of the group equipment that returned on the cargo van. All of these aspects of the post-impact phase parallel those experiences which would confront any teacher embarking on an extended field trip.

Other aspects of the post-impact phase deal with a concentrated effort at transferring the learnings gleaned from the students' and faculty's two and one-half day experience to the on-campus courses as well as the three one week practicum experiences which are part of the semester five pre-internship. As was indicated in the previous chapter this aspect requires some indepth planning involving a variety of individuals.

Essentially the post-impact phase is an opportunity to bridge the meaning derived from OCRE to the lives of the students and faculty back on campus. The importance of not letting the experience end with the simple impact phase of OCRE cannot be overstated. It is crucial that there be a space created for the practice of the theory that is lived out in the pre-impact and impact phases of any residential experience, particularly an experience which views its role in the development of teachers as being indispensable.

OCRE: Curriculum-As-Lived

The world of curriculum-as-lived is the actual world of OCRE as experienced by the student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings. As was the case with Chapter Five, the curriculum-as-lived is also framed within the boundaries of the three phases of the OCRE but is a world that is situated and 'lived' by the student teachers through experiential education. However, a distinct difference between this chapter and Chapter Five is that this lived experience has embedded within it a previous lived experience of OCRE, a story which upon reflection becomes part of the participant's new story. This curriculum-as-lived is also an interpretive text shared by three participants. This interpretive text, similar to the text in Chapter Five, represents a space where my descriptions and interpretations of the voices of each participant may be shared.

The Pre and Post Questionnaires in conjunction with the conversational interviews provide the data for describing the participants' second experience. All the data for each individual were analyzed and organized into categories. The format for the development of categories, establishing the emergent themes and the eventual clustering of themes was the same as described in Chapter Five. For the purposes associated with this study the same three inclusive themes were identified; **Self with Self**; **Self with Other**; and **Self with Environment**. These clusters captured the themes that emerged from the categories and provide the foundation for an interpretive synthesis of each individual's lived experience of OCRE.

The interpretive synthesis of each individual's lived experience is shared

thematically with corresponding verbatim. The sharing of each individual's voice through the themes collectively give meaning and construct the participant's story of the lived experience of their second OCRE.

Questionnaire Information

As was indicated in Chapter Five, both the Pre-OCRE and Post-OCRE Questionnaires were designed as open-ended inquiries. However, the final question of the Post-OCRE Questionnaire asked respondents;

“Was OCRE a valuable experience for you? Why? Why not ?”

The following table provides the results of the tally and illustrates by percentage how the numbers compare for participants who experienced their second OCRE.

<u>PARTICIPANTS</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>UNDECIDED</u>	<u>NO RESPONSE</u>
65	61	1	3	0
	93%	2%	5%	0%

Stuart's Experience

Stuart had all the confidence in the world that this fall OCRE was going to be every bit as rewarding as the previous OCRE. His first OCRE in the winter left him with very fond memories. Having gone through one OCRE, even though it was in minus thirty degree Celsius weather, Stuart believed that the upcoming OCRE was going to pick up from where the previous one had left off. Similar to any new experience, the first OCRE contained some unknowns which caused concern. These things at first were intimidating, but once Stuart was involved in the experience and reflected upon it, he saw how everything was able to come together. Through it all he learned valuable lessons none of which were more important than that of organization. He recalls,

I think it gives us [students] the opportunity to see or actually experience what it was like, well especially the first one, not to be organized and not to have any understanding of what it means to be organized. There was a lot of stress going on in our class before the first one. It was like, what's going to happen? What's going on? To see it all work out was great because it did fall into place quite nicely. (p. 7)

For Stuart this looking back to a previous experience and understanding what was gleaned would help provide some comfort entering into the second OCRE. Thus, his anticipation and excitement regarding the fall OCRE seemed to be different than from that experienced entering into his first OCRE. This new anticipation and excitement was focused upon the possibilities of OCRE for its

contribution to his personal and professional development.

On a personal level Stuart viewed the OCRE as a chance to “discover something new about myself” (Pre #6). Based upon his experience through the first OCRE, Stuart was able to see how the atmosphere that surrounded OCRE provided the opportunity to become introspective. Connected with this notion of finding out something new about oneself, Stuart also saw the chance to grow personally through the “social interaction” (Pre #6) that occurs at OCRE. He wanted to assume more of a ‘follower’ role this OCRE as he felt that in the first OCRE he was a ‘leader’ and that by playing out a different role he in turn would find out more about himself in relation to his own leadership skills and abilities to work with others.

On a professional level, Stuart saw this upcoming OCRE as a continuing adventure into an education of the out-of-doors and its role in students learning. He openly admits that his first OCRE was “enlightening” (Pre #4) as it introduced him to the viability of utilizing the natural environment to reinforce curriculum subject matter. He describes his understanding like this, “I always considered the outdoors as more of a place of recreation as opposed to a learning environment” (Pre #4). As a result of his introduction to the outdoors in the first OCRE, Stuart was entering into his second OCRE with a mindset that this was a “chance to practice using the outdoors as a classroom” (Pre #1). Through experiential learning what had manifested within Stuart was a realization about another way of learning and teaching that, previous to this experience, did not exist in his understanding of education. He now viewed the outdoors as a “teaching tool” (Pre #3) and OCRE would provide him with “new teaching methods and resources” (Pre #5) that he would then begin to

implement as a new teacher.

Stuart's view that the outdoors was a teaching tool and that the upcoming OCRE had prospects for providing him with methods and resources to operate this tool show us that, in part for Stuart, OCRE was something that portrayed teaching as being technical. But Stuart also gives us a glimpse of something else that OCRE provides that is beyond teaching as technical. When I asked him what his feelings were about the upcoming OCRE his response was, "excellent" (Pre #2) and he went on to describe what may be interpreted as a development that occurred in him as a result of his first OCRE and was something that he was beginning to see for its importance with children. He says,

[what happens at OCRE is] not emphasized enough in the middle years program [and] kids at this age level need a wider variety of life experiences. (Pre #2)

For Stuart the experience in his first OCRE created an interest in the outdoors and the possibilities it held for him as a teacher. But he also saw the possibilities it held for the students for whom he would be responsible. It was this understanding that he would bring with him as he embarked upon a second OCRE. The path leading to the second OCRE, based on the recollection of his journey through the first OCRE certainly was one that Stuart looked forward to walking. Let's accompany Stuart along this portion of the path that winds its way through the second OCRE and come to understand his lived experience.

Self with Self

Stuart's personal insights about himself through the OCRE tended to be linked to those around him. He discovered personal strengths and weaknesses through both individual and group learning experiences. For example, he mentioned that at this fall OCRE he wanted to assume more of a follower role because he found that at his first OCRE he tended to lead most of the time and he felt that experiencing a new role would help his development. He explains it like this, "last OCRE (Winter '93) I felt I was a leader [and therefore] I tried the follower role this time and the growth experience helped me realize more about me" (Post #7). As a result of being a follower at his second OCRE, Stuart comfortably admits that his personality is more of that of a leader. But he believes that this role is not of a leader who is "domineering" (Post #4) and who must be in control. But rather, he views himself as a leader who has the ability to establish direction and empower others to take the initiative by being supportive and providing encouragement.

Stuart also found that the OCRE experience encouraged him to be more open minded to new ideas and not to be so critical before the ideas had a chance to get off the ground. He recounted how in one particular situation he had a negative attitude towards an activity even prior to its start. He recollects saying,

"This is going to be hokey", I thought, how are you [the professor] going to make your point with anything to do with Math or Art [really] make it work.. especially in the area [that] we were set up in...just out almost in the parking lot, and it worked; it was great...within five minutes of getting

going...it was great. (p. 1)

Stuart goes on to explain that being open to new ideas and “just trying different things” (p. 3) allows an individual to learn a lot about oneself. Perhaps the best representation of this is Stuart’s own words which capture not only the quality of being open minded but also his orientation to leadership which has developed through the experience. He explains it like this,

The success of OCRE for an individual, I find, is what you put into it and what you can get others to put into it, and how you interact as a group makes a big difference on what you get out of it. (p. 3)

Stuart’s professional perceptions of the OCRE were linked to some things that he experienced personally through OCRE. The realization of the outdoors as a learning environment to go beyond the conventional classroom was an exciting reality for him and one that now influenced his interpretation of school. Through his personal experience at OCRE he saw the possibilities that similar kinds of experiences could hold for students; he comments,

Not everybody learns at a desk and if you can give them [the students] the opportunity to learn somewhere else and they [achieve] success learning somewhere else then maybe school won’t be so intimidating of a place. (p. 2)

OCRE allowed Stuart to begin to look at providing for individual differences for students. It was a practical experience that set before him the stark reality that students learn in different ways and that the outdoors is one way that a teacher might explore to help students learn. He was beginning to apply this learning from the OCRE to what he has learned through his practicum experiences with middle years students. He shares this insight,

I think in the classroom, especially middle years, not every kid I found... gets turned on by sitting in a desk and doing the work. When you get them in a different environment then they're a totally different person.
(p. 1)

Stuart continued by explaining how he observed this phenomenon out at OCRE with peers from his section. There was this "change" (p. 1) in individuals where maybe back at campus these particular people were not viewed as "doers" or were not very "outspoken" (p. 1) but, "you put them in that environment and they really shine" (p. 2).

For Stuart, it wasn't that he would revolutionize his teaching to the extent that he would only teach outdoors but rather, it established in his mind the credibility of the outdoors as a legitimate learning environment. OCRE challenged him as a teacher to find ways to utilize the outdoors to enhance students learning, particularly those students that are so often prematurely stigmatized and labelled with the education jargon.

Perhaps one of the most important insights for Stuart through the OCRE that influenced his professional development and was highlighted earlier,

focused on the idea of organization. Through the experience Stuart has come to realize the importance of organization both from a student's perspective and also from that of a prospective teacher; he explains,

OCRE has given me the opportunity to participate and observe organization. [The] students expect to have their organizing done for them [and] as teachers we must initiate the organizing process. (Post #8)

He recalled how in the first OCRE their section was not well prepared and not organized and he believed that this influenced how some people felt about the OCRE. For Stuart as he looked back on the first OCRE, he saw how his section entered into the experience more as students expecting to be led by the hand through the experience. But this did not surprise him because as he describes, the program doesn't allow an individual to experience organization:

Like in the program there is no...other than organizing your own personal time, there is no real chance to organize what you are doing, like you come in and they [professor] hand you [a course syllabus outlining] when everything is due. Now if this is myself I would say, "well, no, this doesn't work for me. I'd like this due on this date and maybe if we switch these two around this will work better for me." We can't personalize it and make it fit ourselves. (p. 7)

In the second OCRE Stuart believed that his section was much better organized due to the fact that they had the experience of at least one OCRE and could

build on that. A second factor that was key was that the students in the section had grown as a community through the first OCRE and this growth continued back on campus and helped build a foundation for the group to become organized leading into the second OCRE. A third factor associated with organization is that the OCRE's are developmental in nature and the second OCRE provides more opportunities for the students to assume more responsibility for designing and instructing learning experiences as well as taking on other leadership initiatives. Through this process Stuart came to value the importance of organization and it made him realize that as students in the program they had to begin to assume responsibility for organization-not as students but as prospective teachers; he explains,

if you don't understand the value of organization and you expect someone to organize for you here, what are you going to do when you get into the classroom...you know, you don't go to your principal and ask him to do your unit plans up for you and help organize a class, it's something you've got to do on you own. (p. 7)

Stuart continues by saying,

...if you appreciate the value of organization that's probably one of the first things you will do as soon as you get in the classroom is get some organizational things done first before you try to teach anything. I thought that was probably one of the biggest things that OCRE really exemplified was the need for organization. (p. 7)

Associated with this organization to which Stuart was referring is the idea about taking ownership and becoming self-responsible. For Stuart there is a direct link between the organizational aspect and being self-responsible. This notion of self-responsibility was viewed from an individual perspective and also from a group perspective. OCRE facilitated the idea of becoming self-responsible for Stuart. He identified that, "you've got to take responsibility and how you as a group decide to do that or as a person decide to do that, [and] it's dependent on yourself not on someone else" (p. 4). He recounted a situation at the first OCRE in the fall where his section met for a group meeting and "everybody was sitting around waiting and they just sat there" (p. 4) anticipating that the leader who was there was going to tell them what to do. Stuart says,

I thought, "Well when are you [leader] going to get things started for us?" I don't know if someone made a comment or what, [but] she [leader] says, "Well, this is your experience, you guys decide what you want to do. I'm just here to observe and help out when need be but I'm not here to lead.", and someone else took over and off we went. (p. 4)

I asked Stuart if this was disconcerting to have happen? His response was simply that for them as students they have become so "conditioned to everything being laid out and just jumping the hoops" (p. 4) that they're not used to assuming that responsibility. He went on to explain that, "once they [students] figure out that there is no plan that you have to follow, then they go ahead and get at it and do the best that they can" (p. 4).

In Stuart's estimation, OCRE provided the opportunity for students to take

ownership, to organize, and engage in the provisional try and from this gain the confidence to make decisions.

Being able to have the chance to design some learning experiences with a group and then teach the activity to peers was something that Stuart held in high regard. This experience was rewarding for Stuart because as he says, "I learned more about the values of the outdoors as a classroom and I learned a lot about myself as an individual and as a teacher" (Post #9). Stuart saw this chance to collaborate in a group and to organize and prepare an appropriate learning experience utilizing the outdoors, not only for professional development in a technical sense but, "it also gave you a chance to start dealing with peers that in the future we will be dealing with in the field" (p. 10). He continues by explaining,

It was good practice that way as far as group interaction because the same people that you are having difficulty with in group work at OCRE, or even in the classroom, you're going to find people very similar to that in a staffroom and the chance to deal with them and make things work is very valuable. (p. 10)

The kind of opportunities presented through the experiences associated with the OCRE were ones that Stuart found to be very positive and through reflection was beginning to transfer to possible situations that would arise going into internship and beyond into his career as a teacher.

In listening to Stuart share his experiences about OCRE and it's influence on his professional development, perhaps the most intriguing

comment he made through it all was in response to a question posed to him about the contribution of OCRE to his understanding of teaching and learning. He responded by saying that, “teaching and learning can occur anywhere and one should never stop trying to teach or trying to learn” (Post #6). For Stuart, OCRE turned out to be an experience that either epitomized this or at least reinforced this. He says,

There were a number of things that went on as far as learning went... just because you're not in the classroom you don't have to shut it off and as far as teaching and learning being anywhere, I think it goes back to different people learn in different ways so you have to teach in different ways and the outdoors is definitely one of those ways that will turn some on and get them learning. (p. 6)

For Stuart, OCRE influenced his development as an aspiring educator and was something that he wondered if there ever could be an 'OCRE' for teachers. The opportunity of “getting together with people in your profession” (p. 12) was appealing to Stuart. It was a “great experience” and as he says, “I would be interested in continuing this type of experience throughout my professional career” (Post #2).

Self with Other

The theme of interdependence which was used for OCRE, was a theme that Stuart saw as being most appropriate for what occurs at OCRE. The relationships that are developed between students by living and learning

together epitomized what interdependence represents. He believed that his own personal and professional development was influenced by experiencing interdependence through OCRE.

He found that at OCRE sharing is something that just happens and seems to be connected to almost everything that a person is involved with on a personal or professional level. He explains it like this,

I found that the night around the campfire when all of the sections brought out food that I felt good about being able to share. (Post 5)
He adds to this a professional perspective,

I learned the value of sharing resources during our colour group activities. (Post 5)

Stuart believes that it is this kind of atmosphere, or this ethic of caring, that encourages individuals to let down their guard and risk and ultimately trust each other. Through this trust building the individuals begin to operate as a unified group with a common purpose. It is when this happens that Stuart believes a sense of pride emerges in the group's accomplishments. He explains the transition he saw within his own section from the first OCRE through to the end of the second OCRE,

I think, actually as a group, I mean, I might be a little biased towards our section but the last OCRE I thought that we really added something, and I was actually quite proud of the people I've been associating with in the last year; the way they worked together and you could see how they

changed from one year to the next. (p. 3)

For Stuart that was another very important byproduct of OCRE, learning how to cooperate and “to work as a group” (p. 10). He contrasted this notion of cooperation among individuals in his section at OCRE with the competition between individuals back on campus,

like here [at university] it's competition. In the classroom it is competition.. When you get out there [OCRE], there are no marks and the goal is, I think, is fun. If you had fun then it was successful...that's the bottom line and to work towards that as a group, it was quite interesting. You don't always get that opportunity in here because it's always how you do on a test. Out here it's like well, did we have a good time? I had a good time so. (p. 10)

In Stuart's interpretation of a 'good time' he discussed how it's implicit that learning is occurring and that if the students who attend OCRE feel they had a good time then they did learn. Just because one is not able to evaluate this learning in a paper and pencil test, one should not assume that no learning has resulted. He shared an experience he had during his pre-internship with a group of seventh and eighth grade students that perhaps explains this best:

We went on a field trip (after OCRE actually) with my pre-internship class out [to] Buffalo Pound and it was almost like a mini OCRE, there were 90 students out there...and they were split into groups and they were doing

Science and Social Studies... while the other group did Phys-Ed, like Outdoor Ed, it was almost like a hashing type deal but it was three hours long. It was a gruelling trail but they had to work through activities as they went through this trail and then they also did worksheets and things while they were on their field trip and I mean, the kids were wet when they got back but they had mounds of information and you could see that something was clicking, their minds were working and it was better than being led by a rope through a museum. (p. 8)

Stuart continues by comparing this learning of grade seven and eight students to the learning that occurs for OCRE participants as prospective teachers.

to be able to experience OCRE, which is basically like a field trip, and to see what it takes to organize that and to make it work...when you actually go through these activities and you say, "Yeah, I learned something here..." and you think, "Well, hey, I can take a field trip while I'm in the school and I wouldn't have a problem justifying it". (p. 8)

The learning that Stuart refers to is more complex than a simple learning associated with the outdoors. For Stuart, it is the importance of finding ways to help others who have not had the experiential opportunities to learn in and about the outdoors and to be open to its possibilities. For Stuart this means that he must be able to articulate this understanding of utilizing the outdoors and employ his abilities to work collaboratively with others to help educate them and in turn create positive learning experiences for students. Stuart is confident that

OCRE has provided him with the necessary tools to begin this engagement.

Self with Environment

The relationship that Stuart had with the environment prior to any OCRE was one that viewed the outdoors as a place essentially for recreational purposes. It wasn't until he was exposed to the first OCRE that he began to see the outdoors for its educational potential. This was not surprising as he had earlier commented that he now has a broader understanding of learning and teaching as being beyond the conventional classroom. By participating in the learning experiences through the first OCRE he now viewed the "outdoors as a classroom" (Pre #1) and he believed that the second OCRE would provide him with a chance to practice teaching in this classroom. This initial relationship with the environment was one that was very technical in nature and this bridged into the second OCRE.

Following the second OCRE Stuart still maintained this view of the outdoors from a technical perspective but there were other circumstances that seemed to begin to broaden this initial perception. The opportunities he had to work with others prior to OCRE in designing learning experiences to teach during OCRE allowed him to begin to move to a deeper understanding of himself and the environment. He mentioned that he has learned the "values of the outdoors as classroom" (Post #8). It was this group process that contributed to Stuart's deeper understanding because he was exposed to others ideas and values about teaching in the outdoors. He says,

You're working in your peer group and you're working with other

professionals and you get a chance to think about what you're doing and you can see how others do it. (p. 3)

It was these kinds of opportunities associated with the second OCRE that influenced Stuart as he found his own space in relation to the environment. It is interesting how Stuart's identification of space involved not only himself but also others. Through a combination of elements Stuart's understanding of self with environment was able to move to a deeper level beyond simply technical. For Stuart the outdoors is now composed of numerous "life experiences" (Pre #2) with which he and his students are invited to interact. One gets the impression from listening to Stuart's OCRE story in combination with the story told about his field trip with the group of seventh and eighth grade students during his practicum, that his understanding of self with the environment is something that has already had an impact on his teaching philosophy. It makes one wonder if further outdoor opportunities will continue to expand this awareness.

The interpretation of his lived experience is filled with examples that illustrate the value Stuart places on the reflective process associated with learning and teaching through experiential education. His OCRE experience and the reflective process has encouraged him to look within himself. Through this introspection, Stuart has been able to understand and articulate his development both from a personal and professional perspective. What occurred at OCRE was a realization of these two worlds through the interweaving of the self with self, self with other and self with environment. In listening to Stuart's story and the possibilities he sees for his future in the world

of teacher, it leads one to speculate that the learning/teaching experiences that Stuart and his students embark upon will be similar to those experiences that reflect the themes that he experienced. If this is the case, then there is a very good chance that Stuart's future students will experience unique opportunities carried out within an atmosphere that promotes and encourages a cooperative and caring ethic.

Tim's Experience

Tim has a quiet and reserved demeanor. He approaches new experiences objectively and looks for what might be learned from his participation. He does this by keeping an open mind and being willing to give the proverbial try. His first OCRE in the winter was no exception to this rule.

Similar to Stuart, Tim was uncertain entering the first OCRE. He recalls vividly his feelings at that time, "Before our first OCRE outing, I was really unsure of what OCRE was. I really had no idea of what I was supposed to get out of it [the experience]" (Pre #1). Even though there was a feeling of uncertainty surrounding the first OCRE for Tim, it was his ability to remain objective and open-minded towards the experience that helped provide him with a very rewarding OCRE. He described his first OCRE as being "very worthwhile" (Pre #1) and a "great experience" but not something that he felt "changed [his] life" (Pre #4). The positive feelings that resulted from the first OCRE served to be the lens with which he would view the upcoming OCRE.

In trying to capture the essence of Tim's feelings regarding the fall OCRE and the possibilities it held for him both personally and professionally, he continually referred back to the first winter experience and used concrete examples to address the questions. Tim's reflective responses confirmed the positive feelings that resulted from the first OCRE and allowed him to consider what he might learn in the upcoming fall experience. When asked about his feelings regarding the upcoming OCRE experience he responded,

I really had a great time. I got reacquainted with the outdoors and

re-realized how much I like being outside. It was also quite an experience to see my classmates and my profs in a different setting.

(Pre #2)

Reflecting on the previous OCRE was a way that Tim could address questions regarding the upcoming experience. These reflective words capture memories he has of the previous OCRE and also characterize his feelings and anticipation of the potential for the second OCRE.

For Tim entering his second OCRE was going to be a continuation of an adventure that began in the first OCRE. Having been over the OCRE terrain once already this leg of the trail was not as fraught with uncertainty at the outset as was the case with the first OCRE. The reflections on the first OCRE provided Tim with a guide to follow and allowed him to enter into the adventure with an aura of anticipation and excitement. As well, it created the mindset in Tim to view this adventure for its potential and possible opportunities for personal and professional development.

Tim looked towards the fall OCRE as an experience that would help bring what he called "personal certainty" (Pre #5) to his life as a teacher.

On one hand his previous OCRE renewed an interest in the outdoors for him. He realized now, "how much I like being outside" (Pre #6), an interest that he said had not been present in his life since his childhood years of playing outdoors. This renewed interest has also influenced his "attitudes and values" (Pre #3) towards learning and teaching. For most of his formal education to date, Tim viewed learning and teaching as something that occurred inside a 'four-walled classroom'. But through the first OCRE his definition of learning

and teaching began to change and it has since evolved to where he now sees the “importance of the outdoors” (Pre #6) and the “value of getting away from the classroom” (Pre #3) in childrens’ learning. Tim believed that this coming OCRE would enhance and contribute to this new found understanding.

Tim also looked forward to the fall OCRE for its contribution in the “building of friendships” (Pre #6). The social ambiance that surrounds OCRE allows a person to develop closer ties that an individual carries with them throughout their personal and professional lives. Tim had all the confidence that this OCRE would continue to contribute to these established friendships in a positive fashion but perhaps even more importantly, initiate new found friendships.

Having been introduced to Tim and now after listening to his reflective thoughts on his first residential experience, let’s continue the journey with him as he becomes reacquainted with OCRE and shares this lived experience.

Self with Self

The fall OCRE for Tim was truly a positive learning experience that allowed him the opportunity to get in touch with himself a little better. The OCRE provided the space for Tim to “understand and accept [himself] more” (Post #7). It afforded him the chance to engage in experiences that encouraged participation and promoted reflection in a relaxed and unconstrained way. It was through a process such as this that Tim believes he was able to come to understand more about himself personally and professionally.

From a personal perspective, the fall OCRE was a very positive and rewarding experience for Tim. He said that “personal growth” (Post #3) was a

realized value that resulted from the OCRE. This personal growth became evident to Tim through having the opportunity to reflect on the experience during the experience. He explains it like this,

it seems like you're more in touch with yourself. There are not so many other commotions going on in your life [when you're at OCRE]. You can really, reflect, introspect. You can really look inside yourself. There are a lot more opportunities for that and that experience in itself will lead to, you know, [that] type of growth. (p. 3)

Tim believes that the atmosphere of the OCRE can really promote reflection that is not artificially constructed by requiring individuals to sit down at prescribed times in definitive locations to reflect. Instead it is reflection that happens on its own and reflection that allows one to delve deeper into the meaning associated with the experience for oneself. Tim mentioned that just physically being in the outdoors allowed him to "think a lot clearer" (p. 2) than when he's in a classroom or an office working. He found that this feeling of openness encouraged him to experiment with his thoughts and put aside inhibitions he may have felt. The outdoors created the freedom to let himself go and he found himself, "just thinking of really neat things and creative things I would have probably never thought of in my room or in my den or whatever, doing homework" (p. 2).

"Confidence" (Post # 4) was the one word that Tim chose to describe himself following the fall OCRE. He believed that it was through experiences such as an OCRE that he could "lose some of the inhibitions" he has and could

also “realize more of [his] own personal characteristics” (Post #4). This increased confidence level allows one to feel more comfortable with oneself and thus, interact more freely with others which in turn promotes one's own self growth. Tim explains it like this,

I think that the whole experience [OCRE] is really positive. Everyone is out there to have a good time but it's not just a good time. It's not like a big party. It's like a real positive growth experience. I think everyone wants to have some type of growth because of it and I really think just the whole positiveness. You get positive feedback constantly. You're giving positive feedback. I think when you give positive feedback it kind of boosts you up too, like me personally, you feel good at making someone else feel good. I think that kind of just adds to the whole thing. You just feel a little better about yourself in general. (p. 3)

The kind of positive feedback and growth experiences that Tim is referring to does not happen incidentally at OCRE but requires an individual to become an active participant in the OCRE. “You have to make the most out of it” (p. 5) according to Tim and this means involvement in all aspects of the experience. In fact, Tim believes that the reverse may be true for someone who does not take the initiative or the apparent risk involved. Limiting oneself to only parts of the experience and not immersing oneself in the experience has all the possibilities for producing a shortfall in the personal development of an individual. For Tim it is this total immersion in the world of OCRE that results in a very worthwhile and rewarding personal experience.

OCRE also helped Tim understand and shape his role as a prospective middle years teacher. Tim brought with him to the second OCRE a perspective of the outdoors that had undergone transformation and was redefined as a result of his experience through the first OCRE. He viewed this upcoming fall experience with a great deal of enthusiasm for its possible contribution to furthering his understanding of utilizing the outdoors to enrich curriculum subject matter but even more importantly for Tim, to “learn how to teach in an outdoor setting” (Pre #3).

The faculty as well as student leader led learning experiences were very important for Tim’s “professional growth” (Post #3). He cited the “hashing trail”, (Post #6) where the students functioned in teams combining physical, cognitive and social skills to complete a given task, as one learning experience that influenced his professional growth and epitomized the OCRE theme of ‘interdependence’. For Tim, this particular learning experience demonstrated the various roles people can play in solving a problem and that individuals have various strengths and limitations that may be utilized to solve the problem in a collaborative way. The application of critical and creative thinking skills towards the problem solving and decision making process were aspects that appealed to Tim. Upon reflection, he was beginning to transfer this way of learning and the possibilities it held for middle years students to his future career as a teacher. Tim felt that, “an activity like this [could] be really effective” (Post #5) with middle years students.

Tim's perception of learning and teaching for middle years students was slowly being reshaped. It was through the learning experiences at OCRE that Tim also realized the potential for interrelating classroom and outdoor learning.

The challenge now for Tim was to begin to identify some connections between curriculum areas. Once integration was achieved, Tim believed that learning could be enriched even further. This enrichment could occur by utilizing the outdoors. As a future teacher, he believes this is where the teaching and learning should take place. He explains the understanding like this,

Professionally I just think I didn't realize the importance of bringing Outdoor Ed into the classroom or taking the classroom outside and teaching through the outdoors. (p. 1)

He continues by saying,

There are many opportunities to integrate what you're learning in the classroom with the outdoors and take it outdoors. (p. 3)

The learning experiences designed by the students themselves in their own respective colour groups also reinforced the notion of an interdisciplinary approach to teaching as well as providing an experiential component in the OCRE. Tim explains these experiences in this fashion,

Just how the colour groups had different activities with different subjects and you'd go through them, you could see relationships between math and science for example, sure, there are a lot of chances of integration there but when you're exposed to them like that you can definitely see it; it's right there. (p. 8)

Perhaps more importantly for Tim's professional development was that

these student led experiences not only reinforced outdoor learning utilizing an interdisciplinary approach but, they also required that the students take the responsibility and ownership for designing and instructing these experiences during the OCRE. This progression of student responsibility from the first to the second OCRE is intentional and plays a vital role in the students' development. For Tim he viewed the developmental aspect like this,

This second OCRE definitely gave us [students] more ownership over the experience and I really think that it helped me and my decision making process. No one was there to decide for me. I had to decide to decide for myself. (Post #8)

This notion of ownership was an aspect that Tim felt was very critical for him as a student teacher to experience at OCRE. He began to make the transference to a school situation with a teacher and students,

I think that [ownership] leads to the decision making. When you are making decisions, you know, just like in a classroom; if you let the kids for example, help make the classroom up every year, they're going to feel more ownership over the class just as we made a lot more of the decisions in what was going on in the second OCRE. It just became more 'yours' instead of someone else's...just like here it is. You kind of plan it so it becomes yours in a way. (p. 6)

For Tim, OCRE was successful in that it did contribute to his professional

development in a technical way. But as Tim reflected on the OCRE and discussed this development further, he came to realize that this development went beyond the notion of learning and teaching as being simply technical. Tim began to look at the OCRE for more than the 'what' of teaching. He asked the more important questions of 'how' and 'why'.

Tim's OCRE was an encounter with himself as a student and at the same time with himself as an aspiring middle years teacher. His world of teacher was emerging from his world of student. His world of professional was emerging from his world of personal. He said it best in his concluding comments about the experience,

The more you know about yourself I think the more effective teacher you will be. The more you know your weak characteristics and your strong ones the better you will be. OCRE helps you develop a sense of who you are...It's something that I will probably never forget for the rest of my life. (p. 8)

Self with Other

I think that OCRE in general really benefited me in terms of the friendships I made out there. You get a chance in the classroom to make fairly close friendships with most of the people in class; a lot of interaction; but once you get out there [OCRE] it's a whole new way of interacting. You're not just here from 8:30 until 3:30 or whatever; but nights and everything, meals. Everyone is together and you just...

I made a lot of friendships or friendships became closer. (p. 1)

Tim's words perhaps best provide us with an insight into the relational aspect he experienced with his peers. Students involved in OCRE are together for a period of nearly three full days unlike on-campus classes which require them to be together for limited times throughout various days. But there is something more than this physical presence of people with people that creates an interaction unlike that which they experience back at the university. There is an aura that envelopes the OCRE that takes this interaction beyond something as simple as 'being around' others and creates an atmosphere where there is sharing as well as genuine concern and caring for others. This emotional attachment influences a person. Tim explains it like this,

it's just like a whole atmosphere; you go home and you're thinking to yourself, "I don't want to go home, this is a great time, I wish it could always be like this", you know everyone getting along great, everyone helping each other out, listening to each other. (p. 4)

For Tim, the atmosphere created at OCRE encourages a person to take risks and begin to trust others and the end result is positive.

You're sharing secrets with people you think you never would have because you've grown with them. You've kind of come together closer. All of those things just kind of boost you up. They kind of make you feel that much better. (p. 4)

This kind of experience can have a profound impact on an individual in a variety of ways. Tim compares OCRE and his life back at the campus like this;

It's [OCRE] a lot more carefree; just the whole atmosphere. Here [university], you come to class, it's really repetitive and boring, basically the same desks, same classroom day after day. It's hot, it's stuffy; it really negates personal growth in a lot of ways (P. 4).

The personal growth experienced by Tim through interaction with others proved valuable as he describes himself as, "not really the most outgoing person in the world" (p. 5). Through OCRE Tim found himself to be a "good listener" (Post #4) and by being an interested listener during one-to-one conversations and section reflection times, he was encouraged to become involved and share his ideas more openly. The willingness to share more readily served to contribute to his personal and professional development. Tim says,

I don't really go out of my way to make comments. I tend to do that a bit more now and I think that OCRE really helped me do that. Now when I look back on it, I did this and this and this and I'm getting better at this and this, you know like maybe speaking publicly or whatever. Speaking in front of a group just makes you feel more confident. (p. 5)

For Tim, the understanding of self with other can be realized through an OCRE atmosphere that stresses the qualities of fun and friendship. These qualities tend to permeate the various learning experiences associated with

OCRE. They can not be deliberately manufactured or planned but rather, are a byproduct of the experience of bringing people together in a setting that allows them the freedom to be themselves. Being oneself encourages the individual to give the proverbial try, to begin to risk and ultimately to trust others.

The relationship that develops between these individuals can be nurtured and maintained throughout the OCRE and eventually transferred back to their lives on-campus. It is a relationship that doesn't impede one from stopping in the concrete hallways of the university and conversing with someone who before was simply a face among other faces in a classroom. It is a relationship that invites an individual to seek out others at break time in the education cafeteria and engage in memories about OCRE or make plans to share ideas and resources for their next week's practicum experience. Finally, it is a relationship that invites one into the world of being a teacher because it epitomizes what teachers do; they interact and it is through this interaction both with students, parents and fellow colleagues that the role of the teacher in education unfolds. Based on Tim's experience the OCRE can play a vital part in better understanding this role.

Self with Environment

Tim's perception of his relationship with the environment was one that may best be portrayed as being detached. He never really thought about the outdoors in any way other than as a physical space. Having been through the OCRE, Tim now has a relationship with the environment that has been taken to a different level. He explains the relationship this way,

I have a respect for the outdoors and nature, a lot of it I had taken for granted. It [was] just kind of out there... I think my attitude has changed in respect for the environment and nature. I came to realize how much I liked being outside. (p. 1)

Tim reflected back to his childhood days and was reminiscing about his excursions outdoors, where doing things outside was an everyday occurrence and something that was taken for granted. Because of the OCRE he now views the outdoors as being more than something simply 'out there'.

His attachment to the outdoors has translated into his personal life, as he not only now makes a point of physically going outdoors more but also takes the time to become aware and immersed in the surroundings during frequent camping trips. There is a spiritual element that is present in the outdoors for Tim. He finds his time in the outdoors to be spiritual in the sense that it encourages him to reflect introspectively. Being in the outdoors provides the chance for, "just reflecting on who you are; what you are; how you can change it [self], maybe not change it, but just add to it" (p. 3). The OCRE afforded Tim the time and space to become reflective. He valued the chance to be able to take the time and to find the outdoor spaces readily available during the days at OCRE. These spaces encouraged reflection in an unstructured and non-contrived fashion.

The attachment and affection for the outdoors has also become part of his professional life as it was through the OCRE that he realized the "value of education in an outdoor setting" (Post #3). Tim's experience at OCRE rekindled a relationship with the outdoors and encouraged him to look at teaching beyond

the traditional classroom. For Tim, this does not mean that schools should adopt a policy that states all education should be outdoors. In fact, Tim cautions against an education which simply goes outdoors because that's the 'in thing' to do. His reason for this is that he fears students would see this as a novelty and that eventually the novelty would wear off. Tim sees the outdoors and the importance of the environment as being critical in a student's education. There is an ethic to be developed about a relationship with the environment and a student's education can play a very important part in the development of this ethic. However, this is something that must be extended beyond the formal years of education. It is a lifelong learning process that can be initiated and practised throughout a student's education through participation in experiences which integrate classroom and outdoor learning. Tim believes that with such learning experiences as an integral part of formal education, the ethic of caring and the understanding about the environment will be fostered and maintained throughout one's life.

Tim admits that there must have been some sort of respect for the outdoors prior to OCRE because of his feelings about the outdoors now but that it was just not really evident to him before. He believes that he's going through a "renewal" (p. 2) in regards to respecting the environment and that OCRE "definitely speeded up the process" (p. 2) and brought it to the forefront. This revelation made Tim realize that personally and professionally his relationship with the environment is something that can no longer be kept on the "back burner" (p. 2).

Tim's rejuvenated relationship with the environment, interwoven with the

threads of experiencing this with others through OCRE, has ignited a spark in his own personal life. One can see that this spark will also be the source and flame that inspires his professional life as an aspiring teacher. Within this flame appears to be a great deal of energy and promise for the education of the students who are fortunate enough to come under Tim's guidance in the future.

Patti's Experience

Patti is an individual who has a true zest for life. As I perused her questionnaire regarding the upcoming fall OCRE, I became enthralled with her most upbeat and positive attitude about the OCRE. Her use of exclamation marks to provide emphasis about OCRE and its possibilities for her, both personally and professionally, made me to want to search for more in her story.

In her discussions about the upcoming fall experience, Patti shared reflections from her grade eight school days about going on field trips and the great times she had experienced in these learning opportunities. In her reflections there were additional references to her previous winter OCRE, which for Patti was an experience that held many 'warm' memories. She recounted specifically the time that she and some of her peers slept outside in a quinzhee in the minus thirty Celsius temperature. It was memories such as this that prompted Patti to use the word "excited" (Pre #4) to describe herself prior to the upcoming fall OCRE.

Patti is the type of person who enters a situation with an open mind. This was how she entered the first OCRE and based on her experience through that OCRE, she certainly believed that this fall experience held every bit as much promise. She says, "I had a wonderful time at the winter OCRE and I plan on having just as much fun, if not more, at this one" (Pre #4).

For Patti, 'fun' is a word that captures her own personality and the zest for life that she so readily exudes. With her attitude there is little wonder that she is an individual who remains open minded when it comes to engaging in new experiences. The first OCRE was a good example of a new experience for Patti.

What she had learned about herself both personally and professionally in a 'fun' way, certainly helped to provide a vivid picture of possibility for the upcoming fall experience.

Throughout her anticipatory remarks about the fall OCRE one got a sense based on her previous experience and her excitement regarding the upcoming experience that there was a fusion of Patti's personal world and professional world. When I asked her about the OCRE experience, Patti responded,

It is [three] very educational and fun days. Although we do not have 'traditional' structured classes we are continually learning by actually experiencing outdoor education. We then converse about activities and lessons we have done and think of ways to improve them to suit many grades and to integrate different subjects. (Pre #2)

The experiential learning characteristic associated with OCRE provided the opportunity for Patti to begin to find the connection between her personal life and professional life. Through the first OCRE, Patti was able to equate her own fun and positive learning experiences associated with learning and teaching in the outdoors to learning experiences that would prove to be very beneficial to students. She explains the transference like this,

I will grow professionally towards my goal to become a knowledgeable, creative and fun teacher. I will [also] become more familiar with nature (our environment) and how I can use it to benefit students. (Pre #6)

It was this open minded attitude that she was bringing to her second OCRE. This OCRE would be a place of opportunities for “experiencing how to teach children outdoors”, “moving beyond the classroom”, and “using the environment as a learning and teaching aid” (Pre #1). But even more than these opportunities, OCRE was a place of possibility for “teaching children about the world by actually experiencing the world” (Pre #1).

Patti’s previous winter OCRE which proved very positive was certainly setting the standard for the upcoming fall experience. Even for someone as open minded as Patti, one has to wonder whether she would find this experience as satisfying and rewarding or if she would experience disappointment and discontentment at the conclusion of her second OCRE?

It was this query that beckoned me to want to talk with Patti about her lived experience of OCRE and to come to understand her story and to share it with others who perhaps also came to wonder if OCRE would provide for Patti what she had so eagerly anticipated it might. I invite you to take the journey as well and listen to Patti as she shares her story of the lived experience.

Self with Self

The fall OCRE for Patti went beyond the simple descriptive words of satisfying and rewarding. It was a three day experience that was filled with great times. For Patti, “being happy” (Post #1) was the thing that came to mind when I asked her about the OCRE. She painted a picture of herself “smiling” “laugh[ing]”, and “singing” (Post #1) with others in an atmosphere that was created not by some artificial means but rather through genuine concern and sincerity of the individuals involved. She explains,

It (OCRE) was the best time of my "university" life! It was friendly, non-threatening and full of smiles and laughter. As a result we let our guard down and spoke freely and openly. It is from these shared feelings and thoughts that we benefited the most. (Post #9)

Patti's deeper understanding about herself was realized through interactions and involvement with her peers. In discussions I found her to use the term 'we' very often when asked questions about the OCRE. This was not surprising as Patti is very much a people person. She enjoys being around and working with others. She views the contributions that others can make as something that is vitally important for her own development both personally and professionally. Patti was also very quick to make connections in her understandings about herself personally and professionally and this was done in a developmental manner.

Patti believed that the OCRE was something she should experience personally before she could really begin to understand the impact of the experience in a professional sense. She saw value in the experiential learning approach associated with OCRE and how this approach could help facilitate her development personally and professionally. She cited the importance of first participating in and "enjoying" (p. 1) the activities for themselves and then following this with reflective opportunities where professional components of adaptation and integration to school aged children were discussed. The application of these reflective discussions had the possibility of then being incorporated with 'real' students through the preinterns' own school practicums. She went on to explain how she was fortunate to have this opportunity during

her school practicum placement following OCRE to engage her own students in learning in the outdoors and to put into practice some of the learnings that resulted from the discussions on adaptation and integration. The nature walks and the planting of tulips to brighten up the school yard were highlights and fun experiences for her grade two class.

Patti's experiential education through OCRE was a characteristic that she held in high regard and saw as having a profound impact on her own development. She compared the learning that she accrued through OCRE to what happens so often in classes back on campus,

[the learning] it's so vivid and clear in [our] minds because [we] actually did the things whereas a lot of times in our classes, not all of our classes but with some, we just sit and listen for an hour or hour and a half and you go like, "I don't hardly know anything of what you just did". (p. 5)

This experiential approach also allowed Patti to see herself as an aspiring teacher who is now more "flexible" and "adaptable" (Post #4). She explains the new found insight like this:

As a beginning teacher I often found myself staying close to my lesson plan. However, during the past years and after OCRE I have become more spontaneous and flexible in regards to my teaching. I am more willing and able to adapt my lesson to the students and the environment. (Post #4)

In the conversations with Patti, she described how having the chance to design and teach learning experiences in an environment different from the conventional classroom allowed her to become more conscious of providing for individual differences in learning styles. This has ultimately influenced her own teaching style. She says,

No longer do I see activities as being for me. Instead, I try to adapt them to suit different learning styles and environments. I am more critical of my teaching styles because I realize the importance of being flexible and creative. (Post #8)

Flexibility and creativity were two areas in her teaching that Patti believed were enhanced through her experience at OCRE. The opportunity to work with her peers in a group designing learning experiences and observing and participating in other groups' learning experiences in a 'not so common' learning environment reinforced these two qualities.

This practical experience has influenced her teaching philosophy. She expands on this aspect by explaining,

it really means that all of my students are going to do hands on activities as much as they can where they're up and around and involving more kinesthetic movement. (p. 5)

She continues,

I want to go outside as much as possible because ...that's where they have to spend the whole day and that's where they're going to

learn. (p. 5)

Patti's perception of school had undergone some transformation. No longer was she defining school and learning as something solely confined to what occurs in a four walled structure. But rather school and learning had taken on a new meaning. She shares this meaning:

I think they [children] can learn from the minute they wake up in the morning until they go to bed at night and I think that if teachers can see that [then] they can be inside and outside of the classroom continually throughout the week and they can [do] activities that involve nature and the classroom. (p. 5)

Patti's understanding of learning and teaching had taken on a new meaning and an awareness of, "using the world as a resource" (Post #6). Her understanding of childrens' learning and her role as a teacher in this process had evolved to where she believed that, "children can and will learn in any and all environments provided there is a facilitator to guide the learning process" (Post #6).

Patti viewed herself now as a facilitator. Her notion of using the world as a resource encouraged the integration of curriculum subject areas. She believed this integration could be promoted further by utilizing the outdoors. Moving beyond learning as being separate bits of information within a prescribed domain and all taught within the confines of four walls was a stark realization for Patti following the OCRE;

I think the biggest area for myself in professional development with OCRE would be the focus on integration...because we had all these classes and even though [through] each of them we get lectured about integration and the importance of it, they're still labelled EdArt, EdHealth, EdSocial Studies, they're all in their own specific domains. Whereas I think at OCRE...we're doing a social studies activity perhaps but we're also involving physical activity and a lot of language arts as well. It's easy to integrate out there. (p. 6)

Participating in an activity such as this and then looking at how that particular learning experience could be adapted to suit the needs and various learning styles of a grade one or grade three class were of great benefit to one's professional development according to Patti.

OCRE presented Patti with a "larger repertoire of activities and ideas" (Post #3) but, it did so in an experiential way that provided her with the challenge to go beyond the technical aspect of teaching. OCRE encouraged her to look to ways of interrelating subject areas and furthermore, that this interrelationship of subject matter content must be connected to the world and the real life experiences of children. This was not an understanding that could be ascertained by simply talking and reading about it. No, it was an understanding that required one to live through it. As Patti describes,

I mean we can be lectured about it or read textbooks about it, we can write up lesson plans that involve it but until we actually do it it's not meaningful. (p. 7)

Self with Other

Looking back at her winter OCRE, Patti believed that the fall OCRE had all the possibility for extending her opportunity to establish a closer relationship and “better friendships with my peers and profs” (Pre #3). The first OCRE allowed her to get to know the other students in her own section and to begin to break down some of the artificial barriers that she believed people so often put up. Patti felt that the winter OCRE helped create a ‘comfort zone’ for individuals to see each other as they really are. The warmth that was developed between individuals was a natural combatant for the cold, minus thirty degree weather. The need to dress appropriately for the weather prompted people to get “bundled up” and therefore “no one cared what they looked like” (p. 8).

This concrete example of dress gives credence to the comfort zone that is readily developed through the OCRE and helps establish this common ground. It is not a time to worry about having top of the line apparel and showing concern for how one looks to others. But rather, it is a time to engage in activities comfortably in what may sometimes prove to be a challenging environment. This comfort zone encourages individuals to risk a little more when they observe that there is this common ground. The trust that develops through the risk taking was then transferred to their on-campus classes where it continued to flourish but in a different way. As Patti observed, it provided a good foundation for entering the second OCRE. The second OCRE allows the individual to build on these established relationships but also to extend this to students from other sections who one has not had a real opportunity to come to know. The second OCRE certainly met this challenge for Patti; she says,

in the end it was, well we were all these people [and] most of us didn't know each other very well, you knew a few people, you had your friends, but by the end of OCRE it was like you had fifty or sixty new friends and one hundred more acquaintances and that's what we've built on you know for developing peer relationships and our teacher bonding. (p. 8)

The second OCRE for Patti allowed her to develop "better relationships" (Post #7) and a closer bond with her peers. This closeness and friendship occurs through a variety of experiences associated with the two and half day experience.

Patti recounted how one night she and a group of people slept out by the fire, roasted hot dogs and marshmallows and sang songs. She described most of these individuals as acquaintances rather than close friends, but the atmosphere was such that friendships evolved. She went on to describe how ironic it was that a lot of their conversation around the fire focused on the teaching of children and that the group seemed to be making conscious attempts to link this type of experience that they were having to similar experiences that children might have.

It was through this particular experience of being with others and talking about learning and teaching in a different perspective that Patti began to see how this influenced her own professional development. She addresses it in this way:

I realized that sometimes the simplest things can be the most fun (spontaneity). I realized that the same could hold true for the classroom.

Some students may enjoy the spontaneous activities we do with few materials and resources, while others may enjoy the pre-planned structured events. Either way they will benefit from the experiences. (Post #5).

Other group experiences associated with OCRE also provided Patti with insight about herself in relation to others. The opportunity to plan and teach to peers at OCRE was a valuable experience for her to see how she functions with a group of people when a task is set before them. Taking the responsibility to contribute your part in the overall design and teaching of the learning experience gave her the feeling of accomplishment and the satisfaction of knowing she can be a team player.

For Patti, the most important part of understanding her relationship with others was through the opportunity to engage in reflective sessions about their experiences. She believed that these opportunities, which often occurred in the early evening at the section's own campsite, allowed people to "let our guard down and [speak] freely and openly" (Post #9). It was through these kinds of experiences that their feelings could be shared and through the interactions of peers and professors that one's own development both personally and professionally was enhanced.

Self with Environment

Patti's childhood days were filled with numerous holiday camping trips with her family. Each summer they made it a point to get away and so often these family getaways tended to be experiences which included spending a

great deal of time camping in the outdoors. Other than a grade seven and eight residential experience during her school years and the odd summer and winter camp she attended, she can't recall having any substantial contact with the outdoors as part of her formal twelve years of education.

However few, it was opportunities such as these that helped Patti establish an initial relationship with the environment. This relationship however, was one that viewed the outdoors as something that was removed and not a real part of her everyday life. The outdoors tended to be a recreational place to and from school, following school, and for her family summer holiday camping trips.

She remembers the enthusiasm and anticipation leading up to her first winter OCRE. This was going to be the first real winter experience in which, as an aspiring educator, her role would be to find her own comfort in the outdoors as well as to begin to realize the possible potential for utilizing the outdoors to enrich children's learning.

Having been involved in few winter excursions and none as a future teacher, Patti viewed this opportunity as she did so many other new experiences with an open mind. She was not disappointed with the end result. Her understanding of the outdoors following her first OCRE was that of the great potential the natural environment had for contributing to the school curriculum. Now Patti could envision herself in the future "moving beyond the classroom" and "using the environment as a learning and teaching aid" (Pre#1).

There is little doubt that upon reflection, the winter OCRE provided the spark that ignited Patti's interest into delving further into the possibilities that the

outdoors held for her teaching and her future students' learning. The winter OCRE served as a solid foothold and secure handgrip to move into the fall OCRE and reach the goals she had set for herself entering into this experience.

Patti believed that the fall OCRE would build on this understanding and help her develop a closer relationship with the outdoors. She had identified that this OCRE would be an opportunity to "become more familiar with nature (our environment) and how I can use it to benefit students" (Pre #6). She also described how the OCRE would provide her with a chance at "experiencing how to teach children outdoors" (Pre #1).

During her second OCRE Patti's understanding and relationship with the environment matured even more. Moving beyond the classroom to the outdoors required more of a teacher than simply interest. She found that through the second OCRE she now had the confidence to go beyond the classroom and perhaps more importantly she could rationalize for herself as a teacher the vital importance of moving beyond the classroom. Patti's philosophy of learning and teaching had been influenced by the experience she had through participating in the two OCRE's.

This philosophy stemmed from Patti's deeper understanding and closer relationship with the environment. The outdoors was something no longer apart from learning as was the case in her own education. Patti's interpretation of learning had changed. Now, "seeing the whole world as a learning environment instead of just [the] classroom" (Post #3), exemplified a metamorphosis in Patti's thinking of learning and teaching.

Patti was also beginning to take this new perspective of teaching and learning and conceive how it might be played out in a practical teaching

situation. She explains, "I think we [teachers] can take them [students] outside and they can learn just as much through their own environment. I think maybe starting with their own community and then you can go out on field trips" (p. 5).

Patti sees the need to involve parents, fellow teachers and administrators in these kinds of experiences. By being positive and encouraging through collaborative efforts she is confident that this way of learning and teaching can succeed.

Patti's understanding and relationship with the environment had reached new heights. There is little doubt that Patti, the teacher, will do all she can to ensure that her students will receive an education that is founded on the belief that learning and teaching need not be restricted to the conventional classroom. On the contrary, learning and teaching is about life and therefore, should involve interaction in and with the real life world. She articulates her thoughts like this,

I want to be able to teach beyond the way I was taught and move on from there and see that there are other things out there and [that] I maybe could have learned better or more had I been more incorporated into that kind of thing. (p. 5)

Interpreting Patti's lived experience leads one to believe that her zest for life and love for learning with children coupled with a newly emerging teaching philosophy are three keystones which should prove invaluable to Patti's life as an aspiring teacher. Her future students should prepare themselves to engage in learning experiences that will be exciting, fun-filled and focus on a learning

about life and for life.

Epilogue

The purpose of this chapter was twofold. Initially, the chapter described the second OCRE within the boundaries of a four year elementary teacher education program that has as its foundation a theory into practice philosophy. This description of OCRE was portrayed as the 'curriculum-as-planned'. The curriculum-as-planned reflected the intentions of the second OCRE, as well as highlighted the developmental nature associated with experiencing two OCRE's. It establishes in theory what OCRE intends to provide as an experiential educational endeavour.

Secondly, the chapter provided the space for three participant voices, who experienced the second OCRE in their teacher education program, to each share their individual story of the experience. This interpretive synthesis portrayed the 'curriculum-as-lived'. The curriculum-as-lived establishes through practise, how these individuals come to experience the curriculum-as-planned. The resonating voices of the three participants echo reflections from both OCRE's and speak to the impact and influence of these experiences on their lives as becoming teachers. Pre-service teacher education needs to 'listen' to these voices.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A RE-TURNING TO OCRE: VOICES FROM THE PAST

In a certain sense every experience should do something to prepare a person for later experiences of a deeper and more expansive quality. That is the the very meaning of growth, continuity, reconstruction of experience. (Dewey, 1938, p. 47)

Prologue

The intention of this chapter is to provide a space for individuals who live in the world of teacher to reflect on OCRE and share their recollections. The recollections speak to the memories of OCRE as student teachers and as student leaders at subsequent OCRE's. Furthermore, these recollections are a 'reflecting ahead', as these six teachers address the influence that OCRE has on their personal and professional development.

The chapter is an interpretive text constructed by my descriptions and interpretations of the individual voices. Conversational interviews were conducted individually and as a large group and provided the data for the text. The data were then analyzed and organized into categories. The categories represented each individual's OCRE experience as a student teacher participant and as a student leader. From these categories, themes emerged which addressed the development of the individual's personal and professional life through OCRE. Through this thematic discourse, threads were drawn forth, interwoven and attempts were made to have the interwoven threads speak to

the individual's present experience as a practicing teacher. The emergent themes and interwoven threads are shared with corresponding verbatim. Together these depict the metamorphosis from becoming a teacher to teacher and how OCRE aided in this metamorphosis.

Acquainting Oneself with Past OCRE Voices

John has lived in the world of teacher for five years. His teaching experience has all been in rural Saskatchewan. He enjoys the life of teaching in rural schools and attributes this to his love for the outdoors. Teaching in rural Saskatchewan allows John the opportunity to experience the outdoors more readily for personal and professional satisfaction. John describes himself as a hard working teacher who is fair and dependable. His approach to teaching is one that encourages students to become self-responsible and to take ownership for their learning.

Gerald has been teaching in rural Saskatchewan for the past three years. Similar to John, he is an avid outdoors person and sees the rural teaching experience as an opportunity to immerse himself, as well as his students, in learning experiences that move beyond the traditional classroom. Gerald describes himself as a teacher who is firm but fair. He strives to have fun at his job and believes in establishing and maintaining positive rapport, built upon mutual respect, with students and staff.

Debbie's two years in the world of teacher have literally been miles apart. Her first year of teaching in Japan was followed by a second year in rural Saskatchewan. Debbie's perception of herself as a teacher is that she's

conscientious, organized, positive, and enthusiastic. She approaches her learning/teaching with students in a very careful and considerate way. She attributes the excitement exuded in her teaching to the excitement shown by her students. She finds that this excitement stems from providing learning experiences for students and herself that go beyond the classroom and demonstrate a genuine care and concern for the environment. If you walked into Debbie's classroom you would find a teacher and students who not only believe but also live the motto of being 'environmentally friendly'.

Grant is currently in his second year of teaching. He is comfortable teaching in rural Saskatchewan and this should not surprise anyone as he grew up on a farm and for twelve years travelled the country roads to attend school in a small town. If he picked one attribute that best described him as a teacher it would be that he is a person who is always willing to work with others. Grant makes a conscious effort to ensure that this attribute pervades his own teaching and he attempts to nurture this among his students. He believes in creating a learning environment that invites students to participate and be actively involved. The experiential approach that he brings to his teaching frequently involves learning experiences which bridge and blend together the indoors and outdoors.

Jessie is currently experiencing her first full year in the world of teacher. Her urban teaching experience to date has been exciting. She views herself as a teacher who is organized and who has the attributes to be a leader. She believes in mutual respect with students and colleagues. Jessie strives in her teaching to have students assume responsibility for their learning. She's confident that in future years and once she's more comfortable in her teaching

that extending learning/teaching beyond the classroom will be a common occurrence.

Mike similar to Jessie, is also experiencing his first year in the world of teacher in an urban setting. He views himself as a very caring teacher who is demanding and fair with students. He also believes that he cooperates well with colleagues and makes every effort to transfer his cooperative skills to his learning/teaching with students. In his first year of teaching Mike is heavily involved in an outdoor education program. He has jumped into the situation with both feet and finds the experience very rewarding. He is confident that the upcoming planned excursions to the outdoors for his classes will contribute to their group cooperative skills and enrich the curriculum.

Past Voices Portray an OCRE Kaleidoscope

Initially, this chapter provides an opportunity for the individuals who live in the world of teacher to re-turn and reminisce about an experience that for many students is described as a highlight in their teacher education program. It is a chance to re-live a past time that was part of an era that epitomized the feeling of what it meant to become a teacher. It is a forum for the voices of these past OCRE participants to be heard in unison with the myriad of voices which echo in the dorms, hallways, cafeteria, meeting rooms and the grounds of the residential centre.

Secondly, this chapter has the possibility of providing insight into the influence of OCRE on individuals and how the individuals believe this lived experience created a metamorphosis in their respective personal and

professional lives. Listening to these voices provides us with insight into the impact and influence OCRE continues to play in the lives of teachers.

The interpretive text that follows is a kaleidoscope. It is an OCRE kaleidoscope with thematic colours similar to those expressed in chapters five and six, however they are now thematic colours framed in constantly changing shapes that vary from the initial OCRE experiences. This constant change of coloured shapes depicts the continual evolution of the experiences as each of these individual teachers engaged future experiences which in part were extensions of their respective individual OCRE experiences. With each new experience a twist of the kaleidoscope tube occurred and shades of the original thematic colours were framed and continue to be reframed. Following are the kaleidoscopic vignettes of these individuals who live in the world of teacher. They are shared beginning with individual reflections of OCRE as a student teacher participant.

Re-calling Memories that Call Forth Learning

As these particular individuals reflected on their OCRE experiences, invariably the first thing they recall is the atmosphere that surrounds the experience. The atmosphere is one described in both physical and psychological parameters. These two parameters will be discussed independently, however, what must be emphasized is that these two parameters interact simultaneously to help create an atmosphere that is unique to the OCRE.

From a physical perspective, there is a mystique that encompasses the

grounds and permeates throughout the wooden, brick and mortar buildings of this former tuberculosis centre. The history that radiates from this newly redesigned conference centre beckons the OCRE participants to learn more about the centre's heritage. This learning encourages an atmosphere and facilitates an approach to learning/teaching beyond the normal mode of classroom learning and emphasizes an approach that is experientially oriented and that utilizes the outdoors. As Gerald recalled,

...it wasn't so much the activities as it was the surroundings that particular morning. It was overcast, a little bit of fog and [that] just set the stage for the whole trip. It was very tranquil, very quiet and I remember the leader spoke in a voice not to disrupt that. I remember [name] was almost whispering, just so we could hear him and take in the surroundings.

(Gerald interview: 12/30/93)

Thinking back to earlier life experiences Debbie recalls her thoughts prior to her first OCRE:

I think I was curious about what would happen there, what kind of experiences we could have at that certain place because I had been there before. I wondered how we'd utilize the place for [learning] out-of-doors knowing that it was a conference centre.

(Debbie interview: 09/03/93)

There are also psychological variables which influence the atmosphere

of OCRE. Among the more dominant variables expressed are the emotions and feelings individuals experience about OCRE during the pre-impact phase prior to their physical arrival at the residential facility. Very often students describe a fear of the unknown which for some causes concern and yet for others causes excitement. Grant recalls his upcoming OCRE:

I guess one of the first things [that] comes to mind would be how I didn't really know what to expect, just the uncertainty of it all but [also] I guess the excitement of it because I knew who would be going out there. (Grant interview: 09/05/93)

Grant's recollection helps one to understand an aspect of the OCRE atmosphere that is created when an individual realizes at least that this upcoming experience will be embarked upon with the company of peers. The prospect of entering into a new learning environment that is foreign to most learning environments experienced to date by the prospective teachers and done so in the company of one's peers, tends to diffuse the concern and stimulate a sense of enthusiasm for unknown possibilities.

This feeling and emotion associated with the developing OCRE atmosphere that was created with the knowledge that one's peers would be involved in the experience is an aspect that continues to be strengthened as the OCRE impact phase approaches. This atmosphere continued to evolve through the three days and provided a comfort level for various interactions between students as well as between students and faculty. This interaction between and among individuals in an environment that is conducive to risking and trusting is

considered to contribute in a most positive fashion to an individual's overall experience of OCRE.

It was this "camaraderie" (John interview: 11/13/93) that made the OCRE a very special experience for these former students. For John, OCRE was a "real opportunity to see faculty and to see fellow students in a different setting" (John interview: 11/13/93). John believed that it was the atmosphere surrounding OCRE that invited both faculty and students to let down their guard. When John thought about faculty, he remembered two individuals in particular whom he had the opportunity to come to know better. John believed that the OCRE atmosphere allowed him to see these two faculty members' personal-professional sides. He attributed this to the nature of the OCRE which he contrasts with that of a classroom situation back on campus. He explains the contrast like this,

I think sometimes you [faculty] come down off your [faculty] pedestal and you become more with them [students] as opposed to in a classroom where you're here and I'm in charge and this is what's going to happen and you're going to do this. Where out at, [OCRE] yes, that happens outdoors but I think there the thinking changes somewhat and you become closer knit. (John interview: 12/30/93)

For John, the opportunity to essentially 'live' with peers for nearly three days allows individuals to learn more about each other. The OCRE experience which includes opportunities to engage in formal group dynamics and informal group settings, not only contributes to the development of the group but to the

individuals who make up that group because they share individual insights about each other.

The relationships developed between the students themselves and the students and faculty are held in high regard by these former undergraduates. Not only do they bring back fond memories of comradeship and a caring ethic but perhaps more importantly, it is this type of relational quality that these practicing teachers now value and strive to cultivate within their own classroom environments.

As these former students discussed the student-faculty relationships they also addressed the importance of faculty involvement in the OCRE. For these students the importance of active involvement and the modelling of a positive attitude towards OCRE is something that they believed was critical for faculty. It was the standard set by faculty that could serve to enhance or detract from the students' attitude towards OCRE. Gerald describes it this way,

If [the] Profs aren't enthusiastic about it [OCRE] they're obviously not going to spend a lot of time preparing their students for it. If they're not doing their part to get these students excited about it I can't see them [students] going out and enjoying themselves.

(Gerald interview: 04/05/94)

This enthusiasm and modelling of involvement by faculty is, for Gerald an attribute that he has transferred to the relationship developed between him and his students. He sees the attitude a teacher exhibits towards students and their learning as being vitally important in teacher-student relationships. He explains

the relational characteristic like this,

Every day I'm finding that students come to you excited about something that they have done or something they saw...and if you portray that, "I don't give a shit attitude", then they will pick that up and turn and walk on you. (Gerald interview: 04/05/94)

He continues by explaining how teachers need to be careful in the attitudes they exhibit towards students concerning the students' ideas and excitement. Through his experience he has found that, if a teacher exudes that notion of, "I'm too busy to listen", then as Gerald describes, "you've lost him" (Gerald interview: 04/05/94).

For Gerald, experiencing the positive relationship that developed between himself as an aspiring teacher and various faculty members through the OCRE contributed to his belief in the value of being involved and listening to students. Thus, in his practise he makes a conscious effort to ensure he is involved in the teaching/learning process and perhaps more importantly he listens to students.

Associated with the belief about the importance of faculty involvement and enthusiasm towards the OCRE was the significance of the "proverbial try" exhibited by the students towards OCRE. These individuals believed that students coming out to OCRE for the first time should not be so critical and willing to dismiss the experience before attempting to engage in the experience. Though the number of disenchanted students were few as these individuals recalled, it still left these former students in a quandary as to why some of their peers could be so negative. In part, they attributed this negativity to the lack of

support from some faculty members for the OCRE. But what disturbed these individuals the most was that there could be a few students who seemed to negate the OCRE before they really had a chance to experience it. Jessie describes the dilemma in this fashion:

...trying to understand why people just didn't want to be out there was beyond me because I'm like, you know, just being out here and being part of a group and succeeding in what you're doing is good enough to get you to your next stepping stone. (Jessie interview: 09/16/93)

This dilemma continued to frustrate these individuals when they came to OCRE as student leaders and were confronted with participants who seemed to demonstrate the 'I don't care' attitudes. When I asked why this proved to be frustrating, many cited the fact that they were giving their time and effort as leaders to help provide a fun and rewarding learning experience and that some students acting irresponsibly and unprofessionally could not even care enough to become involved. They believed that trying was the least that these students could do. But they were also willing to concede that perhaps this kind of thing just doesn't appeal to all people. Debbie explains her understanding like this,

I realized not everybody loves this stuff you know and I just think everybody should because that's what I like to do...then I realize that there are a lot of experiences and some I don't like too. So it's kind of a fact of life, that some people will like certain things and other people won't. (Debbie interview: 09/03/93)

Gerald had a similar experience when he was a leader at OCRE. He could recall leading a learning experience that met with some resistance from a few participants. He said that when he sensed this discomfort from the students, he simply had to “boost my enthusiasm [and] change my tone of voice and key on those individuals [and encourage them to] try it” (Gerald interview: 12/30/93). This resulted in a student attitude change and they became involved in the experience. Gerald believes that experiencing this as a student leader helped nurture the developing and understanding of his future role as a teacher in the learning/teaching process. Furthermore, it created an awareness of the importance of creating a learning environment that is flexible and inviting to all students regardless of interests. He explains,

...it's helped me as a teacher certainly to realize that not everybody is going to enjoy what we're doing on a particular day and that you have to make it as enjoyable for that individual or for those individuals who are going to hate it. I'm finding every day that every new situation and every new topic is going to have different followers. Somebody is going to enjoy doing this, where somebody is going to enjoy doing that, and neither of those two individuals will enjoy doing the other activities. So you have to make it as enjoyable for everybody and that's not an easy task in the classroom. (Gerald interview: 04/05/94)

For these former students, the involvement and modelling of a positive attitude to OCRE by student leaders and faculty members were aspects that could not be underestimated. Each of the former students considered

involvement and modelling to be critical and vital in all phases of the OCRE but particularly during the pre-impact and impact phases. Reflecting on their own experiences as student participants, they felt that the OCRE experience is dependent upon what participants see in faculty and student leader involvement and attitudes. These individuals acknowledge that there may always be those student participants who are somewhat resistant to the OCRE, but the involvement and modelling of a positive attitude by faculty members and student leaders might be the encouragement required for these dissenters to try and become active participants. The former students indicated that the willingness to risk and trust by all those involved in OCRE, student participants, student leaders and faculty members is a key component to ensuring a very rewarding, educational experience for all. All the former students have identified in their own teaching that the importance of involvement and modelling a positive attitude increases the opportunity for their students to demonstrate this same willingness.

These former students identified other components that they believed contributed to their development as a teacher. One of the more important contributions perceived by these individuals was the opportunity to engage in practice through experiential education. Through experiences both as students and student leaders, they believed that OCRE provided them with a chance to close the gap between theory and practice. Jessie describes it this way,

...seeing everybody doing things hands-on where [as] at the university you're not hardly doing anything hands-on, it's all sitting in the classroom doing you know lectures or whatever. (Jessie interview: 09/16/93)

Another former student, who used the word “understanding” (Gerald interview: 04/05/94) as the one word to describe his OCRE experience, explained that OCRE came at the right time in his professional development as the experience played a key role in “bridging between theories and the actual doing” (Gerald interview: 04/05/94). For these individuals having the opportunity to put into practice the theory they learn in the methods courses and the educational professional studies courses ranked high in their professional development. The OCRE provided a forum for this opportunity.

In conjunction with the theory and practice, preparation and organization were two components that these former students found to be revealing characteristics of OCRE. Experiencing these two characteristics through OCRE has influenced them in their own teaching careers. Through their experiences as student participants and leaders in OCRE, they believe they had a valuable opportunity to examine and learn firsthand the importance of preparation and organization. This understanding has transferred to their own lives as teachers. As Grant explains,

Organizational skills would be different for myself. I always was [organized] a certain amount but never to the point I was after seeing the importance through the OCRE's. Working with you [faculty] to set up the whole OCRE, [and] to understand the whole sequence of things. As a collective group they really opened my eyes to see if you want things to run smoothly or properly you have to be organized. (Grant interview: 03/31/94)

For Grant this experience in preparation and organization has indeed influenced his professional career. It has helped him to become more confident in his abilities both as a teacher and coach.

Gerald also saw the value in experiencing the importance of preparation and organization. He explains how this has influenced his world as teacher,

...the one thing I think back to and use often is the preparation that went into it [OCRE]. Sitting up in the board room, going through it, [the planning] taught me that the large undertaking doesn't have to be so great if you organize it correctly. I think that's really helped me right through preparing units to a yearly plan to a simple trip. I think the preparation I saw, gave me a better understanding of what goes into things like that. (Gerald interview: 04/05/94)

For Debbie the chance to prepare, organize and implement learning experiences at OCRE allowed her the opportunity to practice instructional skills. This was a highlight for Debbie as a student leader and she believed that this experience contributed significantly to her professional development. Furthermore, this experience contributed to her confidence level as an aspiring teacher. Debbie recounted the positive reaction she received not only from her peers but also from a faculty member who was involved in the learning experience. She describes this experience and the resulting influence it had on her:

she [faculty member] came up to me after and said, "you really articulate

well", and I thought 'oh, like wow', I mean I couldn't believe it so that made me feel so positive...it makes me feel like I can do this and I can do that with my teaching and I can do it with kids if I put some thought into it.
(Debbie interview: 09/03/93)

Debbie, Gerald and Grant's comments provide one with insight into the importance that these teachers attribute to experiencing preparation, organization and the instruction associated with OCRE. Upon reflection, the opportunity to experience these teaching elements proved very satisfying and rewarding for the student leaders' professional development. This satisfaction translated into confidence in teaching that each of these student leaders later transferred into their professional lives as emerging teachers.

Increased confidence was a component that each of these individuals attributed to their involvement in OCRE. The atmosphere that envelops OCRE has the capacity to create a comfort space for individuals to let down their guard; to risk, to trust and ultimately learn from the experience. Part of this learning is individuals coming to know themselves and finding the confidence in themselves to continue on the road to becoming teachers. This confidence is not a skill that one practices and masters but rather, it is a quality that becomes visible when an individual is willing to venture forth and try. These former students, now teachers, took the risk and trusted themselves when they were student participants entering into their own OCRE's as well as when they were student leaders volunteering and returning to OCRE. Now in their world of teacher, they reflect and find that their OCRE experiences have played a vital role in the confidence they now portray as teachers.

For these individuals the opportunity to experience the OCRE and truly “live it” (Debbie interview: 09/03/93) provided them with the confidence of becoming a teacher and also the courage to look at learning/teaching beyond a four-walled classroom. These teachers have a vision of the learning and teaching process that was nurtured through their experiences in OCRE. Philosophically speaking, the one essential component that they all agreed was paramount in the learning and teaching process and a component that permeated and epitomized their OCRE experiences was “fun”. Mike’s words perhaps best captures what this group of teachers meant by fun.

If we can find a way for students to have fun all the time whether it’s in the classroom or in the outdoors or in the gym or wherever, we’re going to teach students a lot more because they’ll remember the fun experiences...and if we can find a way to have something fun so they can remember the experience first then teaching would be so much easier. (Mike interview: 04/10/94)

Mike’s reflective comment helps us understand the value that these teachers place in ‘fun’ and the importance of fun in the learning/teaching process. The atmosphere of OCRE radiates a quality of fun through learning/teaching with others in an environment that beckons exploration. For these individuals, they experienced fun while learning during their OCRE experiences.

Perhaps one can make the observation that this is why OCRE is remembered so vividly and fondly by so many preservice and inservice

teachers as such a positive, rewarding, worthwhile, educational experience.

Epilogue

The re-turn to OCRE for these teachers was not a reflection back in time and a recollection of an experience embarked upon during their tenure as an undergraduate in their world of becoming a teacher. On the contrary, it was a reflecting ahead and sharing of stories in their immediate world as teachers. This re-experiencing of OCRE provided these teachers with the opportunity to search for the meaning of OCRE in relation to their personal and professional development. The process of finding the meaning of OCRE required each teacher to share stories of their world as teacher through conversational interviews which attempted to bridge OCRE experiences to the individuals' current teaching experience. It was through the sharing of these stories that the meaning of OCRE and its possible influence on the individuals' personal and professional development had the possibility of being realized.

This chapter has not only provided a space for these past voices to bridge their OCRE experiences to their current teaching experiences, it has also provided a space for these voices to share their meaning of the OCRE experience. The glimpse into the teacher world shared by these individuals portrays the very meaning of experience. The interwoven interpretive text of these six teacher voices epitomize what experience is all about.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EXPERIENCING A PLACE OF POSSIBILITIES

Case studies attempt to unravel the complexities of human intentions and behaviors that surround an educational program by focusing in-depth on the unique experiences of individuals and their construction of reality. (Stevenson, 1985, p. 43)

Three Curriculum Worlds of OCRE

The experiential education component that came to be known as the OCRE grew from the roots of an elementary teacher education program. The principles for the Off Campus Residential Experience emerged from a philosophical orientation of teacher education which values theory into practice. Through time these principles eventually became inscribed and now are commonly referred to as program expectations. The expectations currently exist in printed form in a manual that students and faculty receive as part of the pre-impact phase prior to embarking on the experience. The manual comprising these expectations as well as the schedule and accompanying documentation constitute a world called the Curriculum-As-Plan.

For as long as there has been a Curriculum-As-Plan for OCRE, there has also been a world known as the Curriculum-As-Lived. The OCRE participants' lived experience of the pre-impact, impact and post-impact phases embody the notion of a curriculum-as-lived. This case study, which has been a quest to unearth and understand the lived experience of individuals learning/teaching in

the out-of-doors through residential settings, provided the space for participants to share their lived experience. These voices are the incarnation of a curriculum-as-lived.

These two curriculum worlds of OCRE parallel those found in classroom teaching. Similar to the teachers who live daily in these worlds the OCRE itself, as a component of teacher education, faces a similar “tensionality” (Aoki, 1991, p. 7). This tensionality is a result of being faced with a similar curriculum dualism. Aoki argues however, that there exists a third world, a space or “Zone of Between” (p. 8) which diminishes this dualism between the curriculum-as-plan and the curriculum-as-lived. He describes residing in this space like this,

in-dwelling in the zone of between curriculum-as-plan and curriculum-as-lived experiences is not so much a matter of overcoming the tensionality but more a matter of dwelling aright within it. (p. 9)

For Aoki, teaching is an in-dwelling, between two curriculum worlds. It is a tension-filled space of possibilities that listens to the voices of curriculum-as-lived as it interprets and lives out the curriculum-as-planned.

In this case study, through hearing the voices of curriculum-as-lived share their experience of a curriculum-as-planned, the “between” space has been created. This space resonates with the voices of lived experience which echo the possibilities that exist for OCRE type experiences in teacher education. The challenge for teacher education is to ‘listen’ to these voices so that student teacher experiences of OCRE as well as the role of OCRE in teacher education may come to be understood.

The intention of this chapter is to help people situate themselves in the “between” space and listen to the voices as they speak to the following: One, the meaning constructed by individuals through lived experience of learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings. Two, how this constructed meaning of lived experience influences an individual’s understanding of pedagogy. Three, the meaning this lived experience holds for teacher education. And finally four, the meaning this experience holds for my ‘be-coming’ a teacher educator. These components which provided a focus for the study’s question will now be explored in greater detail.

Constructing Meaning from the Lived Experience of OCRE

Experience is *at once* part and whole. The concept of experience can be used to cover the whole of life (“There is nothing but experience”), and also the parts of a life (“I just had a strange experience”). Another way of saying this is that experiences come to one not in discrete instances but as part of an ongoing life, *my* life. Experience gains its density and elusiveness precisely through a continuous contextualizing or meshing of part to changing whole; the relating of itself to itself. (Kerby, 1991, p. 16)

The lived experience of student teachers learning/teaching in the out-of-doors through residential settings as portrayed in this study illustrates a point in time when individual student teachers make meaning of an experience that is contextualized within the confines of their immediate experience as becoming

teachers. This construction of this meaning is also contextualized within the more encompassing picture of their current life experience.

Making meaning of the OCRE, as shared by these student teachers, is reflected in a temporal understanding of an experience. This OCRE experience and the resulting meaning ascribed to the experience is connected to the larger experience of becoming a teacher which is part of the even larger experience of an individual's current life. Thus, student teachers' construction of meaning for the OCRE experience is a process which is meshed with a multitude of variables from the past and present, that stem from the larger experiences.

If someone were to discuss the lived experience of OCRE now with these individuals, one may find a recollection of an experience that is portrayed somewhat differently. A possible reason for this varied perception may be the subsequent experiences which the student teacher has been privy to since the OCRE. The continuity of life experience and their meshing may have an influence on the recollection and meaning making associated with the earlier OCRE experience. This reconstruction of experience may be evidence of growth that an individual undergoes through time. By understanding experience in this fashion, the dissonance in the construction of meaning derived by student teachers in comparison to teachers should be viewed as an eventual happening.

The meaning constructed by the student teachers of their lived experience of OCRE is a meaning that connects past experience with the circumstances surrounding an individual's present situation. Constructivist's describe learning and the construction of meaning in this fashion,

...students are builders of knowledge who actively construct the meaning of their lessons on the foundation of both their past experiences and their personal purposes. (Henderson, 1992, p. 5)

For the student teachers involved in this case study, their lived experience of OCRE seemed to ignite past experiences and the recollections of excursions to the outdoors. Through their lived experience of OCRE, past experiences were brought forth and in bringing forth these past experiences, a part of the meaning of OCRE was constructed. When these past experiences are contextualized with the student teachers' present situation and meshed with their personal purposes for becoming teachers, the individuals' meaning of OCRE begins to emerge.

The meaning constructed by individuals from the lived experiences of OCRE comes from the three themes identified through the case study. The meaning is a spiralling interrelationship of the three themes; self with self, self with other, and self with environment. Just as Kerby (1991) talks about experience gaining its density through the "continuous contextualizing or meshing of part to changing whole" (p. 16), the meaning constructed by the student teachers is an interrelationship and meshing of the three themes. What occurs through the interrelationship of the three themes is a beginning of a transformation or an awakening of the 'self'. It is this awakening that constitutes the meaning constructed from the lived experience. (It should not be surprising that the overall theme of OCRE is 'Interdependence'). The challenge rests with individuals to realize this initial transformation and transfer this to their everyday lives personally and professionally. There is also the realization that

the understanding and degree of transformation may be different for different individuals. For as Brown (1989) stated,

Adventures in nature may change us for awhile, but all too often, when we return to our normal lives, our old roles, masks, and personality patterns assert themselves again, reform and reknit. Steam easily condenses back to watery origins. Much of the positive energy generated on outdoor adventures dissipates in time, leaving only memories behind. Transformation is a delicate and fragile process that is difficult to achieve. (p. 47)

The hope is that by providing experiential education components such as the one discussed in this case study, the potential for transformation may become a reality. The payoff comes down the road as these aspiring educators continue down the path of becoming a teacher and ultimately enter the world of teacher. Possibly their understanding of pedagogy is transformed. As Dubé (1990) explains,

It is also our belief that there is a transformative dimension of teacher education that can take place in an off-campus behavior region that cannot be achieved in the classroom or in the practicum setting. Such learning is holistic and transformative. It springs from the experience of knowing others and knowing self through others. This type of experience seems to lead to change, perhaps to a paradigm shift, and certainly to the education for becoming a more humanistic teacher. (p. 134)

For student teachers who embark on the OCRE journey, some may not experience this transformation while others will experience it differently in various ways. For the vast majority of aspiring educators who partake in OCRE there is a beginning transformation which radiates possibilities in teaching.

The Lived Experience of OCRE and Pedagogy

Throughout the conversations I engaged in with the study's participants, I referred to pedagogy by using the terms of teaching and learning. The purpose for doing so was that I found the term pedagogy to be a little overwhelming for the student teachers and perhaps the student teachers could relate to the terms of teaching and learning with less difficulty.

The student teachers involved in this case study came away from the OCRE with a different understanding of pedagogy as compared to their perceptions entering into the experience. Following the OCRE experience their insight to the teaching and learning process had taken on an added dimension. This added dimension seemed to suggest a merging of the personal self with the professional self. The merging was enhanced when the personal and professional understandings were interrelated with the themes of other and environment.

This enlightened understanding of teaching and learning appeared to be enveloped within the individuals' construction of meaning through lived experience. By engaging in further exploration of the themes through conversations with the study's participants, the student teachers understanding of teaching and learning emerged from the meaning they constructed of OCRE.

It was an interrelationship of the three themes which spoke to a transformation of self both personally and professionally. What I attempted to do through the themes was look at teaching from both a personal and professional perspective. Engaging in conversations with the individuals about their experiences from a personal as well as a professional perspective provided the opportunity to begin to understand the student teachers' notion of pedagogy. As Aoki (1991) explains, "teaching is fundamentally a mode of being" (p. 7). By taking this approach to teaching, I believed that one could then explore the student teachers' understanding of pedagogy from personal and professional perspectives. The ultimate goal was to bridge these two perspectives and come to a holistic representation of the student teachers' understanding of pedagogy.

The interpretation of the participants lived experience illustrates the value associated with the developmental nature of the two OCRE's and the contribution this makes to the student teachers' understanding of pedagogy. The first OCRE experience tends to be viewed by the student participants as an experience in which they see themselves as just 'followers', whereas by the second OCRE, the student teachers perceive themselves more as 'leaders'. Being immersed slowly, by only being responsible for some planning prior to OCRE followed by more responsibility and planning during the OCRE appeals to the student participants. One of the OCRE expectations calls for additional responsibility to be assumed by student teachers for all three phases of the second OCRE. The expectation is very natural and is congruent with the developmental aspect of the teacher education program. Furthermore, this expectation enhances the chances that the student teachers who assume this responsibility and caring are not only more likely to take ownership for the

OCRE experience but they will also begin to transfer these attributes to their own lives personally and professionally. The reflections on the OCRE experience illustrate that having the opportunity to assume responsibility is something that student teachers identify as being very positive, worthwhile and rewarding for their development. The transformation that results from the student teachers' exposure to the characteristics of responsibility and caring provide the foundation for this development. These foundational characteristics are attributes that become the cornerstones for the student teachers' understanding of pedagogy.

Aoki (1992) describes pedagogy as, "a leading of children" (p. 3). Van Manen (1991) characterizes pedagogy as, "the excellence of teaching" (p. 30) and he goes further to describe pedagogy as,

a certain encounter of togetherness between parent and child, teacher and pupil, between grandmother and grandchild - in short, a relationship of practical action between an adult and a young person who is on the way to adulthood. (p. 31)

The Off Campus Residential Experience provides a valuable opportunity for student teachers to begin to understand what Aoki and van Manen describe as pedagogy. By engaging in the experiential education component student teachers are drawn nearer to understanding themselves both personally and professionally. The merging of the self personally and professionally brings one closer to the understanding of what pedagogy is. Even though student teachers do not engage in a relationship that van Manen describes, they engage in an

interrelationship that individually speaks to each student teacher about a calling to be-come teachers. As a result of this calling, student teachers begin to exemplify an understanding of pedagogy by taking what they've learned about themselves and transferring this realization to their future lives as teachers.

The Lived Experience of OCRE and Teacher Education

Through my past experiences with the OCRE and during my journey through this study, I have found that the Off Campus Residential Experience at various times throughout its existence has come under scrutiny. The crux of the issue for the continued scrutiny stems from the concern for the cost involved versus the educational payoff. Simply stated, there are those who wonder whether an experience such as OCRE is worth the money it takes to fund it. This issue is one that appears to be growing and given today's fiscal constraints faced by post-secondary institutions, the chances are high that unique experiences such as an OCRE, which are viewed by particular individuals as an 'extra', are in jeopardy of being dismantled and done away with. A possible response to this may come from using words like those of Hammerman (1980), who addressed a similar concern when discussing unique programs associated with the education of students. He responded to the question like this,

Due to continually rising costs, some educators see resident outdoor schools in the future as a "luxury" item in the curriculum - available only to "well-to-do" communities and school districts. Many boards of education will ask, "Can we afford to do it financially?"

The answer might best be stated with another question, "Can we afford not to do it, educationally?". (p. 127)

This case study accentuates the educational value of the OCRE and the role it plays in the development of student teachers currently involved in preservice teacher education. If we have been listening to the voices of student teachers, those of us involved in teacher education have learned about the educational value of the OCRE experience. The intention of this case study was not to find the evidence to justify and rationalize the need for OCRE but rather, come to learn about the student teachers' lived experience of OCRE. However, through learning about the lived experience of OCRE the voices of these student teachers' resonates polyphonically and the discourse addresses the concern regarding OCRE's educational value.

Through the case study's thematic interpretation, teacher education has come to learn about the aspiring teachers lived experience and the meaning constructed from these lived experiences. It is a meaning that permeates an understanding of the personal and professional self and the student teachers' bridging of the two. Teacher education has also come to learn through this bridging by student teachers how an understanding of pedagogy begins to emerge for student teachers.

Furthermore, this case study of the OCRE experience has also shared information from student teachers which may be interpreted as feedback and speaks to the elementary teacher education program in general. Anecdotes which express the competitiveness of on-campus university life or talk about OCRE as being a chance to get away from the stress of educational course

work or even having the opportunity of coming to know faculty as people, all communicate the current lived experience of student teachers involved in teacher preparation. Teacher education needs to become attuned to these voices and listen to what is being shared and possibly re-visit the program and look at the larger curriculum-as-planned. Listening to these voices may encourage a faculty of education to re-orient itself pedagogically?

OCRE as a component of preservice teacher education has a vital role to play in the development of teachers. If the belief comes to be that experiential education opportunities out-of-doors play a prominent role in teacher preparation and that experiences such as these open up possibilities for aspiring educators to understand pedagogy, then these types of experiences must no longer be viewed as a 'fringe benefit' in teacher preparation. Having OCRE go beyond the perception of being an 'extra' is not something that will be dismissed immediately or necessarily all together. However, the more teacher education explores what it does by becoming attuned to who it does it to, the greater the chance will be that educational experiences such as OCRE and others will come to be realized for their possibilities in teaching.

OCRE and My Be-coming a Teacher Educator

The journey through this case study has taken me back in time to my earlier years as an aspiring educator in a teacher education program. Through the conversations with student teachers regarding their lived experiences of OCRE I have seen reflections of myself. In their stories of lived experience I have been able to recapture my own lived experience of OCRE some ten years

ago.

The recollections I have of my own lived experience of OCRE parallel the stories shared by these student teachers. My OCRE experience played a vital role in what I perceived teaching and learning to be about. The OCRE created possibilities in teaching that allowed me to see that learning must go beyond the traditional classroom. Going beyond the traditional classroom meant that, as a teacher, I would be providing experiences for students that focused on learning about life through experiencing the life of the outside world. The out-of-doors was a place that radiated the interrelatedness of life. As an aspiring educator, it was a place that could bring life to the teaching and learning process.

For the past five years I have been privileged to participate and coordinate numerous OCRE experiences in the elementary and secondary teacher education programs. I have witnessed hundreds of student teachers experience the uniqueness of the OCRE. I am confident that their lived experiences have spoken to their understanding of pedagogy. Through each OCRE I re-experience and re-commit myself to the philosophical seed that was first planted during my OCRE over ten years ago.

The OCRE experiences of past and present have played and continue to play a key role in my life today as a teacher educator. The philosophy that developed through OCRE is a teaching philosophy that permeates my personal/professional life today. It is a philosophy not written in words but rather, a philosophy that is simply a way of 'being' in the world.

What Possibilities Exist for further Exploration

One of the purposes for conducting research in this specific area is to contribute to the body of knowledge about teacher education. A second purpose stems directly from the first, this being to identify possible recommendations for conducting further exploration that build upon the insights gleaned from this work.

This study has made a vital contribution to the body of knowledge about teacher education. Experiential education through the out-of-doors and the possibilities these experiences provide for understanding pedagogy have a vital role to play in teacher education. Providing opportunities which encourage student teachers to experience an interrelationship of self, other and environment enlighten the student teachers' understanding of learning/teaching and nurtures pedagogical growth.

Through the journey of this study a number of possible further exploratory studies may be embarked upon. These further studies may accrue information that can contribute to teacher education specifically at the institution where this particular study was conducted and also beyond. Furthermore, there is a recommendation for studies to be conducted in programs of teacher education outside of this institution that may speak to the nature of teacher preparation at other institutions while still contributing to the knowledge about teacher education at large.

Following are a collection of possibilities for further exploration that can contribute to the body of knowledge about teacher education.

1. A study with all or some of the individuals involved in this study now residing in the world of teacher would be interesting to follow up on. The focus for the study could identify how these particular teachers engage themselves and their students in the learning process. Revisiting the teachers' OCRE experience, their understanding of pedagogy and making links to their understanding of pedagogy now could be explored.

2. A second exploratory study utilizing a similar case study approach could be conducted with one major exception being that the student teachers who participate be the same group who have experienced both elementary OCRE's. The framework for this study may extend directly from this work. The exploration could become a longitudinal study where the student teachers are followed into their sixteen week internship practicum which would provide for a more thorough look at the development of the student teachers' understanding of pedagogy.

3. Conducting a similar case study in the secondary teacher education program which only has one OCRE experience, could serve to enlighten faculty about student teacher perceptions of OCRE for teaching in secondary schools and its potential in preservice teacher education. The secondary teacher education program's orientation concentrates upon curriculum disciplines as organizing centers. The lived experience of student teachers from various subject areas may see the relevance and suitability of the OCRE from different perspectives.

4. A study which explores the lived experiences of faculty members who participate in OCRE (elementary or secondary) would serve to capture yet another voice which could speak to an understanding of pedagogy. Faculty voices which attempt to articulate the value of these experiences for student teachers as well as for themselves, often fall on deaf ears. Providing a space to not only hear, but more importantly listen to these voices may give credence to valuing faculty involvement in these types of marginalized educational experiences.

5. Looking beyond, a recommendation for further study may be undertaken by other teacher preparation programs to corroborate the findings illustrated through this study. Based on the findings of this study and the value that these types of out-of-door experiential education opportunities hold for teacher education, further exploration may be conducted at institutions which do not presently have an out-of-door experiential education component within their current teacher preparation program. Aspects of the study may focus on whether the structure of the particular teacher preparation program facilitates the opportunity for such types of educational experiences to even exist. The corroboration of such findings may lead not only all teacher preparation programs but possibly some other post secondary education faculties to consider these types of experiences in the preparation of its graduates.

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APPENDIX A
PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Research Title:

An Exploration of Experiential Education Through the Out-of-Doors:
Possibilities for Pedagogical Growth.

Description of the Study:

The study focuses on the experience of individuals who presently or in the past have participated in experiential education in the out-of-doors associated with a teacher education program. Of specific interest to the researcher is the influence of these experiences on the participants professional development.

Procedure:

The procedure will include a questionnaire (15 minutes to complete). The nature of the questionnaire will address the role of out-of-door learning experiences on professional development. As well, informal interviews will be conducted with three individuals selected from the questionnaire to engage in further dialogue regarding their responses and to provide exemplars from the experience.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained at all times throughout the course of the research. Participation is voluntary and will in no way affect evaluation as students in the Faculty of Education. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

Consent:

I, _____, agree / do not agree to participate in the

(Please print name above)

(Please circle)

research.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

* If you are interested in participating in the informal interviews please indicate by placing a check mark in the space provided. _____

APPENDIX B
PRE-OCRE AND POST-OCRE QUESTIONNAIRES

Pre-OCRE Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions with honesty and with as much depth as possible. Also, please take your time in responding to each question from your own perspective and use the flip sides of pages if more writing space is necessary.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained as was stated in the participant consent form.

I thank you for your time, sincerity and honesty.

Student ID Number _____

Date _____

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of "OCRE"?

2. What are your feelings about the OCRE experience?

3. What would you consider to be some preconceived values of the OCRE experience?

4. Give one word that best describes you prior to the OCRE experience and please expand on why you selected that word?

5. OCRE is a compulsory component in the teacher education program. What prospects do you hold for OCRE in contributing to your understanding of teaching and learning?

6. What prospects do you hold for OCRE in contributing to you personally?

Post-OCRE Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions with honesty and with as much depth as possible. Also, please take your time in responding to each question from your own perspective and use the flip sides of pages if more writing space is necessary.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained as was stated in the participant consent form.

I thank you for your time, sincerity and honesty.

Student ID Number _____

Date _____

5. What is one thing, a critical incident, from the OCRE experience that has had an impact on you:

Personally? Why?

Professionally? Why?

6. How has the OCRE experience contributed to your understanding of teaching and learning?

7. How has the OCRE experience contributed to you personally?

8. Considering yourself a future teacher, how has the OCRE experience facilitated the process or transition from student to teacher?

9. Was OCRE a valuable experience for you? Why? Why not?